

# THE *Poultry and Egg* SITUATION

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

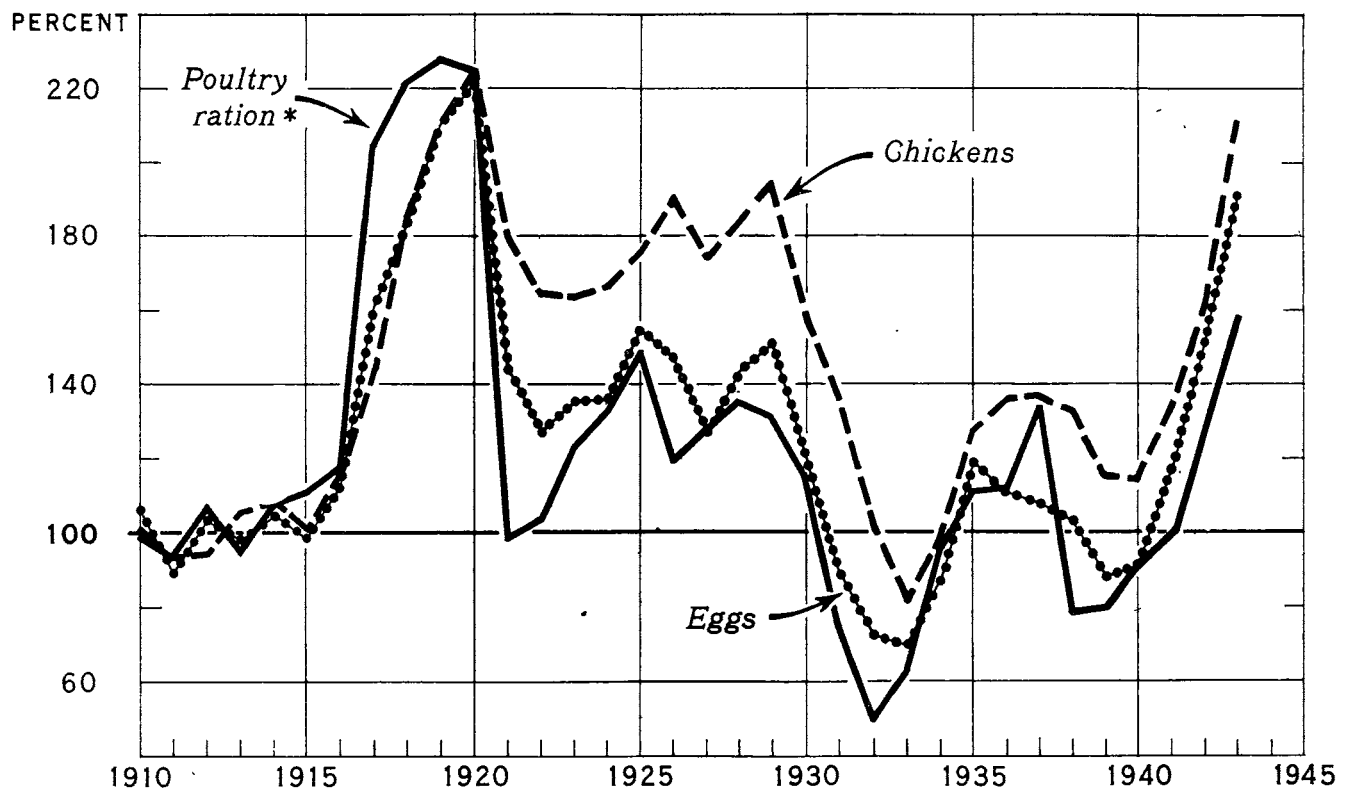
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JANUARY 1944

## PRICES RECEIVED BY FARMERS FOR CHICKENS AND FOR EGGS, AND COST OF POULTRY RATION, UNITED STATES, 1910-43

INDEX NUMBERS (1910-14=100)



\* BASED ON PRICES OF CORN, OATS, BARLEY, WHEAT, BRAN, AND TANKAGE

DATA FOR 1944 ARE ESTIMATES FOR MID-JAN. WITH THE EGG PRICE ADJUSTED FOR SEASONAL VARIATION

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NEG. 39541 BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

Because of large reserve stocks of feed concentrates and ceilings on prices of many feed items, feed prices increased less than prices for chickens and eggs from 1940 well into 1943. This was in sharp contrast to movements in these prices during World War I. In the last several months, however, owing to increasing numbers of livestock and declining feed reserves, feed prices have increased steadily. Poultry product-feed price relationships are likely to average less favorable to farmers in 1944 than they did in 1943.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

