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Nebraska
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln
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SOME FOOD ECONOMIC FACTS FOR THE HOMEMAKER

Part II

Ralph Cole, Extension Economist
Florence J. Atwood, Extension Nutritionist

PRICE MOVEMENTS

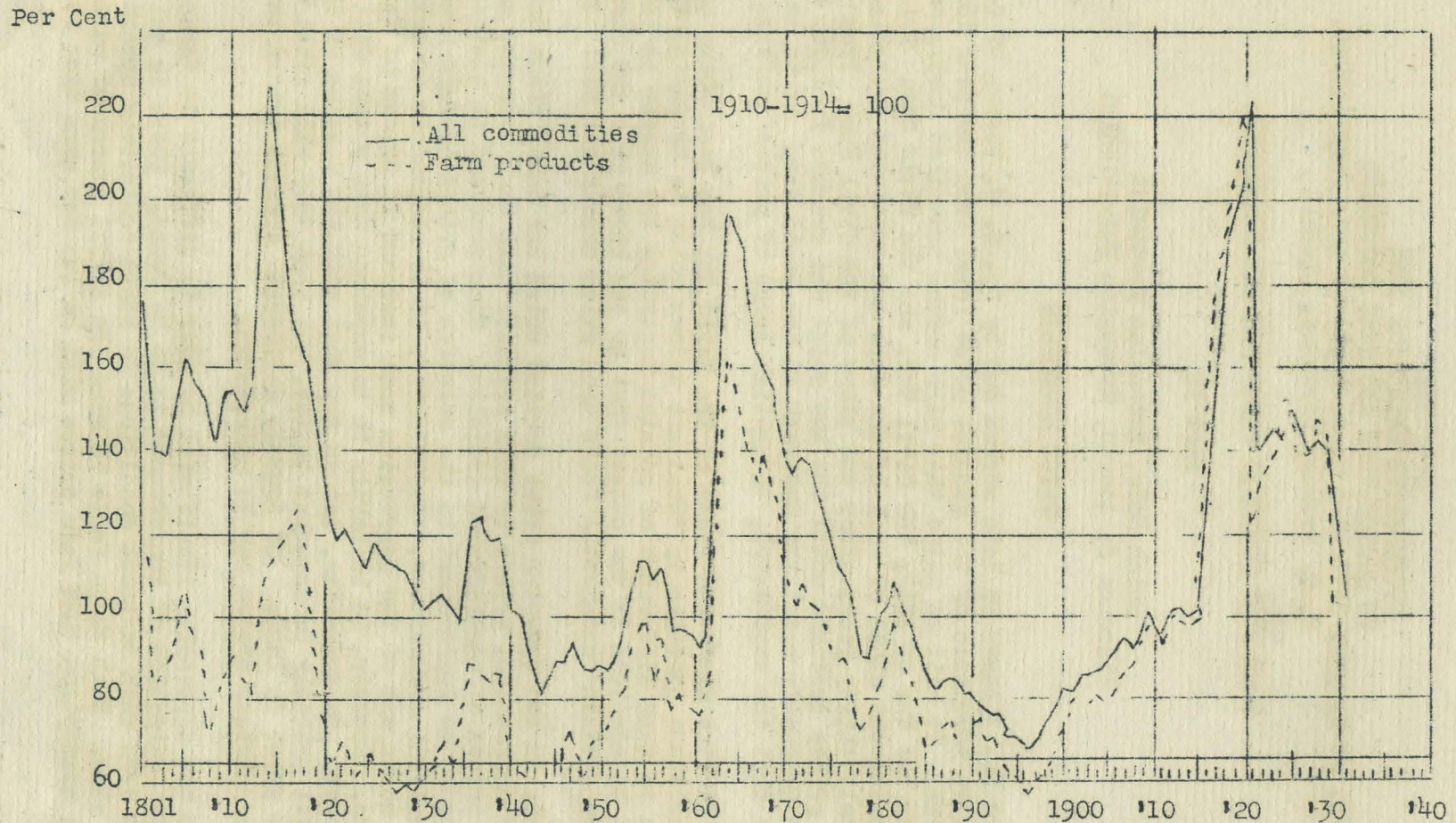
Chart No. 3, based on data worked out by Dr. G. F. Warren of Cornell University, shows movements of the general price level from the year 1800 down to the present time. It will be noted that high prices prevailed during each of the war periods, during the War of 1812, the Civil War, and the World War. Prices declined abruptly following the close of each of the Wars and continued irregularly downward for approximately thirty years after the close of the Civil War. From the high point in 1866 prices declined until the low point was reached in 1896; from that time they rose gradually until the outbreak of the World War. It is to such movements as these that the expression, "Long-time trend of prices" refers.

The decline since the close of the World War has been going on for twelve years. The pertinent question is "What are prices going to be during the next few years?" There is much difference of opinion regarding the answer to this question. It may as well be admitted at the outset that no one knows what the answer is. However, there are certain fundamental facts upon which nearly all will agree.

First, in the sweeping price decline which has taken place during the past three years of depression, prices of farm products have been affected much more severely than prices of manufactured articles. When recovery in business does take place there should be improvement in the relation of prices of farm products to prices of industrial commodities. Furthermore, it is reasonable to believe that when business works out of the depression some increase in prices of farm products will take place. However, it is hardly to be expected that prices will return to the 1925-29 level. To summarize, let us say that with the passing of the depression, farm prices will probably be somewhat better, but that they will still be lower than they were prior to 1929. Of course, deliberate efforts toward inflation through changes in our monetary system may be undertaken.

