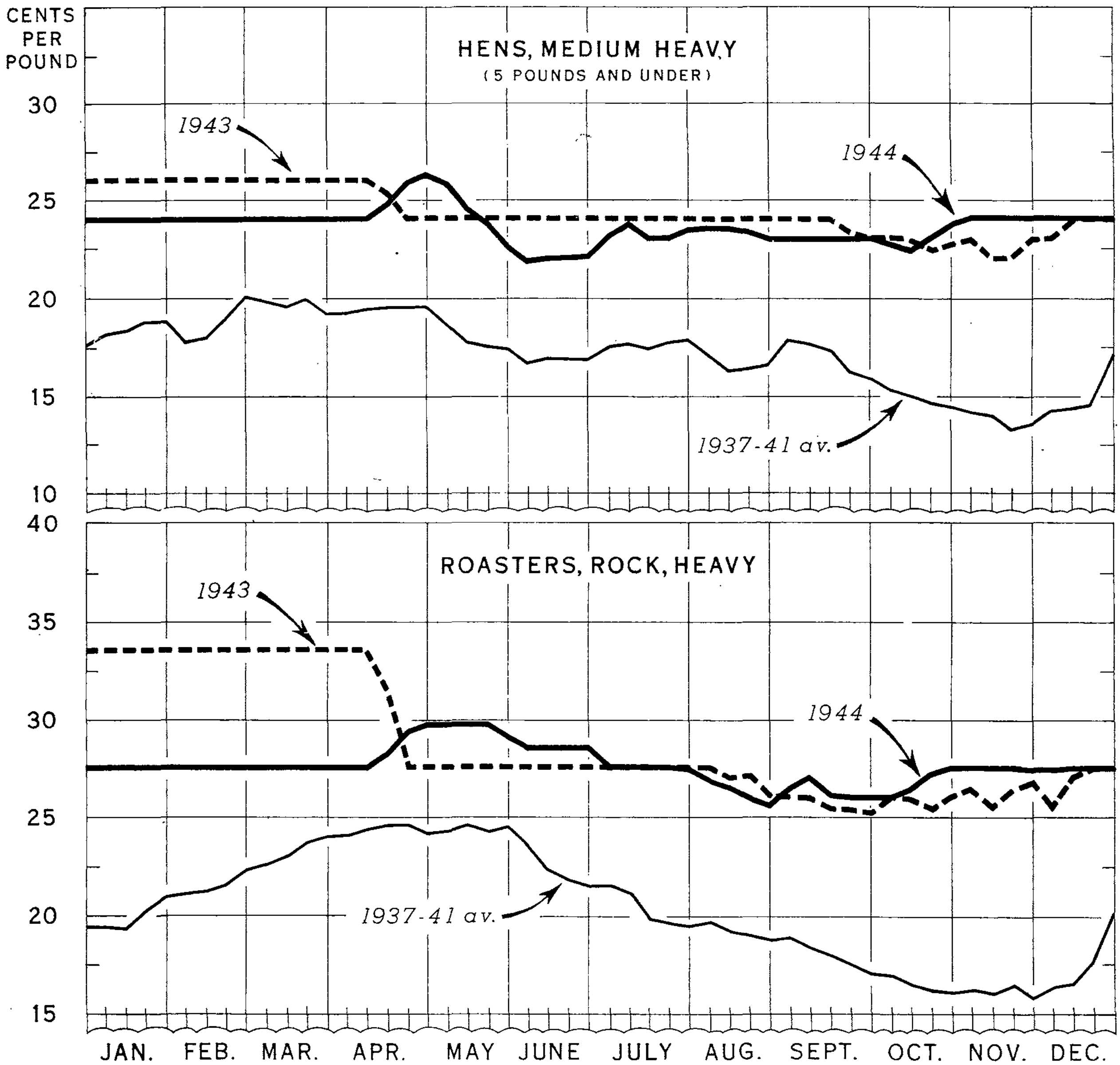
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

PES - 97 BAE JANUARY 1945

THE Poultry and Egg SITUATION

WHOLESALE PRICES OF LIVE POULTRY, SELECTED CLASSES, CHICAGO, BY WEEKS, 1937-41 AVERAGE, AND 1943-44



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Wholesale prices of live poultry during the early and late part of 1944 were at ceiling levels. During the summer months, however, prices were below ceilings reflecting the large supplies of meat at that time.