I T E M	UNIT	NOVEMBER AVERAGE		1942		1943		PCT OF YEAR EARLIER
		PERIOD	AVERAGE	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	
Layers on farms, number	Million	1932-41	325.7	378.6	410.3	402.4	381.8	105
Net disappearance <sup>1</sup>	Index no.	1932-41	100.0	97.4	98.7	99.1	99.8	101
Number of eggs laid per hen	Number	1932-41	5.72	6.86	7.40	6.75	7.49	101
Total farm production of eggs	Mil. doz.	1932-41	155.6	216.3	253.2	225.6	269.3	106
Stocks, eggs, U. S.:								
Shell	1,000 case	1933-42	598	1,170	273	1,780	667	244
Frozen	1,000 case	1933-42	1,921	3,369	2,212	4,597	2,712	123
Total	1,000 case	1933-42	2,519	4,539	2,485	6,377	3,379	136
Apparent egg disappearance, civilian:								
Storage shell eggs	Mil. doz.	1932-41	41.9	32.9	15	41.6	15.8	98
Frozen eggs	Mil. doz.	1932-41	12.2	21.4	19.7	26.1	15.6	79
Total shell egg equivalent	Mil. doz.	1932-41	220.2	256.1	274.3	271.7	288.2	105
Dried egg production	Mil. lb.	--	--	19.5	13.1	22.1	21.5	164
Commercial hatchery operations:								
Eggs set	Million	--	--	41.2	47.1	36.3	34.5	73
Chicks hatched	Million	--	--	25.4	29.3	23.5	21.6	74
Receipts:								
Poultry, dressed, four markets	Mil. lb.	1932-41	67.7	73.5	64.5	66.9	59.4	92
Poultry, live, Chicago <sup>3</sup>	Car	1937-41	418	424	361	515	342	95
Poultry, live, New York <sup>3</sup>	Car	1937-41	772	744	777	863	872	112
Poultry, live, Midwest, per plant	1,000 lb.	1932-41	21.70	36.04	21.68	46.55	25.26	117
Fowl (hens), live, Midwest, per plant	1,000 lb.	1932-41	10.65	16.71	12.07	22.62	14.49	120
Young stock, live, Midwest, per plant	1,000 lb.	1932-41	10.79	18.90	9.26	23.44	10.32	111
Stocks, poultry:								
Broilers	Mil. lb.	1933-42	14.4	10.5	9.2	13.6	14.2	154
Fryers	Mil. lb.	1933-42	14.7	17.3	15.8	20.2	20.7	131
Roasters	Mil. lb.	1933-42	35.1	45.0	43.6	38.8	42.0	96
Fowls (hens)	Mil. lb.	1933-42	26.7	50.5	46.3	60.6	68.4	143
Turkeys	Mil. lb.	1933-42	31.2	26.9	35.6	24.8	36.6	103
Ducks	Mil. lb.	1933-42	5.3	5.9	3.4	3.2	2.4	71
Miscellaneous and unclassified	Mil. lb.	1933-42	24.5	37.0	34.0	36.7	41.5	122
Total poultry	Mil. lb.	1933-42	151.9	193.3	187.9	197.9	225.8	120
Prices received by farmers:								
Eggs, per dozen	Cent	1932-41	27.1	38.9	39.7	47.1	44.9	113
Eggs, parity price per dozen	Cent	1932-41	36.5	47.0	41.2	49.5	44.0	107
Eggs, percentage of parity	Percent	1932-41	74	83	96	95	102	
Chickens, per pound	Cent	1932-41	12.9	19.6	20.5	24.3	24.4	119
Chickens, parity price per pound	Cent	1932-41	14.7	17.7	17.8	19.0	19.2	108
Chickens, percentage of parity	Percent	1932-41	87	111	115	128	127	
Turkeys, per pound	Cent	1937-41	17.8	27.0	29.7	32.7	33.3	112
Turkeys, parity price per pound	Cent	1937-41	18.9	22.3	22.5	24.0	24.2	108
Turkeys, percentage of parity	Percent	1937-41	94	121	132	136	138	
All farm commodities (1910-14 = 100)	Index no.	1932-41	102	169	178	192	197	111
Chickens and eggs (1910-14 = 100)	Index no.	1932-41	122	178	183	217	210	115
Wholesale prices, Chicago:								
Eggs, standards, per dozen <sup>4</sup>	Cent	1932-41	25.9	40.0	40.0	44.2	40.7	102
Live heavy hens, per pound	Cent	1937-41	17.3	21.8	23.5	22.5	23.6	100
Live broilers, per pound	Cent	1937-41	18.9	28.0	27.7	26.2	26.9	97
Live roasters, light, per pound	Cent	1937-41	18.3	26.5	28.0	26.2	26.9	96
Live roasters, heavy, per pound	Cent	1937-41	18.1	22.5	26.5	26.2	26.9	102
Wholesale prices, New York:								
Dressed broilers, 25-30 pounds per dozen, per pound	Cent	1932-41	22.5	30.0	33.5	37.5	37.5	112
Dressed roasters, 48-54 pounds per dozen, per pound	Cent	1932-41	20.9	30.9	34.0	37.5	37.5	110
Dressed fowls, 48-54 pounds per dozen, per pound	Cent	1932-41	19.5	29.3	30.8	33.5	33.5	109
Cash farm income:								
Total marketings	Mil. dol.	1937-41	787	1,764	1,517	2,012	--	114
Poultry and eggs	Mil. dol.	1937-41	88	179	171	231	--	129
Price ratios:								
Chicago, broiler-feed	Lb. feed	1937-41	15.3	16.6	14.9	12.1	12.1	81
Chicago, light roaster-feed	Lb. feed	1937-41	14.9	15.7	15.1	12.1	12.1	80
Farm, egg-feed	Lb. feed	1932-41	26.2	24.2	23.5	22.0	20.1	86
Farm, chicken-feed	Lb. feed	1932-41	12.0	12.2	12.1	11.4	10.9	90
Farm, turkey-feed	Lb. feed	1937-41	15.7	16.8	17.6	15.3	14.9	85
Farm, egg-laying mash	Lb. feed	--	--	13.3	13.5	13.5	12.7	94
Laying mash, cost per cwt.	Dollar	--	--	2.92	2.95	3.50	3.54	120
Feed cost per cwt., farm poultry ration	Dollar	1932-41	1.17	1.61	1.69	2.14	2.28	132
Wholesale food prices (1935-39 = 100)	Index no.	1932-41	95.6	130.8	131.9	133.8	133.5	101
Retail food prices (1935-39 = 100)	Index no.	1932-41	97.4	131.1	132.7	137.3	137.1	103
Prices paid by farmers including interest and taxes (1910-14 = 100)	Index no.	1932-41	129	155	156	167	168	108
Retail prices (BLS):								
Roasters, dressed, per pound	Cent	1932-41	28.6	42.7	43.1	44.0	44.7	104
Eggs, strictly fresh, per dozen	Cent	1932-41	40.5	59.0	59.8	67.4	63.9	108
Nonagricultural employees' compensation (1935-39 = 100)	Index no.	1932-41	104.9	212.1	217.9	250.9	--	118

