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Circular No. 70 - The Agricultural Outlook for Utah

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In preparing the following statement of Utah's relation to the national agricultural outlook for 1928, the writers have been guided by three fundamental considerations: (a) Utah is a livestock state; (b) feed production is the basis of Utah agriculture; and (c) definite physical, geographic, and economic limitations govern Utah's production of crops other than feed crops.

The first and second of these considerations are obvious. The third needs this supplemental statement: After providing for feed requirements, only a comparatively small acreage is available, in any part of the state, for crops other than feed crops, and whatever is grown on this acreage faces the competition of similar commodities from other states, many of which are in a more favorable location with respect to markets. This calls either for concentration to reduce transportation costs, or for exceptional quality to offset transportation costs. Another fact of importance is that in only a few parts of Utah are there intensively cultivated areas where crops, other than feed crops, are of major importance.

1This Outlook is based upon the Agricultural Outlook for 1928, recently published by the United States Department of Agriculture. Copies of the national Outlook (Miscellaneous Publication No. 19) may be secured upon request from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Washington, D. C.

Quotations from the national Outlook are used freely in the present publication, which constitutes an attempt to interpret the national Outlook from the standpoint of agricultural production in Utah, where conditions and requirements, in some instances, are quite the reverse of those pertaining to the nation as a whole.

Approved for publication by the Director, February 17, 1928.
The relative value of Utah's agricultural commodities, measured in terms of state income, is shown by the accompanying table. While this grouping has served as a guide in the preparation of the following statement, the writers have not lost sight of the fact that a crop which may be of relatively little importance so far as state income is concerned may be of tremendous importance to individual farmers. This fact, however, is one which calls for local adjustment and, for obvious reasons, cannot be given the attention it deserves in any statement designed to set forth the agricultural outlook for the state at large.

**Value and Income Utah Crops and Livestock, 1927**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value of Crops, 1927</th>
<th>Income from Livestock, 1927</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hay</td>
<td>$14,311,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>5,792,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feed Grains</td>
<td>2,933,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfalfa Seed</td>
<td>2,279,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar-beets</td>
<td>5,085,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canning Crops</td>
<td>1,185,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>2,508,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>2,228,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Truck Crops</td>
<td>286,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Crops</td>
<td>2,393,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Total</td>
<td>$39,000,000</td>
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**THE GENERAL AGRICULTURAL SITUATION**

"Agricultural income in 1928 for the country as a whole is likely to show some improvement over that of 1927 provided total agricultural production is maintained at its present volume and farmers continue to make further improvement toward a more balanced production."  

That Utah will share in the expected general improvement of the agricultural situation is confidently expected in view of the especially favorable outlook for the livestock industry. It is important, however, that the farmers of this state plan their operations for 1928 with a view to insuring ample supplies of home-grown feed. While feed is relatively abundant in other parts of America, and farmers generally are being advised to...  

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2 Estimates on Value of Crops and Income from Livestock made by Frank Andrews and G. A. Scott, Agricultural Statisticians for Utah, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.  
3 All quotations, unless otherwise stated, are from the Agricultural Outlook for 1928 (Miscellaneous Publication No. 19), published by the United States Department of Agriculture.
curtail the production of hay and feed grains, Utah’s feed supply is relatively short as the result of the hay crop of 1927 being less than that of any year since 1924. There appears to be no reason for expanding the acreage of feed crops in Utah in 1928, but the promising livestock situation warrants the exercise of every precaution likely to insure high yields from the acreage normally devoted to these crops.

Expansion in cash crops is “to be guarded against”, but the risk is minimized where contract prices are available, as in the case of sugar-beets, peas, and tomatoes. Moreover, the support and operation of industrial plants affording a local market for farm crops is an economic consideration calling for the best thought of communities affected by these enterprises.

**UTAH FARM PRICES**

The prices of Utah farm products advanced slightly during 1927. The average for all commodities showed an increase of three points. The index of Utah Farm Price for 1926 stood at 140, and for 1927 at 143. This increase has been due largely to rise in prices of beef cattle, wool, and lambs. Crop prices did not advance as did livestock. The slight increase in the Utah farm price in 1927 and the decline of wholesale prices of non-agricultural commodities, from 161 to 152 during the same period, has improved the purchasing power of the Utah farm dollar. However, this has not benefited the farmers who have obligations to pay because, while non-agricultural commodities have decreased, farm prices have not appreciably increased.

