

Cotton Quotas and Allotments

estimated acreage shifts from cotton to other crops in 1954 as result of expected national allotments

Trimble R. Hedges and C. O. McCorkle, Jr.

The second of four articles analyzing the impact of cotton acreage allotments on the agriculture of California

A national cotton acreage allotment of 17.7 million acres—27.8% below the estimated 1953 acreage of 24.6 million acres—appears certain for 1954 under current law.

Production in 1953 is too great for the Secretary of Agriculture to avoid announcing a cotton marketing quota and acreage allotment for 1954. Passage of new legislation by Congress this fall or next spring, or a rejection of allotments by growers in a referendum are the only two means left to avert a reduction of this magnitude.

Acreage Reductions

The nine major cotton producing states in the South apparently will have their acreage reduced, on the average, 27%. Acreage in Oklahoma will be reduced 17% and in Texas it will be 26%. In New Mexico the reduction will approximate 44% and in Arizona it will be about 55%.

California's share in the 1954 allotment will approximate 717,000 acres—49% below this year's estimated acreage in cotton.

The only acreage figures available for California counties are as of July 1, 1953 so are used throughout this analysis. The 8,000 acre reduction in state cotton acres from July 1 to August 1 is not considered

great enough to impair the county data presented.

The southern cotton producing counties are subject to the greatest percentage loss in acreage, but Fresno and Kern will lose the most acres because 337,000 acres, of the State's total of 717,000 acres to be removed from cotton, are in these two counties.

Allotments for cotton in 1950 forced diversion from the 1949 level of approximately 344,000 acres in all of California and 178,300 acres in Fresno and Kern counties.

Alternative Land Uses

Acreage reductions such as those anticipated in 1954 will drive cotton farmers to search for alternative crops to take up the released land; but, the range of alternative enterprises which can replace cotton varies among California's counties. The choice of alternative crops is affected by natural environment, farm size, grower experience, market availability and other major factors determining farm organizations.

High water costs resulting from relatively low water tables in much of the area in Fresno, Kings, Kern and Tulare counties will severely limit crop choice. Operators of small cotton farms must seek high labor-consuming enterprises

which—at the same time—will net a relatively high return per acre. They require such crops to market their own fixed labor supply and to obtain sufficient family income to maintain living standards.

Many producers are willing to experiment with new enterprises on a limited scale, but the major portion of the released acreage will likely be diverted to enterprises with which the individual operators have had experience.

Markets for many of the adapted specialty crops are limited by processor contract systems. Markets for others can absorb relatively small quantities before farm prices are depressed to unattractive levels.

How the acreage released from cotton production in 1954 will be utilized can not be predicted exactly but there are guideposts. Persons familiar with the agriculture of the area and the variations in organization among individual farms can prepare preliminary estimates of aggregate acreage shifts. Such estimates emphasize the dimensions of the cotton allotment problem.

Based on the assumption that legislation—in existence September 15, 1953—will determine the national, state, and county allotments in 1954, it is estimated

Concluded on page 14

Estimated 1954 California County Cotton Allotments

(Based on U. S. Allotment of 17.7 Million Acres, California Allotment of 717,000 Acres, and Existing Legislation)^a

County	5-year ave. harvested acreage ^b	Estimated 1954 basic allotment	Proportionate share of state reserve	1954 estimated total allotment	1953 acreage in cultivation July 1	Reduction '54 from '53	
						Acres	%
Merced . . .	37,614	26,162	2,907	29,069	52,800	23,731	45.0
Madera . . .	65,820	45,779	5,087	50,866	69,600	18,734	26.9
Fresno . . .	246,760	171,625	19,070	190,695	379,000	188,305	49.7
Kings	121,682	84,632	9,403	94,035	168,000	73,965	44.0
Tulare . . .	185,600	129,088	14,342	143,430	246,000	102,570	41.7
Kern	229,720	159,774	17,752	177,526	326,300	148,774	45.6
Imperial . .	25,851	17,980	1,998	19,978	111,000	91,022	82.0
Riverside . .	13,638	9,485	1,054	10,539	48,000	37,461	78.0
Others . . .	1,115	775	87	862	3,300	2,438	73.9
California	927,800	645,300	71,700	717,000	1,404,000	687,000	48.9

^a Sources: Basic data official reports California Crop and Livestock Reporting Service.

