

Larger tobacco crop likely, but use may stabilize

LANCASTER — A further recovery of yields and acreage at the 1980 level could increase this year's U.S. tobacco crop about six percent above last year's 1.8 billion pounds.

A larger crop would offset smaller beginning stocks and keep the 1981-82 tobacco supply about the same as this season.

Effective farm quotas for 1980 are down six percent for flue-cured and up 11 percent for burley. The quotas suggested that U.S. tobacco growers may keep this year's plantings about the same as the 916,000 acres harvested in 1980.

Because of increased prices for fuel and labor, production costs may rise as much as 15 percent from last season. Price support for eligible tobacco will be about 12 percent higher than last year because of the formula that reflects changes in prices farmers pay.

USDA likely will announce grade loan rates for the various kinds of tobacco before the marketing season begins.

Despite a larger 1980 crop, smaller carryin stocks pulled this season's domestic leaf supply down to 5.04 billion pounds, two percent below the previous year.

Total use of U.S. tobacco should remain close to 1980; however, by the end of the marketing year all-tobacco carryover stocks will still be down.

On January 1, stocks were slightly below a year earlier. By end of this marketing year (July 1 for flue-cured, October 1 for burley and other kinds), stocks should total about two percent below the 3.27-billion-pound carryin.

Last year's cigarette output, a record 714 billion cigarettes, increased one percent above 1979. Both domestic use and tax-exempt categories gained.

Also, consumption of smokeless tobacco products (chewing tobacco and snuff) grew again in 1980. Use of both smoking tobacco and cigars fell below a year earlier; another drop is expected this year.

U.S. smokers consumed 630 billion cigarettes last year, about 15 percent above the previous year. Consumption per adult remained about the same as 1979 - 196 packs. Total cigarette use may remain steady this year, as increasing population offsets reduced per capita use.

Exports of U.S. tobacco leaf and products increased 13 percent in

value last year to a record \$2.43 billion. Both manufactured tobacco exports and leaf exports rose in price and volume. Export weight of unmanufactured tobacco totaled 599 million pounds (272,000 metric tons) or 721 million pounds, farm-sales weight.

This year, exports will do well to maintain last year's level, because export grades of U.S. tobacco are in short supply.

Unmanufactured tobacco imports (duty paid) and the customs category 170.80 (tobacco manufactured or not manufactured, not specifically provided for) increased four percent to 394 million pounds (179,000 metric tons) last year. Cigarette leaf and stems accounted for the gain.

Imports have risen in recent years, last year representing about three-tenths of the tobacco used in U.S. cigarette production. A similar proportion is likely this year.

The International Trade Commission is investigating the need for import restrictions on tobacco and will hold a public hearing on May 11.

Flue-cured tobacco disappearance in the current marketing year will probably drop from last

year's 1.08 billion pounds. Both exports and domestic use may decline slightly.

With the larger 1980 crop, mid-year carryover may rise about one percent from last season's 1.96 billion pounds.

Production this year should drop slightly from last year's 1,085 million pounds, assuming the crop is average size in relation to the effective quota.

With first-quarter use stabilizing, this season's total disappearance of burley tobacco may change little from last year's 632 million pounds.

Auction sales, ending in early March, indicated a 1980 crop of about 555 million pounds, up 109 million from 1979's unusually short

crop.

Burley carryover next October 1 is expected to drop eight percent below a year earlier.

USDA set this season's burley marketing quota at 661 million pounds, 7.5 percent above last year. The farm quota, which reflects 1980's undermarketings, totals about 850 million pounds, 80 million pounds above last season's effective quota. Burley production is expected to increase.

Acreage allotments for Virginia fire-cured, dark air-cured, cigar binder, and Ohio cigar filler are the same as last year.

Kentucky-Tennessee fire-cured allotments were reduced five percent. Each type registered price increases for the 1980 crop.

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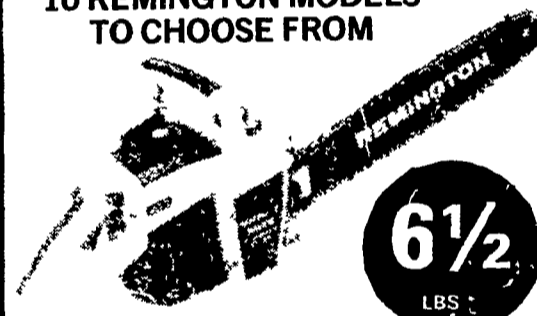
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