Poultry prices for 1945 will probably be at or near ceilings due to large army procurement and a decline in the over-all meat supply of about 8 percent.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

ITEM	UNIT	AVERAGE PERIOD	AVERAGE NOVEMBER	AVERAGE DECEMBER	1943 NOVEMBER	1943 DECEMBER	1944 NOVEMBER	1944 DECEMBER	CURRENT MONTH AS PERCENT OF YEAR EARLIER	CURRENT MONTH AS PERCENT OF AVERAGE
Layers on farms, number	*Million*	1933-42	311.1	333.3	404.3	435.7	404.0	418.9	96	126
Number of eggs laid per hen	*Number*	1933-42	5.57	6.05	6.74	7.49	7.42	8.09	108	134
Total farm production of eggs	*Mil. doz.*	1933-42	145.6	169.6	227.0	271.9	249.8	282.2	104	166
Stocks, eggs, U. S.:[1]										
Shell	*1,000 case*	1933-42	2,001	610	1,780	675	1,045	416	62	68
Frozen	*1,000 case*	1933-42	2,487	1,991	4,597	2,727	5,871	4,442	163	223
Total, shell and frozen	*1,000 case*	1933-42	4,488	2,600	6,377	3,402	6,916	4,858	143	187
Dried whole eggs	*Mil. lb.*	--	--	--	56.1	45.8	110.1	107.1	234	---
Apparent egg disappearance, civilian:										
Total shell egg equivalent	*Mil. doz.*	1933-42	226.3	231.9	286.8	306.7	302.3	314.7	103	136
Dried egg production	*Mil. lb.*	--	--	--	22.2	21.1	15.6	10.2	48	--
Commercial hatchery operations:										
Eggs set	*Million*	--	--	--	51.6	46.3	45.0	48.2	104	--
Chicks hatched	*Million*	1933-42	15.2	16.0	35.4	29.6	29.0	34.2	116	214
Receipts:										
Poultry, dressed, four markets	*Mil. lb.*	1933-42	72.6	66.9	66.9	59.4	57.2	54.8	92	82
Poultry, live, Chicago	*Mil. lb.*	1938-42	6.5	5.9	7.2	4.7	6.4	3.8	81	64
Poultry, live, New York	*Mil. lb.*	1938-42	11.5	12.1	13.8	14.0	11.9	2.3	16	19
Poultry, live, Midwest, per plant	*1,000 lb.*	1933-42	30.9	21.7	46.5	25.3	28.8	19.4	77	89
Fowl (hens), live, Midwest, per plant	*1,000 lb.*	1933-42	11.8	11.0	22.6	14.5	17.4	13.8	95	125
Young stock, live, Midwest, per plant	*1,000 lb.*	1933-42	18.5	10.4	23.4	10.3	11.0	5.2	50	50
Stocks, poultry:[1]										
Broilers	*Mil. lb.*	1933-42	14.1	14.2	13.6	14.2	8.9	7.4	52	52
Fryers	*Mil. lb.*	1933-42	13.3	14.9	20.2	20.7	16.6	15.4	74	103
Roasters	*Mil. lb.*	1933-42	28.2	35.7	38.8	42.0	36.4	32.7	78	92
Fowls (hens)	*Mil. lb.*	1933-42	25.8	30.0	60.6	68.7	89.8	88.4	129	295
Turkeys	*Mil. lb.*	1933-42	18.8	33.3	24.8	36.6	67.5	72.4	198	217
Ducks	*Mil. lb.*	1933-42	6.8	5.1	3.2	2.4	5.2	4.3	179	84
Miscellaneous and unclassified	*Mil. lb.*	1933-42	24.1	26.3	36.7	41.5	43.8	47.5	114	181
Total poultry	*Mil. lb.*	1933-42	131.2	169.6	197.9	226.2	268.1	268.2	119	168
Prices received by farmers:										
Eggs, per dozen	*Cent*	1933-42	29.9	28.3	47.1	44.9	43.4	44.5	99	157
Eggs, parity price per dozen[2]	*Cent*	1933-42	39.8	36.9	46.8	44.2	47.1	44.2	100	120
Eggs, percentage of parity	*Percent*	1933-42	75	76	101	102	92	101	99	133
Chickens, per pound	*Cent*	1933-42	14.1	14.0	24.3	24.4	24.0	24.1	99	172
Chickens, parity price per pound	*Cent*	1933-42	15.0	15.0	18.9	19.0	19.5	19.5	102	130
Chickens, percentage of parity	*Percent*	1933-42	94	93	129	128	123	124	97	133
Turkeys, per pound	*Cent*	1938-42	19.2	20.1	32.7	33.3	33.8	34.6	104	172
Turkeys, parity price per pound	*Cent*	1938-42	19.3	19.3	23.9	24.0	24.6	24.6	102	127
Turkeys, percentage of parity	*Percent*	1938-42	99	104	137	139	137	141	101	136
All farm commodities (1910-14 = 100)	*Index no.*	1933-42	112	114	194	196	196	200	102	175
Chickens and eggs (1910-14 = 100)	*Index no.*	1933-42	107	110	184	187	177	189	101	172
Wholesale prices, Chicago:										
Eggs, standards, per dozen[3]	*Cent*	1933-42	28.8	27.0	44.2	40.7	42.0	41.6	102	154
Live heavy hens, per pound	*Cent*	1938-42	17.2	17.9	22.5	23.6	[4]25.5	[4]25.6	108	143
Live broilers, per pound	*Cent*	1938-42	20.6	19.6	26.2	26.9			--	--
Live fryers, per pound	*Cent*	1938-42	18.3	19.2	26.2	26.9	26.9	27.4	102	143
Live roasters, heavy, per pound	*Cent*	1938-42	17.0	18.9	26.2	26.9	29.0	29.0	108	153
Wholesale prices, New York:										
Dressed broilers, 25-30 pounds per dozen, per pound	*Cent*	1933-42	22.7	23.9	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.6	100	157
Dressed roasters, 48-54 pounds per dozen, per pound	*Cent*	1933-42	22.2	22.8	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.6	100	165
Dressed fowls, 48-54 pounds per dozen, per pound	*Cent*	1933-42	20.6	21.0	33.5	33.5	33.5	33.6	100	160
Cash farm income:										
Total marketings	*Mil. dol.*	1938-42	1,096	942	2,005	1,692	2,190	--	109	200
Poultry and eggs	*Mil. dol.*	1938-42	113	107	231	225	240	--	104	212
Price ratios:										
Chicago, broiler-feed	*Lb. feed*	1938-42	16.0	14.1	12.1	12.1	[4]	[4]	--	--
Chicago, light roaster-feed	*Lb. feed*	1938-42	14.0	13.9	12.1	12.1	13.4	13.1	108	94
Farm, egg-feed	*Lb. feed*	1933-42	24.5	22.6	22.0	20.1	20.3	20.7	103	92
Farm, chicken-feed	*Lb. feed*	1933-42	11.6	11.2	11.4	10.9	11.2	11.2	103	100
Farm, turkey-feed	*Lb. feed*	1937-42	15.9	16.0	13.8	15.3	14.3	15.8	103	99
Farm, egg-laying mash	*Lb. feed*	--	--	--	13.5	12.7	12.2	12.6	99	--
Laying mash, cost per cwt.	*Dollar*	--	--	--	3.50	3.54	3.55	3.54	100	--
Feed cost per cwt., farm poultry ration	*Dollar*	1933-42	1.25	1.29	2.14	2.23	2.14	2.15	96	167
Wholesale food prices (1935-39 = 100)	*Index no.*	1933-42	101.6	101.4	133.8	133.5	132.9	--	99	131
Retail food prices (1935-39 = 100)	*Index no.*	1933-42	102.6	102.4	137.3	137.1	136.5	--	99	133
Prices paid by farmers including interest and taxes (1910-14 = 100)	*Index no.*	1933-42	132	132	166	167	171	171	102	130
Retail prices (BLS):										
Roasters, dressed, per pound	*Cent*	1933-42	30.6	30.7	44.0	44.7	45.0	--	102	147
Eggs, strictly fresh, per dozen	*Cent*	1933-42	44.9	42.2	67.4	63.9	66.3	--	98	148
Nonagricultural employees compensation (1935-39 = 100)	*Index no.*	1933-42	116.8	119.9	249.5	254.1	270.6	--	108	232