Utah farmers can reasonably expect as good or better prices on an average for livestock and livestock products and for contracted crops during 1928 as received in 1927. Prices of other crops will depend largely upon acreage and yields in this and other states. Since the greater portion of Utah’s agricultural cash income is from sheep, beef cattle, dairy and poultry products and contracted crops, and since the prospects for these commodities are fairly bright, farmers in general can look toward 1928 with some encouragement.

**DEMAND**

“The agricultural industry as a whole should anticipate a domestic market situation at least equal to that of the current winter, although there are some uncertain factors which indicate the possibility of a somewhat better situation.”

“Foreign demand for our agricultural products of 1928 probably will be no better than it was for those of 1927.”
THE AGRICULTURAL CREDIT OUTLOOK

"The credit outlook for agriculture is in general somewhat improved over that of a year ago."

But the federal authorities point to possible local credit difficulties in some agricultural regions, due in part to additional failures of country banks, such failures resulting as a rule from the cumulative effects of years of post-war agricultural depression rather than from conditions prevailing in 1927.

As regards discount rates of Federal Reserve and intermediate credit banks, the national Outlook says:

"No extraordinary demands for credit in commerce and industry are in prospect in so far as can be foreseen at present, and it is improbable that any minor changes that may occur in commercial loans and discount rates will materially affect the interest rates in rural districts.

"The Federal intermediate credit banks now, in most cases, re-discount agricultural paper at a rate of 4 1/2 per cent as compared with a rate of 4 3/4 per cent a year ago, and this lower rate promises soon to be in effect for each of the twelve banks in this group.

"In the field of farm mortgage credit no striking changes have occurred during the past year nor are any important changes in immediate prospect so far as can be foreseen."

FARM LABOR AND EQUIPMENT OUTLOOK

"With industrial employment continuing at a lower level than during 1927, a large supply of farm labor during 1928 is likely, because of the close relationship between the volume of industrial employment and the supply of farm labor."

While the supply of farm labor is never an acute problem of general importance in Utah, where most farming is done by family labor, recent surveys conducted by the Utah Experiment Station emphasize the possibility of greater efficiency in the distribution and use of labor throughout the year. A much larger part of the total cost of producing Utah farm products is chargeable to labor than is generally appreciated.

From present indications, wholesale prices of farm machinery will not differ greatly from the prices of 1927, but the "retail price of building materials, especially when bought in large quantities, probably will show further decline."

The wholesale price of non-agricultural products on the basis of pre-war prices (August 1909-July 1914=100) was 151 in November 1927, as against 241 for 1920, 165 in 1925, and 161 in 1926.\(^4\)

\(^4\)As reported by the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
THE LIVESTOCK OUTLOOK

"The average level of prices of livestock and livestock products has not changed much from a year ago when these were at the most satisfactory average since pre-war days. The price of hogs is very much lower; poultry and eggs slightly lower; beef cattle prices are very much higher and prices for other livestock and their products somewhat higher."

The index of livestock prices for Utah, December 1926, and December 1927, were as follows:\(^5\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>1926</th>
<th>1927</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beef Cattle</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hogs</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butter</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a general increase in beef cattle, sheep, lambs, and wool with a small increase in butter. However, a decline took place in the index of hogs and eggs.

A recent statement by Utah statisticians for the Federal Bureau of Agricultural Economics reads:

"At the beginning of 1928, Utah farmers and stockmen have more sheep, swine, and milk cows and heifers, and less horses and beef cattle, than a year ago. The total inventorial value of Utah livestock increased about six million dollars during 1927 or about 11 per cent, due largely to a sharp increase in per head value of cattle. Sheep continued to lead in total livestock value in the state."

THE BEEF CATTLE OUTLOOK

"From the long-time viewpoint the cattle situation appears favorable. Since any increase in cattle numbers will not materially increase market supplies until late in 1930 or in 1931, cattle prices are expected to remain on a fairly high level during the next three or four years."

