

Billion Bushels of Wheat Recommended for 1918

The production of over 1,000,000,000 bushels of wheat and over 83,000,000 bushels of rye, through the planting of over 47,337,000 acres to winter wheat and of 5,131,000 acres to rye this fall, is the immediate war agricultural program for the nation announced by David F. Houston, secretary of agriculture. This record winter-wheat acreage, an increase of 18 per cent over last year, would yield 672,000,000 bushels if the average yield for the past 10 years is equalled, or under a repetition of the favorable conditions of 1914 would give 880,000,000 bushels. In either case, with a spring-wheat crop next year equal to that of 1915, the nation will have more than one billion bushels of wheat for domestic use and export.

This vastly increased production of wheat, needed in any case, will be absolutely essential to prevent a serious shortage of breadstuffs next summer should the growing corn, now behind season, be much damaged by early frosts.

The program approved by the secretary of agriculture represents the best thought of the United States department of agriculture and of state agricultural officials and state councils of defense.

The study of this question has involved many factors, and the specialists have been aware from the first that the demands for wheat may exceed the supply next year. Effort, therefore, has been made to recommend in each state about as large an acreage in wheat and rye as can be sown without upsetting proper farm practice, which must be maintained in the interest of wheat and rye crops this and succeeding years, as well as in the interest of other necessary spring-planted crops, which are not discussed in detail at this time, as they are not food crops in which a marked shortage exists.

The estimates, the department states, are made with the knowledge that there is some shortage of the fertilizer supply, but with the assumption that there will be no general shortage in the supply of seed or farm machinery which is necessary in the production of the wheat crop. It is assumed also that ample transportation facilities will be provided and a fair price of wheat will be es-

tablished. These factors have been assumed as fixed and satisfactory. If any one or more fail to be adjusted in good time, no person can tell how serious will be the effect on the total crop.

The planting and cultivation of these increased acreages of fall-sown grains call for unusual efforts on the part of the farmers. Plans to place at the disposal of farmers all assistance possible are being perfected in the United States department of agriculture, the state colleges of agriculture, and other state and local agencies which co-operate in farming matters. The assistance of successful growers of wheat and rye in a campaign to turn out bumper crops in 1918 is assured.

The state officials will do their utmost to get the acreages expected of their states into the ground. The program as originally worked out by the federal department of agriculture called for somewhat more than 44,000,000 acres to be sown to winter wheat this fall. When this proposal was presented to the officials of the several states a further increase was considered possible and desirable by them. As a consequence the recommendation for the sowing of 47,337,000 acres is made.

Following is a summary of the department's recommendations regarding winter wheat and rye.

Wheat

The planting of approximately 47,337,000 acres to winter wheat, on the basis of the average yield for the past ten years, indicates a total production of 672 million bushels, which exceeds all previous winter-wheat crops harvested in the United States with the exception of the crops of 1914 and 1915, when the acreages harvested and yields per acre were both above normal.

If the extremely favorable conditions under which the winter-wheat crop of 1914 was grown are again experienced, the yield of winter-wheat next year will be 880,000,000 bushels, or by far the largest winter-wheat crop ever produced and even larger than the total of both winter and spring wheat crops for all past years except two.

It is too early to determine the area which should be sown to wheat next spring, but if this is equal to