[1]End of month. Frozen eggs converted to case equivalent.

[2]Adjusted for seasonal variation.

[3]Fresh Firsts November and December 1933-42 Av., Standards 44-lbs. November and December 1943 and 1944.

[4]No quotations.

THE POULTRY AND EGG SITUATION

Contents

SUMMARY

Wholesale and retail prices of poultry meat for the next 6 months will be at ceilings, reflecting a strong civilian demand and large military requirements. Supplies of chickens, excluding broilers, will be less than a year earlier because of the 20 percent decline in the number of chickens raised in 1944 from 1943. Broiler production, however, is increasing as evidenced by the record December hatch in the New England States, the primary source of chicks for the Del-Mar-Va Peninsula and the Shenandoah Valley. Little, if any, of this increase will go to civilians, since WFO 119 virtually prohibits the sale of chicken meat in the Del-Mar-Va Peninsula and the Shenandoah Valley except to the armed forces. During January the order was extended to the important broiler-growing areas of Georgia, Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma.

Farm egg production for the first half of 1945 will be significantly less than in the first half of 1944, due to the 10 percent reduction in the number of potential layers on farms January 1 from a year earlier. Civilian per capita egg consumption is expected to continue at a record annual rate because of smaller supplies of poultry and other proteins and favorable consumer incomes. Military procurement probably will be as large as last year.

Thus, eggs available for dehydrating purposes may be less in the period January through June 1945 than in the corresponding period of 1944. Accordingly, prices received by egg producers in the first half of 1945 probably will average at least as high and may be higher than in the same period of 1944, depending upon War Food Administration price-support and dried-egg-procurement policies.

Farm egg output in December was 282 million dozen, 4 percent above the December 1943 record output. The 1944 farm egg production is tentatively estimated at approximately 4.8 billion dozen, 6 percent above the 1943 record and 58 percent higher than the pre-war (1935-39) average. This large production resulted from the record number of potential layers on farms January 1, 1944 -- 515 million birds -- plus a rate of lay per hen -- 112 eggs -- which was exceeded only in 1942.

Prices of poultry products during December and early January were firm and at or near ceiling levels. The December 15 farm egg price of 44.5 cents per dozen showed a contra-seasonal advance of 1.1 cents from November 15 but was 0.4 cents below December 15, 1943. Wholesale egg quotations from December 13 to January 18 were declining seasonally in accordance with OPA price regulations, and demand and supply factors appear to be fairly well equalized. Market receipts of eggs during late December and early January were below the previous year, but because of declines in egg drying, the quantity of eggs available for civilians appears to be at a high level.