Summarizing the national situation as regards cattle supplies, prospective demand and prospective prices, the national Outlook states:

"Market supplies of cattle in 1928 will probably be 6 to 10 per cent smaller than in 1927. The number of cattle and calves on farms and ranges January 1, 1928, was 2 per cent smaller than a year earlier and was the smallest number since 1912. In view of the expected relatively high price of beef compared with other important meats, demand for beef may be somewhat less than in 1927. It seems reasonably certain that prices of slaughter cattle will average higher than in 1927, although peak prices of that year may not be equalled. Stocker and feeder cattle are expected to enjoy a good active market in 1928 with average prices for the year above those of 1927."

\(^5\)Price Index for Livestock and Products based on prices for Utah as reported by U. S. Department of Agriculture. 1910-1914—100.
"With the exception of 1921, total slaughter of cattle and calves each year since 1917 has exceeded the number of calves born.

"The proportion of steers in the total cattle supply also decreased in 1927, and especially the proportion of steers 2 years old and over.

"The number of cattle on feed in the Corn Belt on January 1, 1928, was estimated at 6 per cent below January 1, 1927, and the decrease in the western States at 16 per cent. Nebraska, Kansas, and the Lancaster District of Pennsylvania and Maryland are the only areas in which there were more cattle on feed this year than last. Average weights of cattle on feed are the lightest for many years.

"With smaller numbers of cattle coming to market, average weights lighter, and no prospect of serious competition from foreign sources, the quantity of beef available for domestic consumption is expected to be definitely smaller than in 1927.

"The demand for beef in 1928 may be less than in 1927, due to the fact that the relatively high price of beef compared with pork and lamb, may tend to turn consumers to the cheaper meats. However, during the last half of 1927 when business was declining, beef prices continued to advance. If, as now seems possible, business conditions improve in 1928, there may be little or no decrease in the demand for beef.

"If the demand for beef in 1928 falls below that of 1927 it is not likely that such reduction will offset the expected decrease in market supplies. Average cattle prices, therefore, are expected to be considerably higher in 1928 than in 1927 although the peak prices of 1927 may not be exceeded."

As regards the beef cattle situation in Utah, statistics recently compiled by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics show that advancing prices have resulted in rather close selling of cattle in many sections, with some further liquidation of beef herds.

"Of beef stock on hand (in Utah), cows, heifers, and calves comprise the bulk, with a relative small number of steers. It is probable that the downward trend in cattle numbers will be checked with the return of better prices, and there will be a tendency to increase holdings, but so far attempts to restock depleted cattle ranges in this state have been on an extremely limited scale. Much range area formerly occupied by cattle has been turned over to sheep, and increases in beef cattle herds will be accomplished under difficulties of restricted range and high priced stock cattle."

Ranchmen, who have access to the public domain for winter range and who supplement it with sufficient winter feed to keep all stock in a thrifty condition, are in a somewhat stronger position than those with no range other than the limited amount available in summer on the forests.

THE HOG OUTLOOK

"With an increase of 6 to 8 per cent in pigs raised in 1927 over those raised in 1926 no reduction in seasonal hog supplies for slaughter is indicated until next fall and winter. While some improvement in domestic demand for pork is anticipated, infor-
mation regarding European hog production indicates that export demand during the greater part of 1928 will be even lower than in 1927."

With supply and demand conditions as indicated above, no material change in hog prices other than average seasonal fluctuations seems likely until next fall and winter when market supplies probably will be affected by curtailed production resulting from the present unsatisfactory price situation.

Utah does not produce many hogs. In a recent survey the fact was revealed that only 35 per cent of the fruit farms included in the survey had any hogs at all.

For a number of years past Utah farmers have been advised to keep hogs in small numbers, as a means of better balancing agricultural practice, affording a profitable means of disposing of feed materials that might otherwise be wasted, and supply a convenient source of income. At least one good, well-bred brood sow on every farm has been advocated as a safe procedure.

A recent statement from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics shows that:

"Utah farmers now have about 30 per cent more hogs than a year ago, which increase was in line with general increases over the country. The bulk of hogs raised in Utah are consumed locally, and the numbers shipped to western markets are more than offset by imports of pork products, and of live hogs for slaughter. Further immediate expansion in hog numbers in the state will probably be checked by the much lower prices now prevailing, compared to prices a year ago. However, with beef and lamb prices comparatively high, it is probable that local consumption of pork will increase materially."

While the present low prices of hogs will tend to discourage some Utah farmers, others will see in the present situation an excellent opportunity to buy good brood sows in limited numbers in anticipation of a return of higher prices.