<sup>1</sup>See December 1943 Poultry and Egg Situation for definition of, and method of computing, "net disappearance."

<sup>2</sup>End of month. Frozen eggs converted to case equivalent.

<sup>3</sup>Car equivalent of receipts by freight, truck, and express.

<sup>4</sup>Fresh firsts December 1932-41 average, November, December 1942; standards, 43 pounds, November, December 1943.

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THE POULTRY AND EGG SITUATION

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Summary.

The prospective demand for eggs for both civilian and war purposes in 1944 is stronger than the demand that prevailed during 1943. Hence, farmers probably will be able to sell increased quantities of eggs this year at approximately the same average prices as they received in 1943. Currently higher prices for feed will result this coming spring in an egg-feed price ratio lower than the record ratio of a year earlier but somewhat above average for the spring of the year. With larger laying flocks consisting of a record high proportion of pullets and stock of improved laying qualities generally, egg production in the first half of 1944 probably will be somewhat larger than in the corresponding period last year. Depending largely upon the volume of harvest of this year's feed crops, egg production in the second half of 1944 may decline more than seasonally. Total egg production in 1944 is likely to be larger than a year earlier by from 2 to 4 percent and per capita civilian egg consumption is very likely to reach a new record high level.

The greater than usual increase in egg marketings in December reflected the effects on production of the generally mild weather. Egg prices, as a result, declined more sharply and earlier than usual. The decline came about 3 weeks earlier this season than last and was only moderately larger than the drop in the first half of January 1943. On January 21, 1944 the average of wholesale prices was considerably below ceilings but was nearly equal to prices of a year earlier despite continued much larger marketings.

The demand for baby chicks for commercial broilers has fallen off considerably in the past 3 months, reflecting the less favorable broiler-feed price relationship. The number of chickens raised for flock replacement in

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1944, like the number of broilers, probably will be smaller than last year. Marketings of fowl will be heavier, however, and the total supply of chicken is likely to be about the same as the slaughter in 1943 -- 3,800 million pounds, dressed weight. Some indications point to an increased supply of turkey hatching eggs for 1944. The slaughter of turkey in 1944 is tentatively estimated at 480 million pounds, the same as the preliminary estimate for 1943.

Prices of practically all poultry items have been firm at ceilings for the past month. Current marketings of chickens and fowl have declined sharply from the seasonal peak in November 1943, but are running larger than a year ago. Storage stocks of poultry reached an all-time peak on January 1, 1944. Sales of storage poultry have been restricted since the end of December, in order to help the Armed forces procure 70 million pounds of frozen poultry.