The supply of poultry meat in early January was short of demand at ceiling prices by a wide margin. This was especially evident in the New England States which ordinarily obtain a large portion of their poultry meat supply from areas covered by WFO 119.

-- January 22, 1945

OUTLOOK

BACKGROUND.- The 1944 developments in the poultry and egg industry indicate the sharp changes, especially in price, which may transpire in such a flexible industry. During the first half of 1944, especially from March through June, a record egg production, accompanied by a weak demand for dried eggs and marketing difficulties, resulted in a burdensome egg supply. At that time (the flush production season), it was necessary for the Government to take all possible actions in supporting egg prices at 90 percent of parity as required by the Steagall Amendment. WFA instituted purchase programs and brought approximately 5-1/2 million cases of shell eggs plus 61 million pounds of dried egg above the original procurement schedule of 185 billion pounds of dried egg. Prices received by egg producers during the second quarter declined to an average of 27.5 cents per dozen -- 90 percent of parity.

Reflecting declines in the supply of other forms of proteins and continuation of higher consumer income, civilian egg consumption during the last quarter of 1944 was at a record annual rate and was about 4 percent above that of the fourth quarter of 1943. The unusually strong demand for eggs resulted in an improved price situation. There was a contra-seasonal increase in price from mid-November to mid-December, despite seasonally increasing production. The average price received by farmers for eggs in mid-December was 44.5 cents per dozen, 101 percent of parity seasonally adjusted.

A similar situation existed with respect to poultry prices. During the summer, demand was weak because of a fairly large meat supply and a relatively small procurement of poultry by the armed forces. Smaller poultry marketings, reflecting the 20 percent decline in number of chickens raised in 1944 from 1943, and large increases in army procurement of meat and poultry, held wholesale poultry prices up to ceiling levels in the last quarter of 1944.

Farm egg production for 1944 is estimated at 4,790,000,000 dozen, 6 percent above the previous record of 1943 and 51 percent above the 1933-42 average. The number of potential layers on farms at the beginning of 1944 was 6 percent above that of 1943, and during most of 1944 was larger than a year earlier. The rate of lay (on a hen house basis) during 1944, was 112 eggs per hen, compared with 111 eggs per hen in 1943 and a 1933-42 average of 100 eggs. The 1944 rate of lay was one egg less per hen than the 1942 record.

Egg Production to be Significantly Below Last Year

For the first half of 1945, farm egg production may be 8 to 10 percent below that of the same period of 1944. This will result from declines in numbers of layers, and also from an expected drop in the rate of lay for 1945 compared with 1944 as a result of a reduction in the ratio of pullets to hens on farms.

In December 1944 the average number of layers on farms was 4 percent less than in December 1943. As of January 1, 1945, potential layers on farms (including hens, pullets, and pullets not of laying age) was 463 million head, 10 percent below that of January 1, 1944. For the next few months, culling, because of the improved egg price situation, is not expected to be as heavy as in the first part of 1944. Accordingly, the number of layers on farms may average 7 to 9 percent less than a year earlier.

The rate of lay per average layer on hand in January-June 1944 was 87 eggs, a record for that period and 10 percent above the 1933-42 average. This record rate of lay was a reflection of a mild 1944 winter season and a larger-than-usual percentage of pullets to hens. On January 1, 1944, the ratio of pullets to hens was 67 to 33 compared with the long 1933-42 average of 63 to 37. On January 1, 1945, this ratio was the same as the 10-year average. Since pullets have a higher rate of lay than hens 1 year old and older, it is likely that the rate of lay may show some decline in the coming year from that of 1944. However, the favorable feed supply situation is an offsetting factor.

Civilian Consumption of Eggs to Reach Record Levels; Prices May Be Slightly Higher Than a Year Ago

Per capita egg consumption for the next 6 months will probably average somewhat higher than in the first part of 1944, reflecting favorable consumer incomes and declines in supplies of other forms of protein foods. Consumption of eggs is related to national income. It appears that there will be little, if any, decline in national income during the next few months. Furthermore, civilian supplies of red meat during the first half of 1945 may be about 15 percent lower than in the first 6 months of 1944 and will fall far short of demand at ceiling prices. Although accurate data are not available as to the substitution of eggs for meat, it is believed that, in view of wartime shortages, some substitution does take place. Per capita consumption during the first half of 1945 may be higher -- probably 5 percent -- than in the same period of 1944. For the period January through June 1944, per capita civilian consumption is estimated at 172 eggs.

The demand for eggs by the military forces for the first half of 1945 will probably remain strong, and disappearance into military channels will be at least as large as during the first half of 1944. However, lend-lease demand for new supplies of dried egg in 1945 may not be so strong as in the 3 preceding years in view of the large stocks of 125 million pounds of dried egg now on hand. Thus, dried egg production for lend-lease is expected to be smaller in 1945 than in 1944. Although possible additional outlets have recently been indicated, as of January 20 WFA had purchased only 6.1 million pounds of dried egg for delivery during January 1945. As of January 15, 1944, purchases amounting to 26.4 million pounds for January delivery, and 13.1 million pounds for February delivery had been made.