When the depression itself will be over is difficult to forecast. As yet little definite indication of improvement is to be found. There is quite general agreement that even when business conditions do start definitely upward that progress will be slow. With these facts in mind the safest course of action is to go forward on the assumption that farm prices will be low for some time to come.

Chart No. 3 - Wholesale Price Index Numbers of All Commodities and of Farm Products
United States, 1801-1931



U. S. Department of Agriculture

11733a

1801-1889 Are Warren and Pearson index
numbers. 1890 to date - Bureau of Labor
indexes.

Preparing and serving three meals a day to the family is only a part of the homemaker's food responsibility. She must either purchase the required foods or see that they are produced from the farm. Table A shows the quantities of various kinds of foods or types of food materials needed to make up a fully adequate diet at moderate cost. This chart will serve as a guide to know whether or not the essential foods are being distributed in a fair proportion in the diet.

A Farm Family's Yearly Food Supply

Table A

Grain products	Pounds
Bread	725
Flour and cereals	220
Milk	1,640 (Quarts)
Vegetables and fruits	
Potatoes, sweet potatoes,	850
Dried beans, peas, nuts	70
Tomatoes,	450
Green colored vegetables,	425
Other vegetables,	725
Other fruits,	575
Butter	135
Other fats (including bacon and salt pork)	110
Sugar	210
Molasses, jellies, jams, etc.	100
Lean meat, poultry, fish	500
Eggs	150 (dozen)

(Figures furnished by U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics)
Children aged 12, 5 and 3 years.

There is another slightly different reason why farm families should produce and process their own food products under present conditions. When times are good and incomes adequate persons are inclined to pay for certain services rather than perform them themselves. They do so to obtain more leisure time. That is often the reason why the housewife buys bread instead of baking it and why she buys butter instead of churning it.

But at a time when cash is scarce and meagre incomes must be stretched as far as possible in order to cover necessary taxes, interest, and living expenses, we are willing to sacrifice some leisure and thus save some money which may be used to help to retain the farm home. In other words many homemakers are willing to churn their own butter, if the money saved by so doing will buy a needed pair of shoes or some other article of clothing.

Consume Home Raised Products

Table B shows that retail prices of home raised foods have declined less than farm prices. Between 1929 to January 1932, pork chops have declined only 35 per cent, and hams 40 per cent, while the hog prices to the farmer have declined 54 per cent. During this same period we find that wheat and bread prices show trends similar to those of pork. Bread prices declined only 21 per cent in contrast with a 55 per cent wheat price decline. Such facts emphasize the need for consuming more home raised foods. It is with these facts in mind that practices in production, preservation and consumption of home raised products is being encouraged in the Living-at-Home project.

Consume More Home Raised Foods Because Farm Prices
Have Declined More than Retail Prices

Table B

Product	Decline in price January, 1929	
	January 1932 Per Cent	September 1932 Per Cent
Wheat	55	65
Flour (retail)	35	39
Bread (retail)	21	26
Cereal (retail)	11	12
Hogs (farm)	54	60
Pork hams (Chicago)	40	46
Pork chops (retail)	35	33
Beef cattle (farm)	52	
Beefsteak (retail)		
Sirloin	28	
Round	29	

(U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics)

Table C shows the approximate retail value of an adequate moderate cost yearly food supply for a farm family of five. The value of the items used to figure this information were based on retail prices of June, 1931.

While most of the food articles suggested here in this chart may be obtained on the farm, this chart represents the actual value that is spent by the average family who purchases foods. It should show to those who purchase foods what a saving they make by having access to farm products.

Retail Value of a Year's Food Supply

Table C

	Per Cent	
Milk, cheese	30	\$195.
Vegetables, fruit,	25	163
Lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs	20	130
Butter, lard, salt pork, bacon	8	52
Bread, cereals, flour.	8	52
Sugar, molasses, sirup, jellies	5	32
Other requisites	4	26
Total Value	100	\$650

(Figures furnished by U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics)
Children ages 12, 5, and 3 years.

Raise Your Own Food on the Farm

Since Table A gives the proportion and amount of food materials needed for the farm family of five, Table D should be of interest to every rural homemaker in making a study of her own food budget. While it is possible for every farm to produce approximately 78 per cent of the amount of food needed to feed the family, every homemaker must decide for herself how much of her time she can afford to spend on these tasks.

Raise Your Own Food on the Farm
Out of a Yearly Food Supply Worth \$650

Table D

	Raise	Buy	Total
Milk, cheese	\$189	\$6	\$195
Vegetables, fruit	131	32	163
Lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs	117	13	130
Butter, lard, salt pork, bacon	52	0	52
Bread, flour, cereals	13	39	52
Sugar, molasses, sirup, jellies	6	26	32
Other requisites		26	26
	\$508	\$142	\$650

(Figures furnished by U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Home Economics)

Summary

Are you reaping profits from labor invested in:

Raising your own food
Making butter
Making cheese
Making breads, cake, salad dressing, soups
Storing winter vegetables

Home butchering
Curing meat
Canning or drying fruits, vegetables
Putting down eggs