THE DAIRY OUTLOOK

"The position of the dairy industry appears on the whole to be fully as strong as it was a year ago. There are as yet no indications of any material expansion in dairy production in the near future. In comparison with a year ago there has been no increase in the number of cows being milked, no significant increase in the number of heifer calves being reared and no material change in the disposal of old cows."

With growing population and with increased consumption of dairy products, significant changes are taking place in major dairy regions which have a special interest to Utah dairymen.
In Wisconsin enlarged demands for fluid milk and sweet cream explain much of the recent decline in cheese production in that state. Increased demand for sweet cream in many eastern consuming centers has led to the growing long-distance shipment of this commodity, cutting into production of manufactured products. Offsetting these shifts to some extent, butter and cheese manufacturing is expanding in newer dairy regions, including the intermountain states.

"Dairy Production on the Pacific Coast is not keeping pace with demand, with the result that the Coast is reaching back into the mountain country for its supplies. The upward trend in demand and rapid development of the industry in this region seem likely to continue for some time."

In view of these favorable developments, dairymen in those parts of Utah which are known to be adapted to dairy farming may well afford to consider some expansion and also observe the following possibilities:

(a) Continue improvement in the quality of cows and methods of management.
(b) Extend the use of feeding rations likely to increase milk production.
(c) Dispose of old cows and low producers while beef prices are high enough to contribute largely toward covering the cost of raising young animals for replacement.
(d) Raise more calves from cows of high productive ability.

In sections not yet proved to be adapted to the dairy industry it would appear inadvisable to encourage expansion beyond a general improvement of herds and herd management.

According to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics:

"There was an increase of about three per cent, or three thousand head, in milk cow numbers in Utah in 1927, which represents a continuation of the upward trend in this phase of livestock production in the state. The average value of milk cows also increased from $72 to $80 during the past year. The keeping of good milk cows has proved to be profitable on Utah farms, and fits well with diversification schemes. Expansion has taken place in practically all of the farming sections of the state. The increased numbers of heifers being kept for milk cows suggests further growth in the dairy industry of the state."

THE SHEEP AND WOOL OUTLOOK

"Sheep numbers continue to increase and prospects indicate a lamb crop for 1928 somewhat larger than a year ago. Consumer demand for lamb is not likely to improve sufficiently to offset the prospective increase in production. With wool stocks in this country light and with a strong foreign market the outlook for wool appears favorable."

"A further increase of 3 per cent in the numbers of Utah sheep and lambs was shown during 1927," according to the
Bureau of Agricultural Economics, "and the increase in stock sheep was somewhat larger than this, since there were some 60,000 less on feed for market January 1, 1928, than there were a year ago. Expansion took place in the way of more farm flocks, more old ewes as one-year breeders, and through some enlargement of range flocks, mainly at the expense of cattle. Per head values of sheep also increased in the past year, due mainly to a keen demand for breeding stock."

Because of favorable soil and climatic conditions over vast areas of open range land, Utah is fundamentally sound as a major sheep-producing state. With the total number of range sheep rapidly approaching the limits of range carrying capacity, however, expansion in this industry should come more from improved breeding and range practices than from any material increase in number of head on the range.

While there are reasons for encouraging farmers to produce small flocks of sheep, this encouragement should be accompanied by improvement in the methods of handling these flocks; otherwise, the farmers may lose money and the sheep industry generally may be injured.

During the last six years, the number of sheep and lambs in the country as a whole has shown an average annual increase of approximately a million head. In view of this fact there is need of considerable caution in regard to further expansion in the production of market lambs.

The outlook is brighter for sheepmen who depend on wool for the major portion of their income. "Supplies abroad are light, foreign markets continue strong, domestic prices of wool are below the tariff differential from foreign prices, and no further recession in general business conditions seems probable in the near future." It appears, however, that consideration should be given the production of higher quality wool.

THE HORSE AND MULE OUTLOOK

"Higher farm income in the South and in the Great Plains this season has brought about an increased demand for horses and mules, and prices for the first half of 1928 are likely to be higher than a year ago. Present numbers of colts indicate further decreases in the horse and mule population for several years to come. Eventually, this reduction will reach a point where scarcity will cause prices to rise to higher levels."

"Utah horse numbers declined about 2 per cent in 1927, continuing the trend of several years' duration," says a report issued by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. "Sufficient demand
is not yet in evidence to stimulate colt production, while prices are holding about steady at a low level. There are only a few mules in Utah, with both numbers and values showing little change."