-- January 21, 1944

#### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

##### Number of Layers has Passed Seasonal Peak

Marketings of mature hens were unusually heavy during the fourth quarter of 1943. The preliminary estimate of the number of female birds 1 year old or older on farms January 1, 1944 is 151 million head, or 11 percent less than the record number a year earlier. From October 1 to December 31, 1943, the number of old hens decreased 33 percent, compared with a decrease of 18 percent in the corresponding months of 1942 and the 10-year average decrease of 20 percent. The number of pullets raised in 1943 was the largest on record. The number of potential layers on farms January 1, 1944 -- hens and pullets of laying age plus pullets not of laying age -- has been tentatively estimated at 508 million head, 4 percent larger than the previous record reached on January 1, 1943. All of the above data pertaining to January 1, 1944, of course, are preliminary. These preliminary estimates are based on reports from crop correspondents. The final estimates will be determined on the basis of more complete data obtained in the year-end survey made through Rural Mail Carriers and will be published in mid-February. Based on the experience of the past few years the final estimate may be slightly larger than the 4 percent increase indicated on January 1 by crop correspondents.

The percentage increase in numbers of layers from November to December 1943 as from October to November, was much smaller than in the corresponding period of 1942, though above the 1932-41 average for that period. During December the average number of layers on farms in the United States, at 431 million head, was 5 percent larger than in December 1942. The number on farms in December 1943 was larger than a year earlier in all except seven States. By regions the percentage increases in numbers of layers over December 1943 were as follows: North Atlantic, 2.9 percent; East North Central, 1.8 percent; West North Central, 7.9 percent; South Atlantic, 4.5 percent; South Central, 4.3 percent; and Western, 9.2 percent. The data for the late months of 1943 and for January 1, 1944 are subject to revision.

#### Egg Production Increasing More Than Seasonally

The number of eggs produced per layer in the United States apparently increased much more than seasonally during December 1943. The average number of eggs produced per bird during the month was 1 percent larger than in December 1942 for the Nation as a whole, 1 percent lower in the North Atlantic States, 2 percent lower in the Southern States, 3 percent higher in the North Central States, and 4 percent higher in the Western States. The rate of output per bird has apparently increased much more than usual since mid-December, particularly in the North Central States where the weather has been exceptionally mild.

Total egg production in the United States during December 1943 was 6 percent larger than a year earlier, with apparent relatively greater increases shown for the second half of that month than for the first half. Receipts of eggs at all primary markets for which data are available increased sharply in late December and the first half of January, with gains for each week over a year earlier ranging from 11 percent to as much as 40 percent. Receipts at terminal markets also increased sharply. Civilian supplies of eggs this winter, through the third week in January 1944, apparently were the largest on record for the period.

#### Increases in Egg Receipts Followed by Abrupt Price Declines

Ceiling prices for eggs began the seasonal decline during November 1943 as scheduled by Office of Price Administration to adjust price levels to the upswing in production. During most of November the pressure on ceiling prices of top-grade eggs tended to increase and actual prices of lower-quality eggs were below ceilings by lesser amounts than they had been in the previous several weeks. Beginning in the latter part of November and continuing into December, market supplies of eggs increased moderately and actual prices of most grades declined slightly more rapidly than the ceiling prices. On December 15, prices of top-grade eggs were the only quotations at wholesale still at ceiling levels. Retail prices, however, were still at or close to ceiling levels for most grades in the larger metropolitan areas.

In the third week of December the volume of eggs moving from the farm to wholesale increased sharply, proportionately more than the movement through retail channels. As a result, prices declined sharply at wholesale and at earlier stages of distribution. Prices at retail were fairly well maintained until existing stocks -- which had been purchased at materially higher prices than the prevailing wholesale and jobbing quotations -- were sold. Hence, there was a seasonally large accumulation of shell eggs at the wholesale stage of distribution in late December and early January, because of a sharp increase in farm production and marketings.

From December 16 to 22 wholesale prices of eggs declined 4 to 7 cents per dozen at Chicago. The smallest declines were in prices of better grades of eggs. In the remainder of December, prices at Chicago were steady, but in the first half of January prices declined 2 to 3 cents more per dozen. At New York, prices declined 3 to 10 cents per dozen from December 16 to 22 and continued to weaken during the rest of that month. In the first half of January prices of lower grades at New York were steady, but prices of top grades declined as much as 3 cents per dozen. On January 21 wholesale prices of eggs at Chicago were 4 to 7-1/2 cents per dozen lower than in mid-December but were about the same as prices a year earlier. At New York wholesale prices on January 21 were below the prices of December 15 by 5 to 15 cents per dozen and averaged slightly lower than a year earlier. Prices of eggs in West Coast cities did not begin to weaken until about the beginning of January and have declined slightly less than at New York.

