



# **The farm outlook for 1919 and the spring drive. Bulletin no. 67 February 1919**

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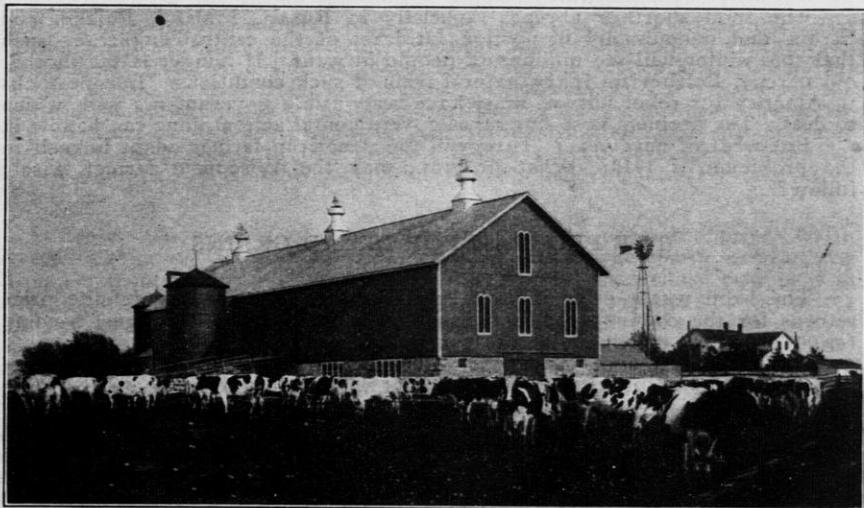
# WISCONSIN BANKERS' FARM BULLETIN

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## The Farm Outlook for 1919 and the Spring Drive

**H. L. RUSSELL, Director**

Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station



THE BACKBONE OF WISCONSIN'S FARMING.

Dairying has been and will be the scene of the farmer's most profitable and successful effort. Dairying has a future for the man who will look ahead.

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**Wisconsin Bankers' Association**

Burton M. Smith,  
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# The Farm Outlook for 1919 and the Spring Drive

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Events in the last three months have completely overturned all plans, both national and individual, relative to food supplies. Before the armistice, every possible effort was made to build up food reserves. Long hours of labor on the part of the farmer, coupled with unusual good luck in the matter of weather, resulted in crop returns which went far to restore the world's empty granaries. Conservation was in full swing and the free will offering of the American home pulled Europe through.

Today it is difficult to maintain the patriotic urge. All rules and restrictions except those of sheer waste have been lifted. Profit will be the spur to action this coming year to which will be added with increasing tensity the call for help from destitute Europe.

The food shortage abroad, especially in Russia, Finland, Poland, and Serbia, and undoubtedly in portions at least of the central empire, is such that this winter will see millions of people in want. If hunger is the mother of anarchy, Bolshevism is the natural fruit of such conditions. Europe looks to America for relief but we must have responsible governments with which to deal. The problem is so huge that governmental action alone can handle it.

But what of next year? How will the American farmer adapt himself to the problems of 1919? What program may the Wisconsin farmer wisely follow?

## THE PROGRAM FOR BREAD GRAINS

The fixed wheat price in force until July 1, 1920, insures definite price returns for the coming crop, and has already stimulated the largest seeding (49,000,000 acres of winter wheat) ever made.

Under the pressure of patriotic duty as well as from a standpoint of profit, it was good policy last year to plant wheat. Doubtless it will be quite as profitable this season to continue this practice, but it can hardly be considered as patriotic. With present prospects the nation will have a crop of over a billion bushels, the unexported surplus of which must be taken by the government at the fixed price regardless of the world price.

Europe will doubtless recover her yield of field crops much more quickly than she can her live stock and dairy products but hardly in time to permit of normal spring planting. A labor shortage in the war-stricken countries is certain. Machinery and fertilizer supplies are below normal. Italy is now crying for phosphates, saying that a shipload of fertilizer today is more needed than food.

The most unsettled small grain problem for Wisconsin concerns barley, one of the best of our field crops. As a bread grain its use is no longer imperative; and the former outlet in brewing is now stopped. Fortunately, it is one of the best (and at the present time the cheapest) of the feeding grains. In the lake shore counties and other regions where corn is not certain, it will undoubtedly be a safe grain to grow for feeding live stock.

## THE OUTLOOK FOR LIVE STOCK AND DAIRYING

The world shortage of meats, and especially fats, is much more likely to persist for several years than a scarcity of bread grains. In live stock and dairying is found not only the job that Wisconsin can do best, but the golden

opportunity to push this kind of farming more energetically than ever before with the best possible assurance that a good quality of products will find a ready demand.