WINTER WHEAT ACREAGE				
State	Acreage suggested for all of 1917	Acreage sown in fall of 1916	Per cent of increase over 1916	Maximum acreage sown in any year since 1906
New York	520,000	441,000	18	478,000
New Jersey	110,000	94,000	17	112,000
Pennsylvania	1,659,000	1,457,000	14	1,659,000
Delaware	150,000	136,000	10	136,000
Maryland	760,000	692,000	10	797,000
Virginia	1,670,000	1,455,000	15	1,455,000
West Virginia	380,000	340,000	12	380,000
North Carolina	1,180,000	1,053,000	12	1,053,000
Georgia	786,000	393,000	100	393,000
South Carolina	325,000	238,000	37	328,000
Florida				
Ohio	3,000,000	1,879,000	60	2,340,000
Indiana	2,800,000	2,256,000	25	2,820,000
Illinois	2,934,000	2,362,000	24	2,934,000
Michigan	1,059,000	896,000	20	1,059,000
Wisconsin	130,000	101,000	29	103,000
Minnesota	95,000	87,000	10	87,000
Iowa	525,000	451,000	16	525,000
Missouri	2,400,000	2,277,000	5	2,859,000
North Dakota				
South Dakota	182,000	182,000	0	182,000
Nebraska	3,674,000	3,645,000	1	3,674,000
Kansas	10,000,000	8,910,000	12	8,958,000
Kentucky	1,000,000	884,000	13	968,000
Tennessee	1,080,000	900,000	20	901,000
Alabama	200,000	133,000	50	133,000
Mississippi	100,000	18,000	455	18,000
Louisiana				
Texas	1,830,000	1,695,000	8	1,730,000
Oklahoma	4,040,000	3,232,000	25	3,232,000
Arkansas	308,000	225,000	37	265,000
Montana	1,000,000	775,000	29	775,000
Wyoming	85,000	79,000	8	79,000
Colorado	440,000	420,000	5	420,000
New Mexico	100,000	94,000	6	94,000
Arizona	43,000	37,000	16	43,000
Utah	275,000	246,000	12	256,000
Nevada	25,000	22,000	14	23,000
Idaho	405,000	346,000	17	405,000
Washington	850,000	754,000	13	1,271,000
Oregon	708,000	472,000	50	692,000
California	509,000	413,000	20	1,669,000
United States	47,337,000	40,090,000	18	45,306,000

that sown in the spring of 1917, or 19,000,000 acres, and the yield is up to the average of the last 10 years, a crop of 251,000,000 bushels of spring wheat will be harvested, and if the yield per acre should equal that obtained in 1915 the crop will be 350,000,000 bushels, the same as the greatest spring-wheat crop ever produced. Thus, with no increase in the spring-wheat acreage, but with the 18 per cent increase over the 1916 winter-wheat sowings planned for this fall, the total wheat crop next year will be more than one billion bushels, if the crop meets with slightly better than 10-year average conditions. With extremely favorable conditions, such as were experienced by the winter-wheat crop in 1914 and the spring-wheat crop in 1915, the total yield would amount to one and one-quarter billion bushels. A 10 per cent increase in spring-wheat acreage, with favorable growing conditions, would add another 30,000,000 bushels. The figures quoted above are based upon a winterkilling of 9 per cent and yields per acre of 15.6 bushels for winter wheat and 13.2 bushels for spring wheat, the averages for the last 10 years, and a yield per acre in 1914 of 19 bushels of winter wheat, and 18.4 bushels of spring wheat in 1915.

Principal Increases in Wheat Production

The principal increases in acreage of winter wheat are recommended in the areas where the acreage devoted to that cereal is already large and farmers are accustomed to growing wheat and are equipped with machinery for producing the crop. A material increase also is recommend-

ed in most of the areas where the production of oats and corn is heavy, since much wheat can be sown to advantage on oat stubble and in the standing corn or on ground from which the corn crop has been removed for the silo or cut for fodder. In some districts the increase in the acreage could be made larger, but this has seemed inadvisable for fear of disorganizing crop rotations, with injury to crops in succeeding years. The detailed recommendations resulting from the joint consideration given to the subject by the federal department of agriculture and by state officials are shown in the accompanying table.

Basis of Increased Acreage

Since the acreages sown last fall are fresh in the memory of farmers, the sowings suggested for this year are compared with those for 1916. For Kansas, where more than one-fifth of the winter wheat of the country was sown in 1916 and a campaign for an increase already is under way, an increase of more than a million acres, or one-seventh of the total increase, is recommended. Ohio is asked for one and one-tenth million acres over last year's sowings. This is considered possible and desirable by the agricultural leaders of the state. Because of available land in the state, Oklahoma is asked to increase the acreage one-fourth, amounting to more than 800,000 acres. Indiana and Illinois are each asked to increase their acreage by somewhat more than a half million acres, thereby equaling what they have sown in the recent past. Oregon, because of the abnormally

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