Table .- Purchases of dried whole egg by the War Food Administration through January 20, 1945, by months scheduled for delivery

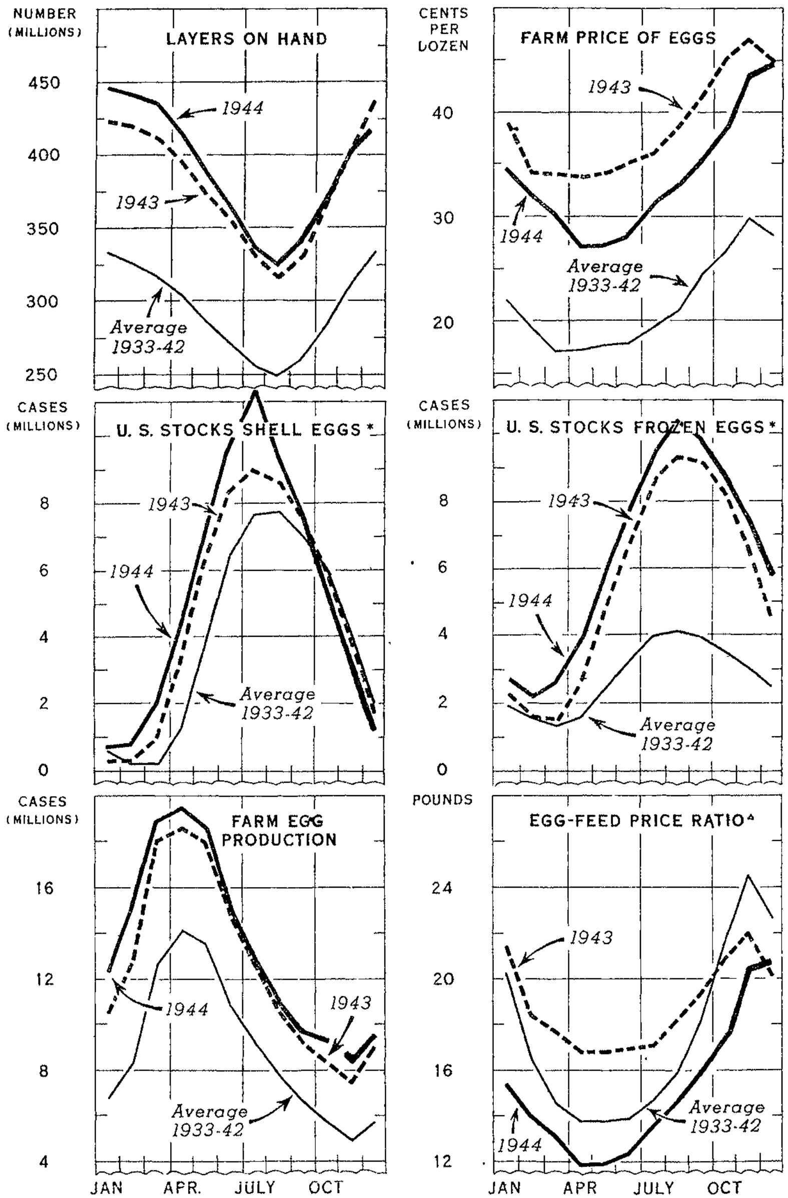
Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.	Mil. lb.
1942	11.4	12.9	13.1	13.4	18.3	17.5	18.5	19.2	19.2	22.0	25.3	15.8	206.6
1943	7.2	20.1	12.6	21.4	17.2	10.9	19.6	19.9	16.1	16.4	20.1	28.1	209.6
1944	26.4	27.0	18.3	27.7	27.0	26.1	24.8	31.5	24.2	20.4	12.8	7.6	273.8
1945	6.1												

Prices received by farmers for eggs during the first half of 1945 will probably at least equal those of 1944 and may possibly be higher. In view of the prospective drop in egg production, accompanied by a strong civilian demand, and assuming at least as large a military procurement as in 1944, it would appear that prices may be slightly higher. However, changes in Government dried egg and shell egg procurement programs from those in evidence at present could affect this outlook.

December Commercial Hatchings up 90 Percent in New England States

Commercial hatching during December is carried on primarily for chicken meat purposes. Under the impetus of a very strong civilian demand and large military requirements for chicken meat, hatchings in those territories which provide chicks for broiler growers were materially above those of December 1943. In the New England area during December, 4,592,000 chicks were hatched compared with 2,422,000 in December 1943, an increase of 90 percent. In the mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic States, there were increases of 51 and 30 percent, respectively. These increases were partly offset by decreases in other sections of the country, so that the total output of chicks by commercial hatcheries in December was only 15 percent larger than in December 1943.