Egg prices, of course, always decline between November and late winter or early spring. The drop this season came early and was unusually sharp, reflecting the effects of mild temperatures on production. Supplies of eggs became large relative to current civilian consumption, before either the 1944 egg-storing or egg-drying operations could be started. Three developments in late December and in January contributed to stabilizing egg prices at slightly above the equivalent wholesale support levels. These developments were: (1) The lowering of retail prices in line with wholesale levels, thus encouraging increased consumption, (2) the purchase by the War Food Administration of dried egg for delivery in February, and (3) the purchase of shell eggs in Eastern markets by the WFA for price support purposes. In the second week of January wholesale prices at New York strengthened slightly, especially on lower grades.

In mid-January most Office of Price Administration regional offices had suspended community ceilings for eggs and ordered that each retail selling price be computed on the basis of specified mark-ups over costs as provided originally in MPR 422 and MPR 423. The unusually sharp and early decline in egg prices caused particularly diverse relationships between wholesale prices in terminal markets and prices to producers, especially in the North Central States. By mid-January, however, the stabilizing effects were becoming fairly widespread and prices received by producers apparently were being brought back into the normal relationships with terminal market prices.

Net Withdrawals of Shell Eggs  
Continued into January

Underlying strength in the egg market was indicated by some market reports of a renewed demand for storage shell eggs. Net withdrawals of shell

eggs, of course, were very small in early January. A slight net into-storage movement of shell eggs occurred in the third week of January. In 1943 the into-storage movement of shell eggs also began in the third week of January. The net withdrawal of shell eggs in December was much larger than a year earlier but somewhat below average. Stocks on January 1 were about equal to the 1932-41 average for that date.

In the second half of 1943 about 3.3 million cases of storage shell eggs were used in the production of dried eggs. Net withdrawals in that period -- for civilian use, for military use, and for drying -- totaled 8.3 million cases. In the second 6 months of 1942 net withdrawals of shell eggs totaled 7.7 million cases, of which about 2.9 million cases were used for drying.

Stocks of frozen eggs declined from the seasonal peak on August 1, 1943 of the equivalent of 9.4 million cases to 2.7 million cases on January 1, 1944. In that 5-month period the equivalent of about 4.2 million cases was used for drying. The stocks on January 1, 1944 were the second largest on record for that date, exceeded only on January 1, 1938. The shell-egg equivalent of all eggs in storage on January 1, 1944 was 36 percent larger than a year earlier and the third largest on record for that date.

#### Dried Egg Output Decreased in December

In line with the delivery schedule of dried egg to the War Food Administration, egg drying operations increased contraseasonally in the second half of 1943. Output in December totaled 21.5 million pounds, compared with 22.1 million pounds in November and 13.1 million pounds in December 1942. The preliminary estimate of dried egg production in 1943 is 262 million pounds, compared with 236 million pounds in 1942, 45 million pounds in 1941, and a pre-war annual average of about 5 million pounds. Dried egg production continued at a relatively high rate in January 1944 to fill the balance of contracts made in 1943, and to fill new contracts made for delivery in February 1944. Through the third week of January the War Food Administration had purchased about 15 million pounds of dried whole egg for delivery in February 1944.

#### Receipts of Poultry have Declined Sharply

Sales by farmers of both young stock and mature hens have apparently continued at record levels into January 1944. In the first 3 weeks of January, however, weekly receipts of fowl at primary markets were averaging about 51 percent of receipts in November 1943, while receipts of young stock were about 16 percent of the November volume. At Midwest primary markets, receipts of fowls in December 1943 averaged 14,486 pounds weekly, per plant, compared with an all-time peak of 22,624 pounds in November.

Relatively heavy culling of potential layers apparently was practiced in all sections of the Nation in November and December. Numbers of layers increased less than a year earlier in all geographic divisions, and in two regions, South Atlantic, and South Central the increase was proportionately smaller than the 10-year average increase from October to December.

#### Prices of Poultry Firm at Ceilings

In mid-December wholesale prices of some live and dressed poultry were barely steady at ceiling prices. Because of declining receipts after mid-December, however, prices of most classifications increased to ceiling levels. Meanwhile, an increasing proportion of live poultry receipts at New York City were going directly to final live poultry receivers. The average price received by farmers for chickens in mid-December 1943 was 24.4 cents per pound, compared with 24.3 cents in November and 20.5 cents in December 1942.

#### Storage Stocks of Poultry Reached Record High on January 1

An into-storage movement of poultry began in June 1943 and continued at record average levels until mid-December. Stocks increased from a near record low on June 1, 1943, to the largest on record for any date by January 1, 1944. A slight net withdrawal of poultry occurred in the second half of December but in early January stocks increased, apparently because of FDO 91. FDO 91 was issued on December 29, 1943, "freezing" storage stocks of chickens until about 70 million pounds have been obtained for the military forces. This action has tended to strengthen the demand for fresh poultry, since sale of such stock is not restricted by the order.

