

Farm Scene Dominated By Wheat

By ARCH MACKENZIE
OTTAWA (CP)—Wheat dominated the farm scene in 1963, earning some \$600,000,000 or more in exports while a record 723,000,000-bushel harvest guaranteed that the golden flow will continue in 1964.

An unprecedented and sudden \$500,000,000 sale to the Soviet Union—with deliveries stretching to next July 31—swiftly submerged fears of a new surplus situation and eased warnings to trim plantings next spring.

Grain, livestock, dairy and other revenue produced a record estimated cash income figure of \$3,300,000,000 compared with the record \$3,081,000,000 last year. But farm operating costs continued to rise, and net 1963 income was only a shade higher than a year ago, at an estimated \$1,700,000,000.

Sharing the spotlight with the Russian purchase was renewal of the long-term wheat agreement with Red China, covering a maximum 126,700,000 bushels over three years.

FUTURE BRIGHT
For the first time similar but smaller agreements were signed with Poland, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, also pinched by crop reverses. But Britain, Japan and West Germany continued to loom large as regular grain customers.

Wheat was credited with pacing a rising economy leading into 1964, and its impact boosted sales of autos, trucks, farm machinery and other durable goods. Heavy shipments are forecast lasting at least until next July 31.

Exports for the calendar year 1963 are expected to hit the crop year expiring each July 31—might exceed 40,000,000 bushels. For October alone the shipments were a record 59,000,000 bushels for a 10-month total of some 320,000,000 bushels.

There were other key farm developments in 1963.

Calgary rancher Harry Hays became Liberal agriculture minister in May, succeeding Alvin Hamilton who had helped the Conservatives retain a grip on the Prairies in the April 8 election.

PLAN NEW MINISTRY
Legislation to create separate eastern and western agriculture ministers lagged in Parliament. Eastern nominee René Tremblay remained minister without portfolio.

The government moved to unload its butter surplus of more than 300,000,000 pounds at cut-rate export prices while dairy supply shifted into closer balance with demand.

One prospect for 1964: Some reduction in federal dairy subsidies which in the case of butter run about \$40,000,000 annually.

The federal government implemented an Eastern Canada feed grains program, providing assistance for over the winter storage of Western supplies to help cut costs. It also extended freight-rate assistance in an effort to deal with Eastern complaints.

H. H. Hannam, the Ontario dairy farmer who had headed the Canadian Federation of Agriculture since its formation as agriculture's main voice, died and was succeeded by James Bantley, an Alberta farmer.

BEEF PRICES OFF
The beef industry, which had been one of the brightest spots in farming, saw prices ease somewhat while exports of feeders to the United States declined. Canadian demand still absorbed higher domestic marketings without any sharp price break.

The Farm Credit Corporation, federal farm loans agency, estimates 1963 business of between \$10,000,000 and \$120,000,000 compared with \$91,000,000 in 1962. Quebec led the list in increase borrowing.

The Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act program in its first full year reported undertaking 240 cost-sharing projects.

On a regional basis, 1963 farm profits showed good to excellent grain yields on the Prairies except for Manitoba and northern Alberta. Commercial production as up for most fruits, but reduced damage in Ontario and British Columbia.

Vegetable acreage was down and weather also was a factor. Sugar beet acreage was higher, at least in part due to climbing sugar prices. The tobacco industry, centered in Ontario, had problems selling the 1962 crop. Looking ahead, agriculture experts see U.S. prices influencing Canadian beef, with perhaps some reductions although no sharp fall. Canadian hog prices may rise.

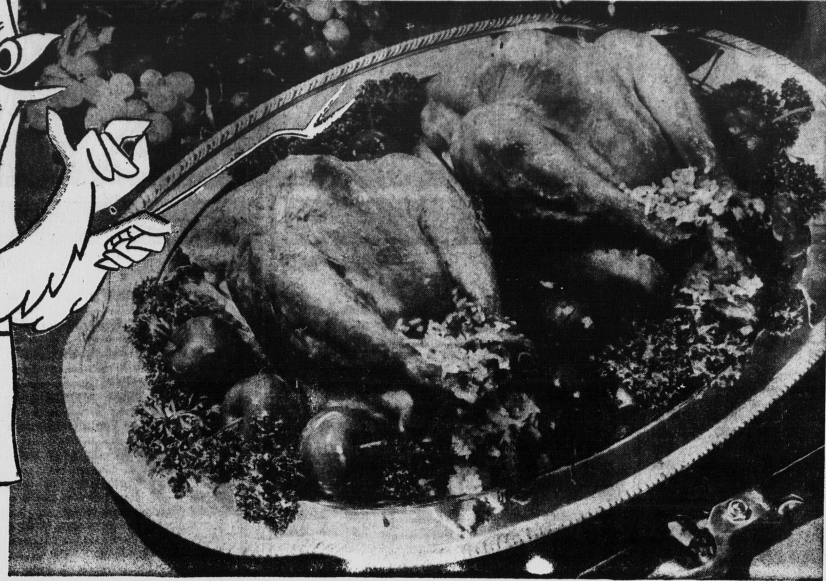
Poultry production increased sharply late in the year with indication of a price break, perhaps affecting consumption of other meats.

PLANS VISIT
BONN (AP)—President Heinrich Lübke of West Germany is planning a Latin-American tour next spring. He recently completed a visit to the Far East.

DERIVED FROM CREE
The name of Wetaskiwin, Alta., is a Cree Indian word meaning "the place where the peace was made."



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