

Over My Shoulder

A monthly review of the livestock market by J.D. Sartwelle, Jr.

October was another eventful month in the industry. Rainfall in Texas continued in many areas to make the month unlike the past couple of years.

The fed market remained fairly upbeat as domestic demand was fair and we saw more tonnage move to Japan and saw Korea come back on line after all their haggling and foot dragging.

Rising spot corn and futures markets driven by trader concerns over increased demand for ethanol production hammered the feeder markets. All in all, the month was typical; some good, some bad.

Rainfall over the Southwest that came from Pacific moisture as well as Gulf moisture made the month be a wet one for the most part in lots of areas.

Some parts of the Western

areas as well as the South Plains and Panhandle and into Oklahoma received moisture that brought them back to life and revitalized a good bit of the wheat that had been planted on September moisture that was badly in need of a drink of water.

The eastern half of the state as well as the Coastal Bend received a lot of rain that hampered outside activities and for sure slowed down the late hay making that folks either needed for themselves or had sold to neighbors.

The month ended in the best shape moisture wise than the past several years when fall rains were scarce.

In the export trade, Korea took their first delivery of beef in late October, while the Japanese continued what they started and even released the large tonnage

that had been in storage in Japan since they shut off trade months ago.

Japanese consumer re-acceptance of U.S. beef is increasing and is expected to continue in the immediate future.

The real story of the month is the quantum leaps in the corn futures driven by an expected increase in corn usage by ethanol producers.

Higher priced corn equals lower priced feeder cattle. As the corn futures have risen, feeder futures have come down in price.

The past ten year average of low priced corn has gone out the window to be replaced by higher priced corn, which will present a whole new economic structure to the industry. Corn goes up, feeder cattle come down.

Most think that this is not a

short term phenomenon, but is here to stay and will be a part of our pricing mechanisms for the long term.

In the feedyards, fed cattle that began the month at the \$92 level, lost ground during the month before rebounding and closing around \$90 to end the month.

Front end numbers supposedly are not burdensome at this time, but as time progresses the large numbers on feed will begin to show up as finished cattle.

There'll be talk of walls of cattle and all coming at once, etc.; we'll just have to see how it all plays out.

In the meantime, in the country and at the markets, runs were slowed down during the month in many areas by persistent rainfall.

By month's end with a little

wind, cooler temps and lower humidities, drying became pretty rapid and folks not only began to make hay again, but also began to catch up on cow work.

The last several days of the month saw salable numbers begin to pick up.

The calf trade suffered the effects of the corn pricing situation as the big calves by month's end traded significantly lower than at the first of the month.

The big cattle at end of month sold \$10-\$12 lower while the little cattle suffered as much but less on a percentage wise basis.

The growing and or emerging wheat grazing prospects kept a fairly good prop under the grazing weight calves.

The slaughter cow trade actu-

ally saw a small upswing during the middle of the month that lasted for a couple of weeks until the numbers began to pick back up at month's end.

The pork complex looked at an over two million head kill for each week of the month and saw top weight prices stay put at a plus or minus \$50 most of the month.

Should the weather cooperate, there could still be a little time to grow a little more grass, make more hay that is certainly needed and permit us to finish up selling the big end of the calves for the year.

A little more moisture after all that's done and a good mild winter would be in order and wouldn't be turned down by anybody that I know.

Texas Parks Weekly Migratory Bird Report

This is the weekly migratory bird report for the week of November 8.

South Zone Waterfowl: There may not be enough adjectives to describe success for coastal duck hunters opening weekend. Some are saying this is the best opener they have ever experienced.

Hunters from Port Arthur, Winnie, Anahuac, High Island, Eagle Lake, Garwood, El Campo, Sheridan, Wharton and any other place that held water likely shot limits of ducks. Teal were most abundant, with flights of bluewings present much like the September teal season. Gadwalls showed in force, too, especially in the Trinity Bay marsh.

Several groups took mallards. Prairie hunters reported seeing lots of divers including scaup and redheads. Canvasbacks, not normally seen on the prairie, were reported in several bags.

TPWD wildlife management areas like Peach Point and Mad Island enjoyed steady hunts. Impressive rafts of pintails and redheads in Port O'Connor and Rockport made for great decoying. Snow geese arrived late last week just in time for the opener, but high skies and light winds did hunters no favors.

Lots of juvenile snows and

specklebellies. The bright moon should continue to help the migration, though no significant cold fronts are expected this week. Rains this week should recharge ponds. Prospects are excellent.