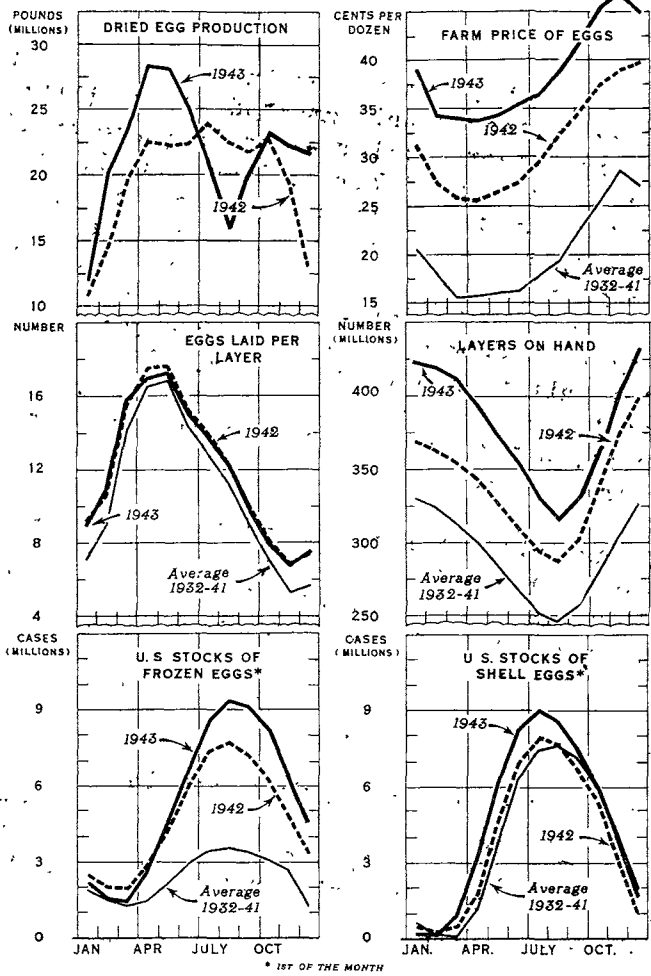
Stocks of all classes of poultry except ducks and roasters were larger than a year earlier. Larger holdings of fowl accounted for 22 million pounds of the 38 million pound increase in January 1, 1944 stocks compared with a year earlier.

#### OUTLOOK

BACKGROUND.-- The purchase of eggs and egg products for lend-lease account has contributed greatly to increased farm production of chickens and eggs. In shell egg equivalent, purchases of eggs and egg products in the last 3 years were as follows: 1941, 228 million dozens; 1942, 620 million dozens; and 1943, 724 million dozens. As percentages of total annual United States egg production these purchases were: 1941, 6 percent; 1942, 14 percent; and 1943, 15 percent. In addition to purchases for lend-lease, substantial Government purchases were made for the Armed forces. Per capita production of eggs, based on civilian and military population, has been as follows in recent years: 1935-39, 310 eggs; 1941, 345 eggs; 1942, 394 eggs; and 1943, 435 eggs. Per capita (civilian) consumption in those years, respectively, was: 300, 314, 316, and 345 eggs.



