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# Colorado Cooperative Crop Reporting Service

*(State and Federal)*

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## NEW SERVICE ORGANIZED

The Colorado Cooperative Crop Reporting Service, which has just been organized, is authorized under the Agricultural Statistics Act, passed by the Twenty-Second General Assembly and approved March 24, 1919. In conformity with the provisions of this act the Colorado State Board of Immigration has entered into an agreement with the Bureau of Crop Estimates of the United States Department of Agriculture covering the collection, compilation and publication of data regarding crop acreages, conditions and yields, for the state as a whole and by counties, and certain other data relating to agriculture.

This is the first bulletin issued under the agreement. Subsequent bulletins will be issued monthly, or oftener if there is occasion for more frequent issues. The U. S. Bureau of Crop Estimates will continue to compile and publish its crop reports for Colorado in connection with the reports from other states as heretofore, but the bulletins issued under the cooperative agreement will be devoted chiefly to Colorado and will contain much valuable information regarding crops and livestock not heretofore available in the general reports. Special Colorado reports heretofore compiled and distributed by the Colorado field agent of the Bureau of Crop Estimates will henceforth be included in the bulletins of the Colorado Cooperative Crop Reporting Service.

It is the purpose of this service to supply accurate and timely information regarding crops and livestock for each county in the state. The success of the service will depend largely upon the continued effective cooperation of the volunteer crop reporters who have made possible the comprehensive reports of the Bureau of Crop Estimates in the past.

One of the most important sections of the Agricultural Statistics Act above referred to is that which provides for the collection by county assessors of data on the acreage devoted to the principal crops in the respective counties each year. This data will make possible the publication by counties of reports on acreage, condition and yields of all crops. Such data has not been available in the past except once each ten years, when compiled by the Census Bureau.

Blanks for collecting the required information have been placed in the hands of county assessors this year and in every county in the state assessors and their deputies are at present engaged in gathering this data as they make the annual property assessment. Reports from all sections of the state show keen interest in the work, and indications point to the preparation of exceptionally complete reports by the various counties. This is the first time the collection of such statistics by county assessors has been attempted in all the counties in the state. Since the law providing for this work was not finally passed until late in March, the time given to prepare for collection of the data this year was very short, as county assessors begin their annual assessment work on April 1, and the agricultural schedules are filled out at the same time as the property assessment schedules. In view of these facts, the results being obtained in the various counties generally are regarded as very satisfactory.

Later in the season the cooperative service will publish in one of its bulletins these acreage figures by counties. Still later, when final estimates on yields per acre have been received and compiled, figures will be published giving the total yields of all crops by counties, which has never before been possible except for census years.

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## **WINTER WHEAT**

Colorado has everything in her favor at the present time for making a record production of winter wheat, according to estimates just announced by the Bureau of Crop Estimates through the Colorado Cooperative Crop Reporting Service. The acreage planted last fall was the largest in the history of the state, and there was but little loss during the winter from high winds or from freezing. The present high condition of the crop, 100 per cent of normal, indicates a possible yield of 14,500,000 bushels. Such a production would exceed the maximum output of spring and winter wheat combined for this state. With present excellent soil condition and future favorable weather the production might even exceed this figure. The condition of this crop a year ago was 86 per cent and the approximate ten-year average is 92 per cent. In Colorado winter wheat entered the winter in high condition, which condition has, contrary to the usual experience for this state, improved throughout the winter and up to the present time. With the abundant moisture that has prevailed up to this time the crop is making rapid and exceptionally fine progress. Practically the only unfavorable reports come from sections in which there is a little sandy land, where small areas were damaged somewhat by wind. Present conditions indicate that there will be very little if any abandonment. The condition of winter wheat for the United States is 99.8 per cent, as compared with 78.6 per cent a year ago and 82.3 per cent the approximate ten-year average. This is, for the country at large, an abnormally high condition, applied to a record acreage. The indicated production at this time is 837,000,000 bushels, compared with 558,449,000 bushels for 1918 and 685,000,000 bushels for 1914, the record crop to date.

## **WINTER RYE**

The outlook for the winter rye crop is also very promising, the same factors which have operated so favorably on winter wheat having, of course, affected the rye crop in the same way. Condition for this crop

for Colorado is 100 per cent of normal, compared with 87 per cent for last year and 90 per cent for the ten-year average. For the United States the condition of winter rye is 96.6 per cent of normal, compared with 85.8 per cent for last year and 88.6 per cent for the ten-year average.

### **GENERAL WEATHER CONDITIONS**

Farmers quite generally are jubilant over weather conditions in most of the state, and especially in that district lying east of the mountains. The moisture has been ample to bring crops to date in good shape and to put the ground in fine condition for farm work, except that in the southwest, northwest and southeast recent storms have delayed farm work a little later than usual.