THE EGG SITUATION



* 1st OF MONTH ^BASED ON FARM PRICES

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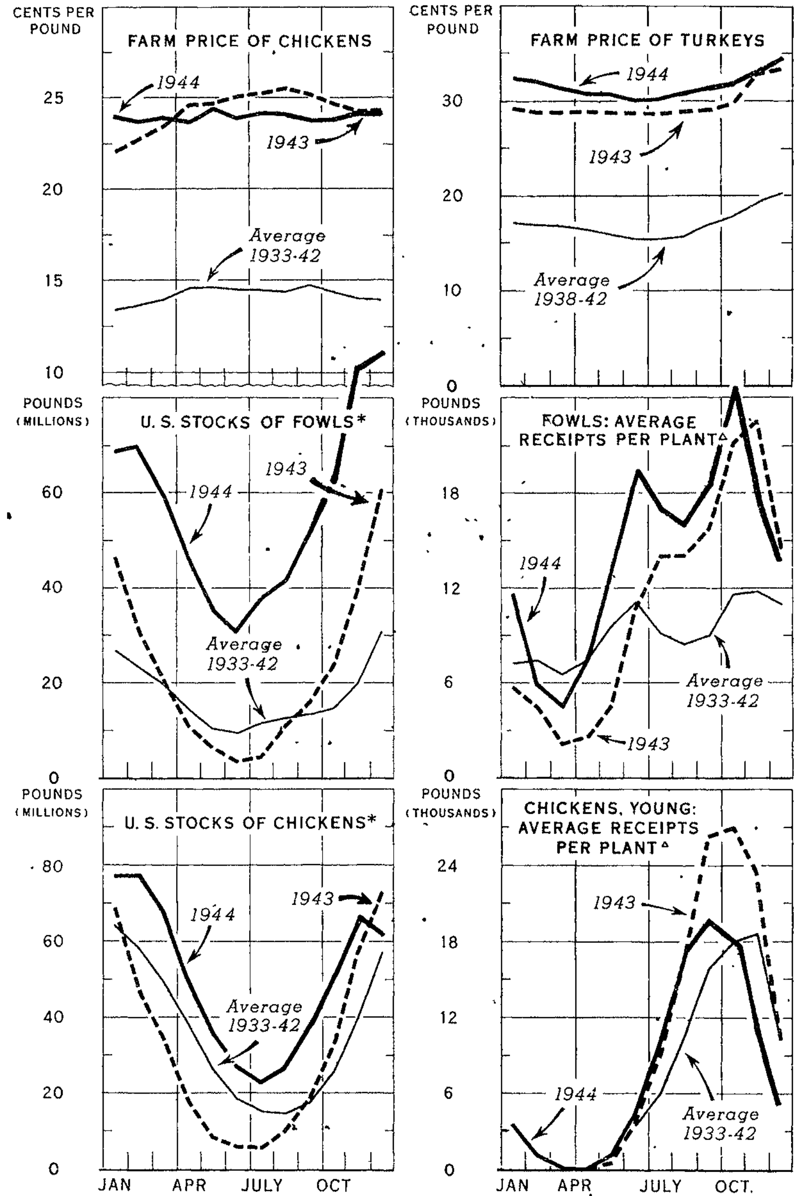
FIGURE 1