### THE EGG SITUATION

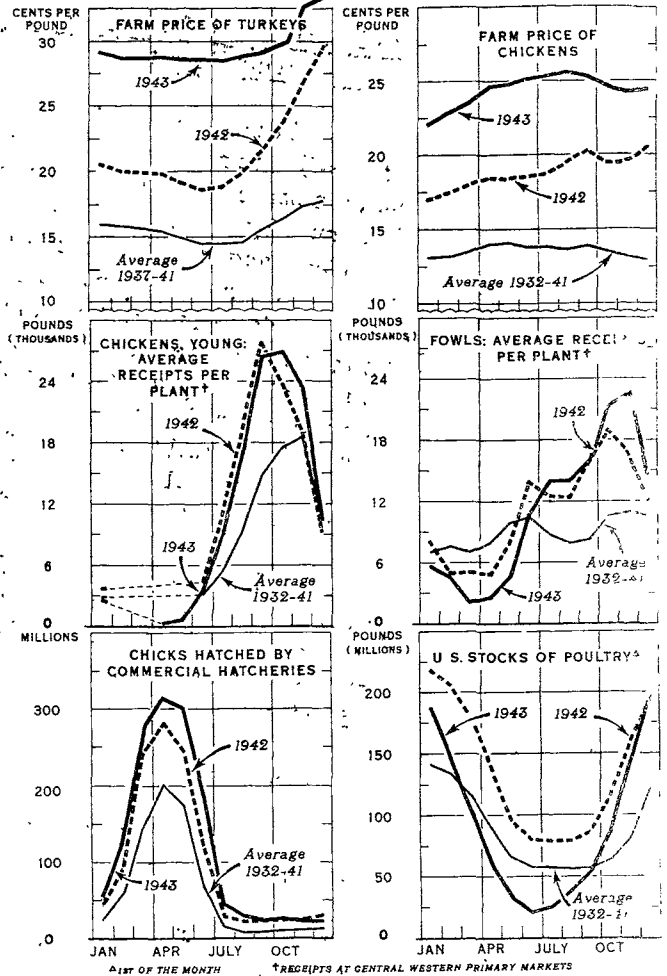


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FIGURE 1

### THE POULTRY SITUATION



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FIGURE 2

National Feed Supply Situation  
Becoming Tight

Total disappearance of corn, oats, and barley in the last quarter of 1943 (first quarter of 1943-44 feeding year) amounted to 48 million tons compared with 43 million tons a year earlier -- an increase of 11 percent. The supply of feed for the year beginning October 1, 1944 was slightly smaller and the number of livestock units on farms was considerably larger than a year earlier. It appears therefore that the rate of feeding per livestock unit in the first quarter of the 1943-44 year was moderately smaller than the record high rate maintained in 1942-43. The supply of corn, oats, and barley remaining on January 1, 1944 was equivalent to about one-fifth less per grain consuming animal unit than a year earlier. Disappearance per animal unit in the rest of the crop year may be smaller than a year earlier by only 10 to 15 percent, but this would result in a rather small carry-over at the end of the crop year.

The adjustment of ceiling prices for corn, and the set-aside and allocation program for high-protein feeds, seem to have improved the geographical distribution of available supplies. But the national feed supply situation is tight and may become still tighter in coming months. Of course, total requirements for concentrates will decrease seasonally when pastures become available. Moreover, indications point to a 16 percent decline from 1943 in the 1944 spring pig crop.

The average price paid by farmers for laying mash in mid-December was \$3.54 per 100 pounds, an increase of 20 percent over a year earlier. Prices received by farmers for eggs, however, were also considerably higher than a year earlier, so the egg-laying mash price ratio was less favorable than in December 1942 by only 6 percent.

Hatchery Production Declined  
Further in December

The demand for baby chicks for immediate delivery weakened steadily from mid-October to the end of December, and this resulted in a contra-seasonal decline in November and December. In December, 21.6 million chicks were hatched compared with 29.3 millions in December last year -- a decrease of 26 percent. The number of eggs set during December was 27 percent smaller than a year earlier. Production of baby chicks during the year 1943 totaled 1,427 million chicks, an increase of 19 percent over the previous record of 1,200 millions produced during 1942.

The less favorable relationship between feed prices and chicken prices and uncertainties concerning feed supplies have been largely responsible for the reduction in demand for baby chicks in recent months. In the late fall and early winter, commercially hatched baby chicks are used primarily to produce commercial broilers. The reduction in the December chick output in most broiler areas is in line with reductions needed if the 1944 output is to be held to the suggested goal levels. Broilers produced from chicks hatched in October, November, and December 1943 will be included in the 1944 data of broilers produced. In these months

the total United States output was 10 percent smaller than a year earlier. The October-December output in 1943 as percentages of 1942 production in the fourth quarter were as follows, by regions: New England, 79 percent; Middle Atlantic, 92 percent; East North Central, 80 percent; West North Central, 84 percent; South Atlantic, 105 percent; South Central, 86 percent; Mountain, 96 percent; and Pacific, 85 percent.

Less Favorable Egg-Feed Price Relationship  
in Prospect for Coming Hatching Season

Since early December, prices of most ingredients of mixed feeds have been under ceilings. However, because of the customary lag between changes in prices of ingredients and changes in average prices paid by farmers for the final product, average prices paid by poultrymen for poultry mash may increase slightly from mid-December levels. In the main hatching season this coming spring, prices of laying mash probably will be between 12 and 15 percent higher than they were in the spring of 1943. Hence, if egg prices should be about the same as a year earlier, as now appears likely, the egg-feed price ratio would be lower than the record high ratio a year earlier by the same percentage as the increase in feed prices, but somewhat above the 10-year average for that period. Uncertainties arising from the tight feed supply situation, together with less favorable price relationships, will tend to bring about a moderate reduction in the demand for baby chicks from the unprecedented demand that existed through most of 1943 -- both for flock replacement purposes and for commercial broilers. In the main hatching months for flock replacement, of course, the demand probably will be as strong as a year earlier. In contrast, the 1943 hatching season extended over a longer-than-usual period because of a continued strong demand.

