

U.S. 1981 ag exports set record

WASHINGTON — U.S. agricultural exports of fiscal 1981 totaled \$43.8 billion and set a record for the twelve straight year, according to Richard A. Smith, administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service. Agricultural exports ran \$26.7 billion higher than imports, and this favorable balance also set a record.

Smith said export tonnage in 1981 was nearly the same as the previous year and that the 8 percent increase in dollar volume resulted from higher unit prices for U.S. products.

He said U.S. agricultural import dollar volume is expected to show a 1 percent decline for the fiscal year just ended, leaving an

agricultural trade balance surplus of about \$26.7 billion for fiscal 1981, 15 percent more than the trade balance in fiscal 1980.

Smith said the past year's agricultural trade was affected by a number of general economic factors, such as a sluggish worldwide economic performance and the dramatic appreciation of the dollar, which combined to dampen worldwide demand. As a result, the record U.S. agricultural export level was less than the \$48 billion forecast a year ago.

The 1981 fiscal year exports showed substantial dollar increases for wheat and flour (up 22 percent), fruits, nuts and vegetables (up 18 percent) and sugar and tropical products (up 61 percent).

The leading dollar earner — grain and feeds — had sales of \$21.7 billion, up 18 percent from last year. U.S. exports of wheat to China, the leading wheat importer with sales in excess of \$1.4 billion, was nearly double the volume of fiscal 1980. Japan, number one in total U.S. agricultural sales, led all countries in feed grain shipments of 15.6 million tons, valued at \$2.4 billion, 25 percent above a year earlier.

The volume of wheat and flour exports rose 6.2 million tons to 43.2 million, but feed grain shipments of 69 million tons were down 3 percent. Exports of all major oilseeds and major cakes and meals were down from fiscal 1980 levels.

Shipments to the EC were down

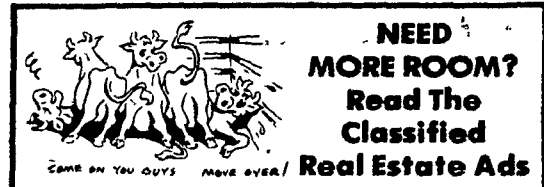
20 percent in volume and, as a result of the trade suspension, exports to the Soviet Union were zero, compared with 817,165 tons last year.

Cotton exports (excluding lint) totaled 5.6 million (480 pound) bales, 39 percent fewer than last year.

Smith said he expects a substantial increase in volume in fiscal 1982 with the possible ex-

ception of rice and sunflowerseed. He also said a significant recovery in export volume of soybeans and products in 1981-82 is expected as a result of reduced foreign competition and renewed growth in foreign countries.

He said prices for most U.S. agricultural products will likely be lower for the upcoming fiscal year, resulting in a smaller increase in total value.





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