THE POULTRY SITUATION



* 1st OF THE MONTH ^ RECEIPTS AT CENTRAL WESTERN PRIMARY MARKETS

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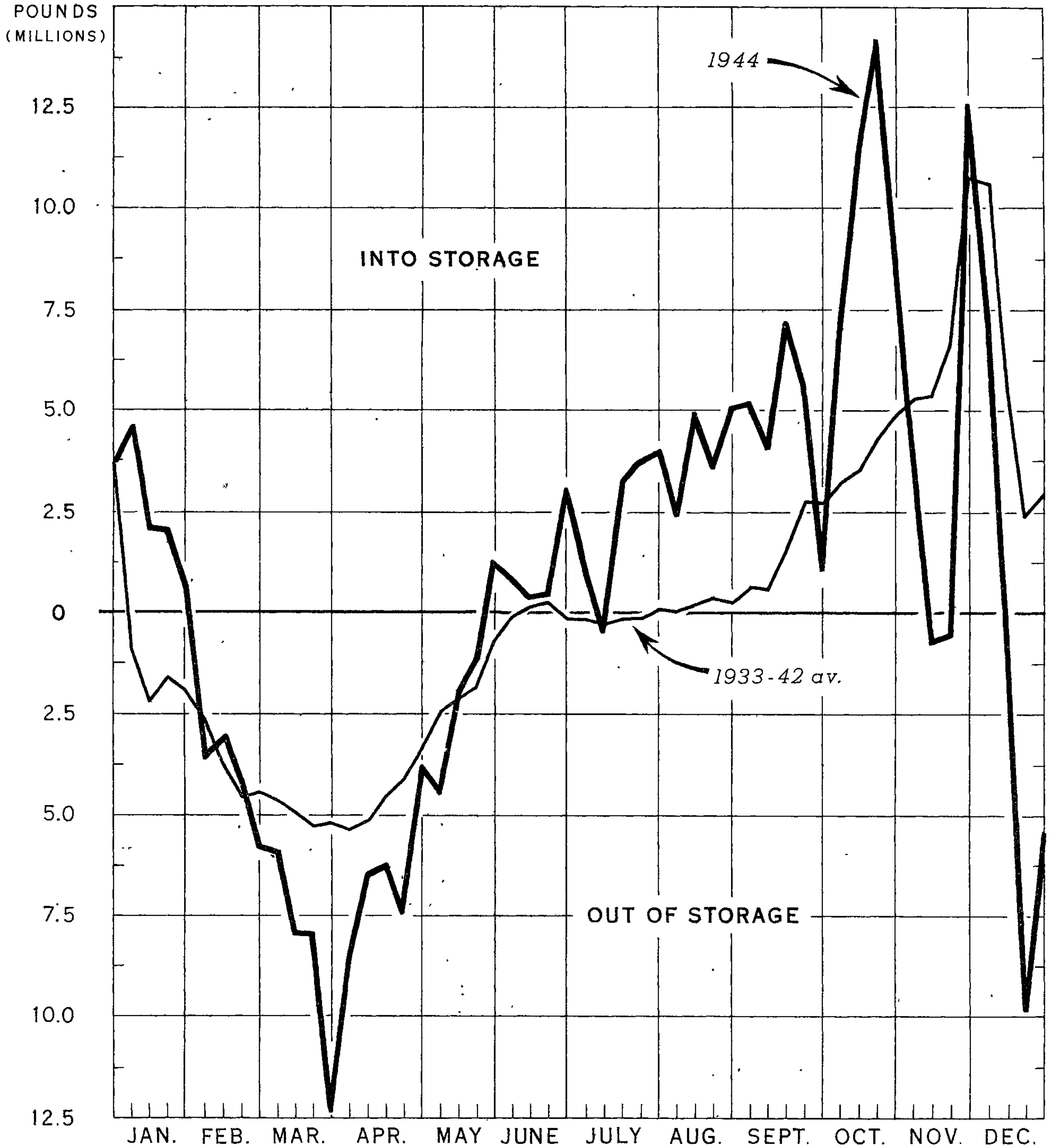
FIGURE 2

POULTRY: NET STORAGE MOVEMENT AT 35 MARKETS, UNITED STATES, BY WEEKS, 1933-42 AVERAGE, AND 1944



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The into storage movement of poultry during 1944 was earlier and heavier than in any previous year. December 1 stocks, because of large military holdings, were at a record level. However, the out of storage movement came earlier and for the first time a net out movement was recorded in the last week of November. This early out movement was due to a strong holiday demand for poultry, and also large withdrawals of turkeys by the armed forces.

Table .- Hatchings by commercial hatcheries, by months, United States 1933-42 average, 1942-44

Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
	Mil.	Mil.	Mil.	Mil.	Mil.	Mil.	Mil.	Mil.	Mil.	Mil.	Mil.	Mil.	Mil.
1933-42 average	26.3	66.3	150.4	213.5	183.2	75.8	25.1	16.0	14.6	15.0	15.2	16.0	817.4
1942	47.3	103.4	234.4	291.9	252.3	121.6	56.7	39.3	34.1	33.2	32.9	33.3	1,280.3
1943	59.8	133.0	279.2	334.6	323.7	197.5	83.1	51.6	42.0	39.5	35.4	29.6	1,609.1
1944	48.2	123.4	293.2	303.6	231.4	68.7	32.3	24.8	21.6	26.3	29.0	34.2	1,236.7

In the first quarter of 1944, hatchings were 2 percent below the record rate of 1943. Declines in egg prices during April and May resulted in a sharp curtailment in hatching, so that output during May 1944 was 29 percent below that of May 1943. In 1943 when a record number of chicks were hatched, commercial hatcheries continued in operation well into July. By June 1944 curtailment of hatchery activities was in evidence. Preliminary estimates of the number of chicks hatched by the commercial hatcheries during 1944 totaled 1,237 million chicks, compared with the record 1,609 million hatched during 1943.

Reflecting the recent large increase in hatching in the New England area, broiler production in the Del-Mar-Va Peninsula and in the Shenandoah Valley probably will increase materially within the next 3 months. With Army requirements remaining large, it is unlikely that any of this increase will go to civilians.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Poultry Embargo Extended to 4 States

War Food Order 119 virtually prohibits the sale of poultry in designated areas to anyone except the armed forces. The order was made effective December 11 in the Del-Mar-Va Peninsula and the Shenandoah Valley. On January 8 it was further extended to the important broiler-producing counties in Georgia and on January 15 to areas in Missouri, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. In 1943 approximately 145,000,000 broilers were produced in the States now under the Order. This was 58 percent of last year's total commercial broiler output.

Supplies of Poultry Meat Far Short of Demand

The demand for poultry meat during the past 2 months has been very strong, due to a combination of factors: (1) As income rises the demand for poultry meat increases. Nonagricultural income payments in November 1944 were about 8 percent above last year.