In Utah where good pasture land can be employed profitably for the grazing of dairy cattle, and, to some extent, farm flocks of sheep, there is a question as to whether farmers in this state would be justified in any material expansion of horse breeding, even though the demand for farm horses is likely to increase during the next few years. But there is little reason to doubt the wisdom of replacing old horses with young stock while horse prices are at their present low level. Farmers who have an abundance of cheap feed and pasture, who are favorably located and who have good brood mares might well consider raising sturdy colts for replacement purposes.

THE EGG AND POULTRY OUTLOOK

"The number of laying hens and pullets on January 1, 1928, probably was not much different from that of January 1, 1927. Feed grains and mill feeds, which enter the ordinary rations used by poultrymen and which constitute the principal items of cost in poultry farming, will probably average somewhat higher in price during the first six months of the year. Present conditions indicate that egg production will be about the same in 1928 as in 1927. However, the low storage holdings of eggs on January 1, and the favorable outcome of the 1927 storage season, are factors which should result in better egg prices during the coming year.

"The holdings of dressed poultry on January 1, 1928, were considerably lighter than on the corresponding date in 1927. With supplies lighter and the prospective demand fully as strong as during the year just closed, the prospects of a higher level of prices for the principal classes of poultry, both dressed and alive, appear favorable, at least during the first half of the year."

A trend toward greater specialization and larger units is seen in the poultry industry of Western States. Perfection of mechanical devices has made possible the development of commercial hatcheries, large-scale breeding operations, and improved poultry house equipment. This has resulted in increased efficiency and in the ability to care for larger producing units per man.

This increase in the number of specialized egg farms, together with the presence of better and earlier pullets on general farms, and further economies in the cost of winter egg production, is tending to increase the volume of eggs reaching the markets during the winter months.
With the exception of wheat, poultry feed prices in Utah are higher than in the Middle West and about equal to prices in eastern producing sections. Marketing and transportation costs, because of the long haul to market, are higher for Utah poultry products than for those from sections near the consuming centers in which Utah products compete.

Offsetting these higher costs, however, are the small economic units of the farms of this state, favorable climatic conditions conducive to high quality in poultry products, and efficiency in production and marketing methods. For this reason, until Utah becomes an importer instead of an exporter of total wheat, the indications are that poultry development in this state will continue.

The balancing of poultry with other farm enterprises has proved to be economically advantageous to a majority of the farms of this state. The results of a recent survey of Utah fruit farms show that farms keeping flocks of from 200 to 400 chickens and a number of good cows, together with their fruit enterprises, received the higher net returns.

In continuing the expansion of poultry farming in Utah, poultrymen would do well to consider the production of ample feed supplies, the improvement of housing and feeding methods, and the observance of every precaution likely to insure high quality of product.

THE FEED CROPS OUTLOOK

With a continuing favorable outlook for beef cattle, continued strength in the sheep outlook, and a promising outlook for the dairy and poultry industries of this state, there is every reason for making certain of ample feed supplies, including both hay and feed grains. Each year's experience is making it plainer to Utah stockmen that the use of locally grown feed is advisable from an agricultural as well as an economic standpoint. This realization accounts for a greater local production and more general use of barley as a substitute for imported corn; and the more general use of oats in dairy and poultry rations accounts for a fairly uniform production of this crop despite the fact that the demand for oats as horse feed has fallen off greatly since the advent of motor vehicles.

Since Utah is fundamentally a livestock state, and since the general livestock outlook is favorable from the standpoint of Utah stockmen, careful consideration should be given the production of ample feed supplies.

The general outlook for hay and feed grains in the United States is given as follows:
"The prices of feed grains, although somewhat higher than a year ago, are relatively still much below livestock prices because of failure of farmers to decrease acreage of these grains in line with the decrease in numbers of livestock. The relative price of hay is even lower than that of feed grains.

"Since the bulk of the feed grains produced in the United States is fed to livestock on the farms where grown, and income from such production is obtained from sale of livestock, it seems essential that adjustment should be in the direction of reducing feed crop acreages rather than expanding aggregate numbers. . . . The hay acreage is over-expanded."