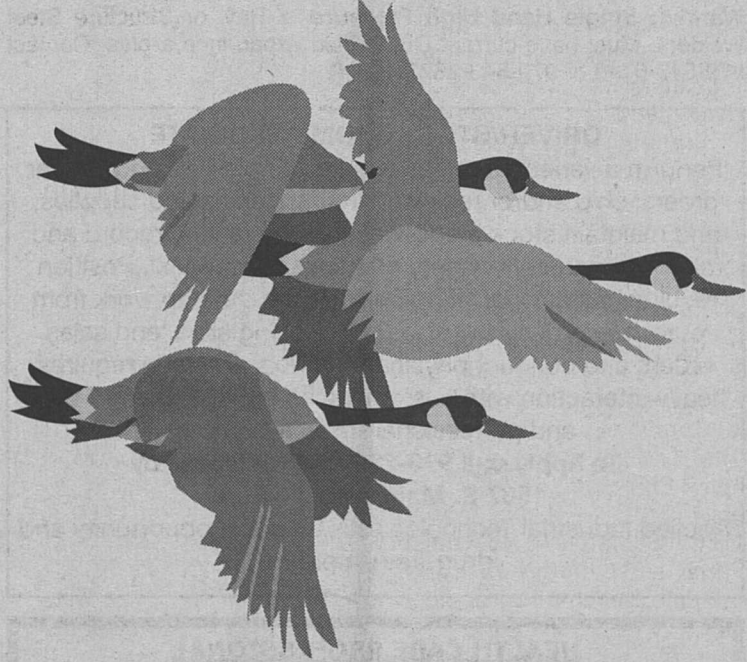
High Plains Mallard Management Unit: Duck hunters scored limits on playas near Amarillo, Dumas and Knox City. Teal, gadwalls, shovelers and mallards were the birds most often seen in bags.

Conditions are good for a consistent duck season. Geese moved into the Etter area late last week. Lake Etter is holding strong concentrations of snow geese, many of which are juveniles, and strong numbers of Canadas.

Haskell County geese are building daily. Sandhill crane numbers are good near Amarillo. No significant weather change is expected until the weekend. Prospects are good.

North Zone Waterfowl: The duck opener for North Texas was great if you had water. The good news is parts of North Texas received five inches of rain Sunday night.

Those able to find ponds or shallow flats on lakes and reservoirs scored limits of gadwalls, teal, shovelers and a few mallards. Lots of divers like scaup, ringed-



necks, redheads and a few canvas backs were harvested as well.

Ducks are using any available water in North and East Texas. Though dreadfully dry, if you find water, you should consistently find ducks in this region throughout the season. Caddo Lake and Lake O' the Pines saw limit hunts in isolated pockets of water. The same holds true for Toledo Bend, Sam Rayburn and Lake Fork. Closer to the coast, hunting

could not be better. Limits were the norm and not the exception around the IH-10 corridor.

Teal were thick on leveed ponds and fields. Shovelers, gadwalls, divers and a few mallards comprised most of the bags. No significant cold weather is expected this week, though rain is in the forecast. Prospects are fair in North Texas and good closer to the coast.

Texas Crop Weather Report

Agricultural Summary

The Southern Low Plains, South East Texas, Edwards Plateau, South Central, and the Lower Valley all received mostly 0.01 to 0.25 inches of rainfall with 0.5 to 1.5 inches in small sections.

The Cross Timbers, Blacklands, and North East Texas mostly received 0.50 to 3.0 inches of rainfall, as isolated showers brought as much as 4.0 inches to some sections.

The Northern Low Plains received 0.1 to 1.5 inches of rainfall while the Northern High Plains only received a trace.

Most of the remaining areas of the state remained fairly dry.

Field Crops Report

Small Grains: Wheat progressed in the Northern High Plains as it responded well to recent rains.

Producers continued planting the late crop behind corn. In the Southern High Plains, wheat was at a "standstill" as a result of decreased moisture levels.

Wheat emerged; however, supplemental rainfall is still needed for good establishment.

Dryland wheat and oat producers in South Texas were in much need of additional moisture to get their crops off to a good start following recent planting.

The condition of winter wheat and oats was mostly good to fair statewide.

Cotton: Harvest was in full swing in the High Plains. Many producers in the Northern High Plains began stripping their fields after being delayed due to recent rainfall.

In the Southern High Plains, recent winds helped drain moisture from the soil which in return allowed for the progression of the

cotton harvest.

Producers in the Northern Low Plains were able to get back in fields and apply more harvest aids.

Most of the cotton in the Southern Low Plains received a terminal freeze.

Statewide, cotton condition was mostly good to fair.

Corn: As harvest neared completion, producers finished chopping for silage.

Sorghum: Growers in the Northern Plains began harvest; however activities were limited due to a hard freeze.

Peanuts: In the Southern High Plains, producers continued to dig and thresh despite concerns of freeze damage.

Producers have already experienced high yields with a few more weeks left before harvest is completed. Harvest was in full swing in South Texas.

Fruit, Vegetable and

Specialty Crop Report

Pumpkin harvest was complete in the Southern High Plains, where demand and sales were at an all time high.

In South Texas, spinach progressed but, loopers emerged in many cabbage fields.

Producers in the San Antonio-Winter Garden continued to prepare for planting of fall veg-

etables and harvested cabbage, cucumbers, and green beans.

Pecans: Crop activities in the Trans-Pecos were slowed down due to the first freeze.

Pecans began dropping at a more steady rate in the Edwards Plateau.

Harvest continued to wind down in the South Central areas of the state.



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