## **EUROPE NEEDS MILK**

No nation can rear its youth as successfully without milk as with it, and war-scarred Europe today is unable to furnish even its children with this essential food for growth. Serbia and Poland are nearly childless because starvation has snuffed out the lives of their young. All Europe is greatly in need of condensed milk. In the year ending June 30, 1918, the United States shipped nearly 530,000,000 pounds of condensed milk; enough as fresh milk to make a milk train over 450 miles long, reaching half way from Wisconsin to the Atlantic seaboard.

**Wisconsin's condensed milk outlook.** Wisconsin is in a specially favorable position to meet the demand for condensed milk if it is possible to arrange to finance shipments. Wisconsin condenseries, made in 1918 approximately 400,000,000 pounds of condensed product, or two-thirds of all the condensed milk sent to Europe.

Moreover the state is in a position to make this product economically. Condenseries located within the market milk zone of larger cities must compete for raw material with the higher priced city supply. Twenty-three Wisconsin condenseries are located outside of the market milk zone of Chicago and Milwaukee. Even with the freight handicap to the seaboard, the milk belt of the middle west is able to compete with the east. The release of the embargo on shipments to all points except Europe shows, however, the necessity of America will soon be under to establish a trade that will consume the enormous increase in this product that has been developed within the last few years. It is improbable that Europe will continuously take large quantities.

**Cheese.** The export of cheese depends wholly upon the price. With increased shipping facilities, England can now secure large quantities of cheese from her own dominions; and at much lower prices than those now paid in America. However, the great prosperity of the South by virtue of war prices for cotton has stimulated the consumption of cheese. The high price of meats has also led to an increased use of this high protein food as a substitute. Over 41,000,000 pounds more of Cheddar cheese were consumed in the United States the first half of 1918 than during the same period of 1917. With a marked reduction in storage stocks this fall and with this home demand, the question of continued exports is not as vital as is the condensed milk situation, but great opportunities exist for Wisconsin to keep her main dairy product prominently to the fore. No other state begins to compare with Wisconsin in cheese production. In 1917 she produced nearly two-thirds of all the cheddar and more than 70 per cent of all the Swiss cheese made in America.

**Butter.** During this era of high prices butter has been relatively lower than any other form of dairy products. However, since the government commanded so large a part of storage stocks, the advance in price has put butter more nearly on a par with other dairy products. There is such a world shortage of fats, and especially butter fat, that it seems likely that prices will not go back to former levels, even though production will doubtless be stimulated this coming season. However, it does not appear likely that American butter, will be much in demand in Europe if a cheaper product can be secured from any other source. The margarines will doubtless be much used where the question of cost is foremost. The increased production of butter in the United States amounted to only 16,500,000 pounds this last year (closing August 31) but even at the materially higher price now prevailing, fine quality of product is scarce. No doubt the use of nut margarines will increase if butter remains at present prices as it has this past year, but animal oleo is apparently not being used in increasing amount even though the margin in price between it and butter is the widest ever known.

Food products must bear some relation to the costs of production in the long run, but, after all, they have to be sold in the market on the basis of what the purchaser will pay for them. In this respect butter suffers more than other dairy products like cheese or condensed milk, as the substitutes compete with the genuine article. A strong market exists for butter even at present prices, but with the decline that will probably ensue when the next crop comes on the market, it is imperative that quality should be maintained as demand for high quality is always insistent.

Dairying is the line in which the Wisconsin farmer is already the most proficient. Based on the fundamental principle that it is generally wise to continue to do the thing which experience has shown to be the best adapted to a section, the Wisconsin farmer in most parts of the state cannot go far wrong if he keeps dairying and related live stock production, especially swine, in the foreground. The reputation which this type of agriculture has brought the state makes it doubly desirable that we should continue to "carry on". Dairying and live stock bridged is over the decline of wheat farming in the seventies, and since they fit in with the program of permanent agricultural development, it is no time to change now.

### MAKE OUR FARMING MORE EFFICIENT

In readjusting our agriculture to after-the-war conditions, attention should however not only be given to what is grown but more particularly to how it is grown. The war has taught us that we can save as well as produce. Better seed will produce more and stronger plants; better culture will ripen crops more rapidly and increase yields. It is easier to prevent losses from disease in our fields and flocks than it is to labor to grow more feed to grow more stock. A dose of serum will prevent hog cholera which has long taken its toll of millions. Seed disinfection and sprays, intelligently applied, save the crop from blight and bugs.

The high wage scale which now obtains requires the best possible utilization of labor. This means a wider use of labor-saving machinery, a more intelligent use of fertilizers. If liming and inoculation increase the yield of legumes on our acid soils (which cover nearly one-half of our state), then we might better spend the time and money necessary to secure this result than to cultivate more acres. Better farming will mean better business, and with better business will come better living which, after all, is the highest aim which can be sought.