So far as Utah is concerned, it should be borne in mind that this state, in several years past, has not produced a surplus of hay. Because of the alfalfa weevil quarantine there has been no export of Utah grown hay, and yet no surplus has accumulated, indicating that production has not been in excess of requirements. It is to be remembered also that feed grains are still being imported into Utah, a situation not reflected by general conditions in the United States.

In 1927 the production of hay in Utah was barely equal to estimated requirements, a condition reflected in existing higher prices for hay in this state despite a general downward trend in the price of hay for the United States.

To maintain present acreages of feed crops in Utah would be good farm management, it would help to stabilize the livestock situation which is favorable at present, and it would cut down feed bills.

Since there are comparatively few Utah farmers who produce hay as a cash crop, the situation, so far as the state is concerned, is reduced to a mere matter of farmers growing their own feed.

THE WHEAT OUTLOOK

"The present indications are that with average or better than average yields, another large world crop of wheat will be harvested in 1928. Winter wheat acreage in the United States was increased 10 per cent, and increases are shown for all foreign countries that have reported to date.

Compared with a general increase of 10 per cent in the winter wheat acreage, Utah shows only a 5 per cent increase; but this smaller increase is offset by a condition, as of December 1, 10 per cent higher than that of either of the two preceding years. With continued favorable weather conditions, the
winter wheat yield in Utah in 1928 could be higher than in any recent year.

Spring wheat planting, therefore, should be governed by weather reports between now and planting time, especially by those reports of weather affecting the wheat crop of the country as a whole. In Utah, spring wheat is sown on dry land to only a limited extent, and no promising alternate crop for these lands is available. On the irrigated lands, however, substitute grain crops are available, and farmers might well consider the substitution of good feed barley or even oats if reports to be issued April 1st should indicate the desirability of shifting from spring wheat to another crop.

In considering this shift, however, farmers should not overlook the advantage of special local markets for irrigated spring wheat, if such markets are known to exist.

ALFALFA SEED OUTLOOK

"The production of alfalfa and sweet clover seed for the past few years has been more than enough to satisfy increased consumption. The present demand is greatest for alfalfa seed that is adaptable for sowing in the Central and Northern States."

Utah grown alfalfa seed has proved its adaptability to soil and climatic conditions in Central and Northern States. Even Utah common has found a ready market in these states, but in view of an increasing demand for the hardier strains, and in view of restrictions recently imposed by the Canadian government, it would seem that new sowings of alfalfa for seed production should be of Grimm, Cossack, Hardigan or other varieties of the variegated group. It is important also that Utah growers pay more attention to purity of strains, seed selection, and certification so that the more exacting demand apparent in consuming centers might be met successfully.

Conditions do not seem to warrant any increase in the production of common alfalfa seed in this state.

THE POTATO OUTLOOK

Although Utah is not primarily a potato state, the national potato production vitally affects local prices. The plantings in the early and intermediate states are of more importance to Utah than the production in the northern or the late producing areas. Here shipments are principally of the early varieties and come in competition with the intermediate states. However, the production in the early states materially affects the prices of potatoes in the states known as the second early group. The
national Outlook reports the situation in these sections as follows:

“In the South, there are as yet no indications of a general increase of acreage, though a few states seem to be planning larger plantings. However, the price of late potatoes is lower, the quantity still in storage probably is greater, particularly in the West, and the chances of profit seem hardly as good as they were a year ago.

“Some of the intermediate states, especially along the Atlantic seaboard, had exceptionally heavy yields last season, which prolonged their marketing period and slowed down the early market for northern or main-crop potatoes. The chances for a repetition of such exceptional yields are not great, but even with average yields, if this group materially increases its plantings, there is danger of heavy supply and low prices during the late summer period.”

It would be advisable for the potato growers in the early counties of Utah to keep advised on plantings as they take place in the early states and especially in those states whose potatoes come in direct competition with the local crop, such as Kansas, Nebraska, Arkansas, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey, and Oklahoma.

Some western states, where comparatively low prices are now being received, report an intention to reduce the acreage of potatoes in 1928; but the intended decrease in these states is not likely to offset the intended increase in other states, from Maine to Nebraska. In the North Atlantic and North Central States an intended increase of about 14 per cent is reported.

THE ONION OUTLOOK

The acre-yield of onions in Utah is considerably above the average for the United States and the quality of the product is good. However, it would be advisable for the onion growers to study the national Outlook for the onion prices of 1928, to maintain high yields and good quality, and to watch national legislation affecting the tariff on imported onions.