Chicken Slaughter to be About as  
Large as in 1943

The reduced commercial hatchery output in the closing months of 1943 suggests that marketings of commercial broilers and fryers in the next few months will be smaller than a year earlier although probably about as large as in recent months. Farm marketings of fowl, culled from laying flocks, probably will be larger than a year earlier in much of 1944, with the greatest gains over 1943 likely at the close of the spring period of flush egg production. The degree of culling in the last 4 months of 1944 will be influenced primarily by the outcome of this year's feed crops, since the carry-over of feeds into 1944-45 will be smaller than in most recent years. For 1944 as a whole, however, it is likely that increased marketings of fowl will about offset decreased marketings of young chickens, and total slaughter of chicken will about equal the record of approximately 3,800 million pounds dressed weight established in 1943.

With increased requirements for chicken by the military, supplies for civilians will be smaller, and on a per capita basis may be about 7 percent below the all-time record supplies in 1943. Supplies of chicken for civilians will be at a seasonally low level in the period February through April, then will increase seasonally to the annual peak in the last quarter

of the year. Demand for chicken in 1944 will be fully as strong as in 1943 -- if not stronger. In the first 6 months of 1943, demand exceeded supply at ceiling prices by a sizable margin.

#### Turkey Production May Increase

Primarily because of limited supplies of hatching eggs, production of turkeys has been fairly stable during the war period. According to some indications, the relatively high prices for eggs and poults in 1943 have encouraged farmers to keep more breeder hens for 1944 egg production. Even though the feed supply and price situation is less favorable than last spring, farmers may raise more turkeys in 1944 than they raised in 1943. The slaughter supply of turkey for this year, however, has been tentatively estimated at the same level as the preliminary estimate for 1943, which is 480 million pounds, dressed weight. The estimate for 1944 can be more firmly established when data on number of breeder hens on hand January 1, 1944 and farmers' intentions to raise turkeys, become available in February.

#### Egg Production Likely to Reach New Record in 1944

The over-all demand for eggs in 1944 is likely to be stronger than it was in 1943. Civilian consumer incomes are larger and requirements for the military, for lend-lease and other war uses are greater than the total actual purchases for war uses in 1943. These considerations indicate that farmers probably will be able to sell somewhat larger quantities of eggs in 1944 than they sold in 1943 at approximately the same average prices.

A record number of potential layers is now on farms. Laying flocks are made up of a record large proportion of pullets, many of which are of improved quality compared with past years. The average monthly rate of production per layer in the United States probably will continue close to the level of 1943, and total egg production in the first half of 1944 probably will be somewhat larger than in the corresponding period of 1943. In the second half of 1944, production may fall below the record output in July-December 1943. The volume of production in the second 6 months of 1944, of course, will be greatly influenced by the outcome of the feed crops. At the present time it appears likely that 1944 egg production in the United States will be larger than 1943 production by from 2 to 4 percent. In terms of dozens the estimate has been tentatively placed at 5,100 millions compared with 4,949 million dozens in 1943, an increase of 3.1 percent.

With the indicated level of production, and deductions for anticipated war requirements, the per capita supply of eggs in 1944 would be 349 eggs compared with the preliminary estimate of 345 in 1943, an increase of 1 percent. However, since eggs are produced in many sections, and there are no restrictions on the quantities civilians may use, the per capita consumption may increase more than indicated above.

Tentative indications for 1944<sup>1</sup> of production and per capita consumption of eggs, chicken, and turkey are shown in the following table together with comparable data for recent years:<sup>2</sup>

Production and per capita consumption of chicken, turkey and eggs,  
United States, 1935-39 average, annual 1941-43,  
tentative indications for 1944

Item	Production				Per capita consumption <sup>1/</sup>			
	1935-39: average:	1942:	1943: 2/	1944: 3/	1935-39: average:	1942:	1943: 2/	1944: 3/
	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Lb.	Lb.	Lb.	Lb.
<u>Chickens, slaughter, dressed weight</u>								
Farm and commercial broilers	2,130	2,767	3,517	3,503				
Nonfarm chickens	195	223	283	297				
Total	2,325	2,990	3,800	3,800	18.0	21.8	28.4	26.4
<u>Turkeys, slaughter, dressed weight</u>								
	350	497	480	480	2.66	3.75	3.45	3.07
	Mil. doz.	Mil. doz.	Mil. doz.	Mil. doz.	Eggs	Eggs	Eggs	Eggs
<u>Eggs</u>								
Farm	3,032	4,025	4,499	4,636				
Nonfarm	333	403	450	464				
Total	3,335	4,428	4,949	5,100	300	316	345	349

<sup>1/</sup> Figures for war years apply to civilians population.

<sup>2/</sup> Preliminary, probably will be revised in March 1944.

<sup>3/</sup> Tentative indications.