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The following estimates, forecasts, and projections are mainly taken from recent publications of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, Economic Research Service, and the World Agricultural Outlook Board of the USDA.

***Wheat.** All Wheat production totaled 2.24 billion bushels in 2000, down 3% from both the last forecast and 1999. The decline from the last forecast is the result of both acreage and yield decreases. Area harvested for grain is down 2% from the last forecast and 1% from last year. The U.S. yield is 42.1 bushels per acre, down 0.2 bushel from the last forecast and 0.6 bushel from last season. A market year average price between \$2.35 and \$2.75 per bushel is expected, compared to \$2.48 for the 1999 crop. Projected U.S. 2000/01 ending stocks of wheat by USDA's World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB) are down 88 million bushels from last month because of a smaller crop and increased use.

***Corn.** The October forecast for 2000 corn production is 10.2 billion bushels, down 2% from the last forecast, but up 8% from last year. Yield is expected to average 139.6 bushels per acre, down 2.2 bushels from last month but up 5.8 bushels from a year ago. If realized, this would be the largest production and yield on record. Acreage for harvest is estimated at 73.0 million acres, down 50,000 acres from last month. A market year average price between \$1.65 and \$2.05 per bushel is expected, compared to \$1.80 for the 1999 crop.

***Soybeans.** The 2000 soybean crop is forecast at a record high 2.82 billion bushels, down 3% from September 1, but 6% above 1999. The yield forecast, at 38.7 bushels per acre, decreased 0.8 bushel from last month, but is 2.1 bushels above the 1999 final yield. Acres expected for harvest are forecast at a record 73.0 million acres, down 1% from September, but up 1% from 1999. Acres expected for harvest were decreased by 450,000 acres in eight States due to abandonment or harvest for hay. Soybean export prospects are reduced 35 million bushels from last month by the World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB). Crush is down 15 million bushels as domestic soybean meal use and export prospects decline. A market year average price is projected between \$4.60 and \$5.20 per bushel, compared to \$4.65 for the 1999 crop year.

***Cotton.** Lower production, demand, and ending stocks highlight this month's U.S. cotton estimates. All cotton production is forecast at 17.5 million 480-pound bales, down 5% from last month, but up 3% from 1999. Yield is expected to average 620 pounds per harvested acre, down 2 pounds from last month. Dry weather and above-normal temperatures continue to stress the crop and lead to increased abandonment. Harvested acreage, at 13.5 million acres, reflects a 4% decrease from September 1. Projected exports are revised down 4%, reflecting both lower available supplies and reduced foreign import demand.

***Rice.** Production is forecast at 192 million cwt, up slightly from September 1, but 7% below 1999. Area for harvest is expected to total 3.09 million acres, unchanged from September 1, but down 12% from 1999. The market year average price is expected to average between \$5.75 and \$6.25 per cwt compared to \$6.11 cwt for the 1999/00 crop.

***Other Crops.** **Durum Wheat** production, at 116 million bushels, is down 2% from September 1, but 16% higher than last year. **Other Spring Wheat** production is estimated at 561 million bushels, down 5% from the last forecast, but 12% higher than a year ago. **Grain Sorghum** production is forecast at 465 million bushels, 10% lower than the September forecast and 22% below the 1999 total. **Barley** production is estimated at 320 million bushels, 3% higher than September and 14% above last years estimate. The **peanut crop** is expected to be down 9% from last year, **all tobacco** production down 13% from last year.

***Cattle.** October 1 **cattle on feed** in the U.S. feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more totaled 11.0 million head, up 7% from a year earlier. September placements were down 3% from the previous year. Marketings of fed cattle were up 2% from 1999. At mid-October, **prices** for choice steers (Nebraska direct, 1100-1300 pounds) averaged \$67 per cwt. Feeder steer prices (Oklahoma City, medium-large frame, 750-800 pounds) were around \$84 per cwt in mid-October, unchanged from mid-September.

***Hogs.** During the first two weeks of October slaughter has been running about 4% below a year ago. Prices at mid-October (Iowa-Southern Minnesota direct, 230-250 pounds) were around \$44 per cwt, unchanged from mid-September. Fourth quarter prices are expected to average \$40 per cwt.

***Other Livestock.** September **milk production** was up 2.8% from the previous year. Production per cow increased 1.5%, and the number of cows was up 1.3%. **Cheddar cheese prices** (U.S. 40 pound

blocks, wholesale) were down the first two weeks of October. During August, total **cheese** production was 6.1% above the previous year, **butter** production was up 9.3% and **nonfat dry milk** production was up 9.9%. **Sheep slaughter** for September totaled 269 thousand head, 13% below last year. US table **egg production** during September 2000 totaled 5.80 billion, up slightly from 1999. Wholesale market **egg prices** for the fourth quarter of 2000 (Grade A large, New York) are expected to average 68-70 cents per dozen, compared with 63.2 cents a year ago. First quarter 2001 egg prices are expected to average 61-65 cents per dozen, compared with 63.3 cents a year ago. **Broiler**-Type chicks hatched during September 2000 totaled 705 million, up 1% from last year. Cumulative Broiler-Type Placements in 15 selected states thru October 14, 2000, were 5.95 billion, 1% above a year ago. The wholesale 12-city average price for whole **broilers** for the fourth quarter of 2000 is expected to be 54-56 cents, compared to 57.6 cents for the third quarter of last year. First quarter 2001 broiler prices are expected to average 51-55 cents per pound, compared with the 54.6 cents for a year earlier. Cumulative **turkey poult placements** for the 2000 marketing year through August 2000 were 297 million, slightly above the same period a year ago. Placements in September 2000, at 23.2 million, were up 6% from last September. Prices (8-16 lb. hens, Eastern Region) for the fourth quarter of 2000 are expected to be in the 77-79 cent range compared with 69.0 cents for the fourth quarter last year. Turkey prices for the first quarter of 2001 are expected to average 60-64 cents per pound, compared with the 62.9 cents average for the first quarter of 2000. **Supplies in refrigerated warehouses** at the end of September 2000 compared with a year earlier were: total chicken, down 8%; turkey, down 11; pork, up 2; bellies, up 11; beef, up 30; frozen orange juice, down 7; butter, up 19; and American cheese, up 18.