^b 1947, 1948, 1950, 1951, 1952.

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CHLOROSIS

Continued from preceding page

the year they will respond is not known.

Lime-induced chlorosis can be avoided in many situations by not overirrigating. Careful irrigation will often prevent or minimize the need for chelates.

The use of chelating agents may make it possible to grow certain plants in soil in which they could not survive otherwise. Also, chelating agents may permit the use of irrigation water which previously was too alkaline. However it is more logical to grow in lime soil only those species resistant to lime-induced chlorosis. Certain plants, including grapes and possibly avocados, can be grafted to resistant rootstocks.

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Rooting Bed Test

soil conditioner in nursing bed eased chrysanthemum transplanting

Edward J. Bowles

A synthetic soil conditioner, CRD-186—Krilium—was tested in rooting beds of commercially grown chrysanthemums for its influence on total root growth and the transplant operation.

Customarily, cuttings are taken in the spring and rooted in beds of sand, after which they are moved to open ground beds for additional growth before being finally transplanted into the cloth house flowering beds.

One such rooting, or nurse, bed was treated with CRD-186 when the soil—a Yolo clay loam—was in ideal condition, and rototilled. At the treatment rate of 10 pounds per 500 square feet there was a remarkable improvement in the aggregation of the soil.

The improved soil aggregation permitted good plant growth, and there was

much less damage to roots when the plants were dug for transplanting to the flowering beds. The digging operation was easier and faster. When the soil was loosened with a fork the plants could be pulled from the bed in groups of five or six. A few shakes removed the soil from the roots with little or no loss of feeder roots.

In untreated soil the plants had to be dug out, and the soil removed by hand from each plant, with a rather heavy loss of roots.

A better root development—by those varieties usually slow to root and develop in the nurse bed—was noted on plants in the treated soil.

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QUOTAS

Continued from page 2

that grain, alfalfa and idle or fallow land will absorb 523,000 acres, or 76% of the land diverted from cotton.

Specialty crops, oil seeds and sugar beets are expected to account for another 82,000 acres—12%. The remainder will be divided among miscellaneous uses.

If these preliminary estimates are borne out by farmer action, California feed grain and hay acreage in 1954 will be at record levels. Alfalfa would occupy about 1,100,000 acres as compared with 1,058,000 in 1950—the last previous cotton allotment year. Barley, too, at 2,200,000 acres would exceed its previous high of 2,162,000 acres, also in 1950. Grain sorghum acreage, about 170,000, would be the highest since 1941 when it occupied 204,000 acres.

Among specialty crops, sugar beets—at about 220,000 acres—may exceed their previous high of 219,000 acres in 1950. Oil seeds would be well down from earlier highs because it is not expected that flaxseed will regain its wartime prominence in southern California.

Such acreage shifts as these—with normal yields—must be accompanied by price reactions as well as farm adjustment problems. Least price impact will be felt by producers of specialty crops that can be contracted.

Alfalfa and grain producers may sell at lower prices than for recent years. Alfalfa is more vulnerable to price drops due to oversupply than is grain because there is a close production-consumption balance in California.

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The third article in this four-part report, to be published next month, will consider the geographic differences in alternative crops, effect of size and changes in net income.

Estimated Utilization of Diverted Cotton Acreage, 1953 to 1954, Basis July 1
Estimates (Thousands of Acres)

County	Acres to be diverted	Small grains	Alfalfa	Grain sorghum	Sugar beets	Corn	Oil crops	Potatoes	Irrig. pasture	Idle	Misc. crops
Merced	24	9	8	2	1	2	..	..	2	..	..
Madera	19	6	6	3	2	..	..	..	2	..	..
Fresno	188	100	18	7	6	3	14	..	4	31	5
Kings	74	37	9	3	1	..	4	..	1	15	4
Tulare	103	30	25	8	5	5	8	2	2	5	13
Kern	149	65	16	6	12	3	5	4	3	27	8
Total											
San Joaquin Valley	557	247	82	29	27	13	31	6	14	78	30
Imperial	91	20	17	12	5	..	17	..	1	8	11
Riverside	37	15	10	1	..	..	2	..	1	2	6
Total											
Southern California	128	35	27	13	5	..	19	..	2	10	17
Total 8 Counties	685	282	109	42	32	13	50	6	16	88	47
Others	2	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total California	687	283	110	42	32	13	50	6	16	88	47