Early in April storms were quite general in the eastern part of the state, and the snowfall was especially heavy in the southeast. Spring plowing was further delayed as a result, but with the return of clearing weather all spring work has been resumed with exceptional vigor.

Irrigation reservoirs have generally been filled as full as desired at this season of the year, and reports are to the effect that there will undoubtedly be ample opportunity to fill them to capacity, so that irrigation systems depending on storage water apparently will be well supplied for the season. The ground was generally frozen hard in the higher altitudes before the first snows of the winter fell, so that the melting snows will run off earlier than usual, indicating a possible slight shortage of late irrigation water where direct stream flow is relied upon.

### **FRUIT**

Cold or cool weather has prevailed throughout the state during most of March and the first two weeks in April. There have been no warm periods of any considerable length, such as frequently occur previous to this time, causing fruit buds to swell prematurely. As a result buds are not advanced further than is desirable for this season, and the danger of loss from late frosts is comparatively slight. In the principal fruit growing district the growers are well pleased with the outlook for this year's crop.

### **BEANS**

There are a good many beans (pinto variety) of the 1918 crop yet to be marketed and prices have declined until they are now very unsatisfactory to growers. As a result the acreage devoted to this variety of beans this year will be considerably less than for the past two years. Reports from the sections where pinto beans have been grown most extensively indicate that the decrease in acreage devoted to the crop will be quite marked.

### **SUGAR BEETS**

The price agreed upon for sugar beets this year—\$10 per ton flat—seems to be generally satisfactory to farmers, and the result will perhaps be the largest acreage planted to this crop in the history of the state. The most marked increases will be in the Northern Colorado district.

### **LIVESTOCK**

Livestock is generally in good condition upon the ranges except in the southeast, south and southwest, where there have been excessive snows and where feed has become very scarce. Special reduced railroad rates have been granted for moving hay into the San Luis Valley and the

San Juan districts, but the price is very high, ranging up to \$40 a ton. The extent of the losses of stock will depend upon weather conditions from now until grass upon the ranges is available. With ample moisture in practically all sections of the state, spring pastures apparently will be very good, but somewhat late in most districts.

### **BREEDING SOWS**

The estimated number of breeding sows in the state at this time is 105 per cent compared with a year ago. The number of mature hogs assessed in the state April 1, 1918, was 194,576, compared with 165,329 assessed the previous year. The total number of all hogs in the state, as estimated by the Bureau of Crop Estimates on January 1, 1919, was 406,000, compared with 387,000 for January 1, 1918. While some of the larger herds have been disposed of, more farmers are placing a few breeding stock on their ranches in most counties, so that the aggregate number, according to reports received by the Colorado field agent of the Bureau of Crop Estimates, shows an increase over last year as indicated above. In some sections, owing to shortage of feed, a larger percentage has been held back from market than usual at this time. The number of breeding sows in the United States is 100.3 per cent compared with last year.

### **FARM LABOR SUPPLY**

Indications are that the supply of farm labor is far better than it was at this time last year, but is still somewhat below normal. The different districts of the state are quite consistent in indicating that the supply is from 6 to 10 per cent better than that of last year, but is still from 6 to 10 per cent below normal. Wages still are high, though apparently not quite so high as a year ago. Farmers in some sections have expressed discouragement in regard to continued high prices for farm labor, and comments are to the effect that some ground will lie fallow this year because of unwillingness on the part of owners or renters to risk employing the labor necessary to farm it. Since the prices of nearly all farm products remain high, the price of labor apparently will have but slight effect upon the acreage planted this spring. Generally speaking, there is no unusual farm labor demand in the state at this time. The present requirements compared with last year appear to be about 99 per cent, while the present requirements compared with normal seem to be a little above, possibly reaching 103 per cent.

### **ESTIMATED NORMAL YIELDS.**

About the first of March a special schedule was mailed to all the regular crop reporters of the Bureau of Crop Estimates in the state of Colorado, asking questions relating to what was considered the normal yield per acre for all the principal crops grown in the state separately for dry and irrigated lands. It is the purpose of the crop reporting service for the state to publish the results of this inquiry as soon as the figures can be compiled. In general it may be stated that for Winter Wheat the estimate of what is considered a normal yield for dry land ranges between 12 and 17 bushels per acre in the most important wheat producing counties of the state. Corresponding with this the estimated normal for irrigated Winter Wheat ranged a few points above and below 34 bushels per acre for the most important and extensively irrigated counties. Detailed figures by counties will be published as soon as available.