***Trade.** October U.S. **trade projections** for corn, beef, and broilers improved while 2000/2001 export prospects for soybeans and cotton declined, compared with last month. Wheat, rice, pork, and turkeys were unchanged from September. October projections for the volume of exports for the 2000/2001 marketing year compared to 2000/2001 are: **wheat** up 3%; **corn** up 18%; **rice** down 9%; **soybeans** down 1%; **soybean meal** down 1%; **soybean oil** up 39%; and **cotton** up 13%. October projections for the volume of meat exports in calendar 2001 compared to 2000 are: **beef** down 3%; **pork** up 4%; **broilers** up 1%; and **turkeys** down 1%. The **U.S. trade** deficit for goods and services decreased to \$29.4 billion in August, from a revised \$31.7 billion in July. The **U.S. agricultural trade** surplus was \$1,109,280 in August, compared with \$841,300 in July.

***Prices.** The rate of **inflation**, as monitored by the CPI for all urban consumers, increased 0.5% in September and has increased 3.5% over the last 12 months. The **PPI** increased 0.9% in September, and has increased 3.3% for the 12-month period ending in September. The September **prime rate**, averaging 9.50%, was unchanged from August. Compared to a year earlier, **feed** prices in August were down 5%; **feeder livestock and poultry** prices up 12%; **fertilizer** was up 9%; **ag chemicals** down 1%; **farm machinery** down 1%; **seeds** up 2%; and **fuels** up 14%.

***World Weather and Crop Developments** (October 8-14). In the **United States**, mostly dry weather followed a record-setting cold snap in most areas east of the **Rockies**, allowing for autumn fieldwork, including winter wheat planting and summer crop harvesting, to proceed. An exception to the dry pattern was southern **Texas**, where early-week rainfall slowed fieldwork but aided fall-sown crops. In the southern **Plains**, additional rain is needed to ensure proper winter wheat establishment. In the **West**, cool, wet weather slowed fieldwork but aided winter grains and boosted soil moisture reserves. Weekly temperatures averaged 2 to 10 degrees F below normal in **California** and the **Southwest**, and as much as 18 degrees F below normal in southern **Texas**. Readings ranged from 7 to 15 degrees F below normal in the **Southeast**, except **Peninsular Florida**, while minimum temperatures fell below the freezing mark as far south as northern portions of **Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia**. Due to early maturation, summer crops were largely unaffected by the cold outbreak, which resulted in more than 300 daily-record lows from October 4-14 and brought the earliest first autumn freeze on record to several locations from the southern **Plains** to the interior **Southeast**. Mostly dry weather helped summer crop harvesting in western and central **Ukraine**, while farther east, showers favored emerging winter wheat in extreme eastern **Ukraine** and **North Caucasus, Russia**. Heavy rain drenched northern **Italy** and southeastern **France**, preventing winter grain planting and summer crop harvesting and causing severe flooding. Much-needed rain soaked the east, but dry weather continued to dominate **Western Australia**. Mostly dry weather helped to reduce flooding in the eastern rice belt of south **Asia**. Showers in eastern sections of the **South Africa** corn belt maintained favorable summer crop planting prospects, but warm, dry weather developed elsewhere. Showers boosted topsoil moisture for winter grains in the eastern **Mediterranean**. A later-than-normal killing freeze ended the growing season across **Manchuria**, while widespread rain boosted soil moisture for wheat across the **North China Plain**. In **Argentina**, rain continued to favor reproductive winter wheat and summer crop planting. In southern **Brazil**, rain is needed in the northern growing areas. Seasonably drier weather aided corn maturation in the main corn belt, while showers boosted reservoir levels across northern **Mexico**.

***Other News.** Over the last decade, U.S. consumption of **seafood products** on a per-capita basis have been relatively flat. This allows for some growth in total consumption due to an increased population, but it doesn't leave room for the development of any new large-scale sectors in the aquaculture industry. The **catfish industry** has been able to develop to a point where it has captured a number of economies of scale in production, processing, and marketing. The remainder of the **aquaculture** industry producing food products have aimed their production at niche markets. U.S. **feed grain production** in 2000 is forecast at 280 million tons, down 5 million from a month ago but up 17 million from 1999. Feed grain supply in 2000/01 is forecast at 331 million tons, down 2% from last month, but up 4% from 1999/2000. Beginning stocks are down from last month, and down 5% from the previous year. **Brazil** will eliminate restrictions on imports of **United States wheat** in early November, Brazilian Agriculture Minister Marcus Vinicius Pratini de Moraes said. Secretary Glickman said the action could pave the way for Brazil to import as much as 500,000 to 1,000,000 tons of U.S. wheat annually.

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