(2) The armed forces are procuring large quantities of poultry meat. (3) Supplies of red meats are insufficient to meet the demand. Hog slaughter is likely to be 20 to 25 percent smaller in 1945 than in 1944, reflecting a sharp drop in the 1944 pig crop. Furthermore, noncivilian takings of red meats may be nearly as large in 1945 as in 1944.

Recent reports indicate that civilian supplies of poultry meat are short of demand and that ceiling prices are being exceeded in some instances. This is especially true of the large metropolitan areas in the East which ordinarily receive a large portion of their poultry from the Del-Mar-Va Peninsula and the Shenandoah Valley.

Frozen Poultry Stocks Show Little Change During December

Stocks of frozen poultry during December showed little net change, primarily because increases in commercial holdings were about offset by withdrawals by the armed forces. The net input was only 86,000 pounds. This was the smallest net input for any December except in December 1942. In that month 5 million pounds were withdrawn.

Table .- Poultry Storage stocks: United States, December 1 and January 1, 1935-39 average, 1943-45

Month and year	Total	Government holdings	Non-Government holdings
	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds
December 1, 1935-39 average	117,994	---	117,994
January 1, 1935-39 average	137,977	---	137,977
December 1, 1943	197,880	---	1/197,880
January 1, 1944	226,161	---	1/226,161
December 1, 1944	268,128	105,900	162,228
January 1, 1945	268,214	96,489	171,725

1/ Includes Government holdings, for which information is not available.

The into-storage movement of poultry in 1944 was earlier than any year theretofore. Net inputs were recorded during the first week in June. At that time, because of an improved supply situation for meats, and declines in military procurement of poultry, supplies of poultry were in excess of the demand at ceiling prices. Accordingly prices went below ceilings, and poultry meat was available for storing purposes. With a change in the situation during the past 2 months, the net into-storage movement has been of negligible proportions.

1945 Farm Egg Goals Revised

Tentative national goals, requesting farm egg production totaling 3,920 million dozen were announced by WFA on November 15. In view of the recommendation of the States, and because of additional needs which have developed since November, the national goal for 1945 was revised upward to 4,350 million dozen eggs. The new goal would provide for a civilian consumption approximately the same as in 1944 and also would fulfill all military and lend-lease requirements.

Supply and Demand for Eggs Fairly Well Equalized at Ceiling Levels

Supplies of eggs during the latter part of December and early January were well behind last year. Receipts at 4 principal markets for the 4 weeks ended January 13, 1945, were 10 percent below the corresponding period of 1943-44, while receipts at the Pacific Coast markets and the Central Midwestern markets were 7 and 8 percent less than a year ago, respectively. Furthermore, cold-storage stocks of shell eggs were far less than the same time a year ago. From December 16, 1944, through January 13, 1945, shell egg withdrawals at the 35 markets were 192,000 cases, of which the major part probably was Government owned. This compares with net withdrawals of 196,000 cases in the corresponding period of 1943-44.

Although total supplies of shell eggs were less than at this time last year, civilian consumption was probably at a record annual rate, since more eggs were available for civilians than a year earlier. For December 1943 and January 1944 delivery, WFA had purchased dried whole egg amounting to 54-1/2 million pounds, or approximately the equivalent of 5.4 million cases of shell eggs. For December 1944 and January 1945 deliveries, dried egg purchased by WFA have totaled approximately 13.7 million pounds, or the equivalent of 1.4 million cases. Accordingly, even with reduced production, more shell eggs were available for civilian uses.

Although most wholesale and retail prices of shell eggs were at ceiling levels, supply and demand factors were fairly well equ lized. Pressure on priceswas evident in certain large metropolitan markets, especially for white eggs and in the large weight category.

Farm Egg Prices Increase Contraseasonally

The mid-December average farm price received by farmers for eggs was 44.5 cents per dozen, an increase of 1.1 cents from the previous month. The 3 percent increase in price compares with a usual percent decline from mid-November to mid-December. Although egg production during December was 4 percent higher than in the previous year, the small December 1 storage stocks of shell eggs, a very strong civilian demand and probably larger Army procurement were responsible for this increase in price. In terms of parity, the mid-December farm egg price was 101 percent.

Since mid-December, wholesale egg prices have been firm at ceiling levels. As of January 15 the average price of current receipts at Chicago was 38.9 cents compared with a previous midmonth price of about 44 cents and a January 15, 1944 price of about 33-3/4 cents.

Reversals were sharp in 1944 as far as wholesale egg prices were concerned. In the early part of the year, wholesale prices were at support levels, and in some localities with poor marketing facilities prices were below the supports. Beginning about July, wholesale prices for top-quality eggs were at ceilings, but lower quality eggs for the period July through October were below ceilings. During the last quarter, because of the strong consumer demand and insufficient supplies of top-quality eggs, prices of lower grades also were at ceiling levels.

Per capita consumption of shell and frozen egg showed little seasonal variation during the year except during the month of June, and averaged at the monthly rate of about 29 eggs per capita. For the year as a whole egg consumption is estimated at 349 eggs per person. This is 7 eggs above the previous record of 1943 and 17 percent above the pre-war 1935-39 average consumption.