“A general reduction of 10 per cent below the 1927 acreage of onions in the late or main-crop states would, with average yields, produce a crop about the same size as that produced in 1925 and would likely restore the more favorable price level of that season.”

Utah growers probably could safely plant an acreage approximating that of 1927, but no expansion seems warranted.

THE FRUIT OUTLOOK

“Fruit production has been increasing rather rapidly during recent years and has now reached a point where large quantities
of fruits, particularly apples, peaches, grapes and grapefruit, go to waste in years of heavy production.

"It should be recognized that the area of potential fruit land is so great that continued pressure of heavy supplies of fruit on the markets and keen competition among the various fruits may be expected. Consumers are demanding higher quality than formerly in their fruit purchases and substantial premiums in price are being paid for the better grades."

Utah occupies a relatively minor position as regards the fruit industry of the United States, and it may be argued that regardless of how great an expansion in Utah's fruit acreage might occur this state could not affect the national situation to any appreciable extent. Such an argument, however, fails to take account of the fact that the national situation does affect local prices. In other words, plantings and production trends in other parts of the country have a marked effect on returns from Utah fruit land. With the limited acreage available for fruit production in this state, therefore, it is important to keep local plantings in line with the national outlook.

**THE APPLE OUTLOOK**

"There is nothing in the apple outlook to discourage unduly the commercial growers who are favorably located and who produce high quality fruit of desired varieties at a low cost. This applies particularly to growers who can count upon a local demand for a particular quality or variety, or who are so located that they can often produce a good crop in years when the total crop is below average. On the other hand, there is little reason to expect profitable production in orchards where returns have been disappointing because of poor location with respect to markets or growing conditions.

"Consumers both at home and abroad are demanding higher quality than formerly in market supplies of apples, and successful growers generally will find it necessary to give more attention to supplying their markets with high-grade fruit of desired varieties."

Utah growers whose soils are well adapted to apple production, who have varieties that are in demand, and who produce fruit of high quality can expect some improvement in the market for their products. Even these growers, however, should plan to make the most of shifts affecting varieties and quality on the apple market of the Intermountain and Pacific Coast States, which are of potential benefit to Utah growers.

Higher transportation and handling charges during recent years renders the poorer varieties of apples in this, and other
export states, unprofitable. There is no prospect for relief in this situation.

Before making new plantings of apple trees, the grower should study the local and national situation, make sure of his soil, water, and climatic conditions, consider his own ability to produce quality fruit, and then exercise extreme care in the selection of varieties.

THE PEACH OUTLOOK

A smaller percentage of peach trees is young in the Mountain States than is the case in the South. The suggestion is made that plantings sufficient to maintain the present volume of production seems to be justified. Such orchards as are set out should be on the most favorable sites and of standard commercial varieties, particularly where the crop is to be shipped to distant markets.

"Under normal weather conditions, heavy production and difficult marketing conditions may be expected during the next few seasons. This is true, notwithstanding the fact that the 1927 crop was 35 per cent less than the crop of 1926, mainly because of unfavorable weather. Because of neglect, disease, and age of trees some decrease in the pressure of heavy supplies on the market is likely to occur within five years. Young orchards in good locations, if given proper care, may later produce crops under somewhat more favorable market conditions.

"In certain districts in the South, some of the poorer orchards have been pulled out during the last year. Plantings in recent years have been light. However, a large percentage of the trees, which were set out during the period of heavy planting from 1921 to 1924 in the South and in certain Middle Western States, have reached full bearing age. The potential bearing capacity of orchards in the southern area is so great that a considerable reduction in number of trees would result in a higher farm value for the crop under average weather conditions and would offer relief to many growers from the generally unsatisfactory returns of recent years. The rapid expansion in the commercial peach industry since 1920 is shown by the fact that carload shipments during the last four years were about 42 per cent greater than during the preceding four years."

CONTRACT CROPS

In the intensively cultivated counties of Utah agriculture has been built around contracted crops. The sugar-beet and canning industries have supplied a market for the farmer’s product at a definite price. The growing of such crops has removed local competition from other commodities and has adequately fitted into the cropping system. The support and the operation of these plants is an economic consideration that should be given the attention of the farmers and the communities affected by these enterprises.

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