

No Farm Depression, Says Bank Official

Farmer savings up fivefold over 1940, putting them in good position to weather price readjustments

SAN FRANCISCO.—Twice since World War II the country has seen a downward trend in farm prices. The 1948-49 period was first, being coupled with a general business decline. The Korean war reversed this trend, with a peak in farm prices being reached in 1951. Since then, prices have been gradually dropping.



Jesse Tapp, vice-chairman of the board of the Bank of America and authority on agricultural economics, sees no critical farm depression ahead

Does this mean we are headed for a critical farm depression similar to the one which followed the 1914 and earlier wars? No, says Jesse Tapp, Bank of America's vice chairman of the board and authority on agricultural economics, at the 22nd annual meeting of the National Lubricating Grease Institute here Sept. 25 to 27. His reasons: continued expansion of the industrial economy, lessened dependence on export markets for farm products, and farmers' excess of savings over short- and long-term debt.

The nation is no longer as dependent on export markets to maintain farm prosperity as it was during the 19th century and the first 30 years of the 20th. Tapp notes that while this is not true of all commodities, it is true for most of them. In addition, whatever impact a decline of export markets might have had on farm economy, it has been largely absorbed by Commodity Credit Corp. purchases, purchases which tend to

spread the impact over a number of years. While this does not dispose of the surplus problem, it does ease the farmer's lot as he makes the required shifts in farming practice.

Another factor pointing away from a farm depression is that farmers are in a much better economic position than they were prior to the depression which followed World War I. During the 1940's farmers were able to retire much of their debt because of continuing good prices, and as of January 1954 farmers had \$19 billion in cash savings and in investments in bonds and stocks. This sum is greater

than their debt, both long- and short-term and puts their savings assets five times above what they were in 1940.

What, meanwhile, is the outlook for future farm progress? More large farms, fewer farmers, and a continuing spread of mechanization, particularly to mechanization in harvesting crops now picked by hand. Today U. S. farms are served by 1 million grain combines, 2.5 million trucks, and 4.5 million tractors, and farmers have a greater investment in equipment than they have in all classes of livestock. Mechanization in the last few decades, says Tapp, has been the most important revolution in agriculture of all time, and he expects advances in the next 20 years to keep pace with those of the past 20.

Antibiotic Supplements Overcome Growth Failure in School Children

Ohio doctors report beneficial results in no way comparable to those with animals

WASHINGTON, D. C.—One of the first reports of the use of antibiotics for human growth stimulation in the U. S. was presented at the Symposium on Antibiotics held here Oct. 25-29. The work reported was part of the school nutritional health program in an Ohio school district.

One major criticism of any previous attempts to study growth stimulation in American children has been the difficult problem of establishing normal growth patterns. The traditional of weight and height records are often misleading and consistent quantitative results have been difficult to obtain.

One approach to the human growth problem is the Wetzel grid system, developed by Norman D. Wetzel, a Cleveland, Ohio, physician. Dr. Wetzel's grid is a coordinate graph system which allows the growth of an individual in terms of height and weight to be integrated and correlated with clinical condition. By following a large number of children from kindergarten through junior high school, Wetzel and his co-workers have accumulated an impressive set of data on normal growth of children

and also on typical examples of "growth failure."

The work on dietary supplements was presented by Dr. Wetzel and Howard H. Hopwood, director of school health services, Shaker Heights, Ohio. They administered oxytetracycline, streptomycin penicillin, and vitamin B₁₂ to children whose growth grid patterns indicated simple growth failure. The antibiotics were administered as oral supplements at from 10 to 50 mg. per day. Statistically significant increased growth rates were reported for the group of children following the supplements with little differences between the various antibiotics or vitamin B₁₂.

Colds and other subclinical infections had less growth inhibitory effect on the antibiotic supplemented groups than they did on the group receiving B₁₂.

The Ohio medical men believe that on the basis of their studies the antibiotics and B₁₂ are beneficial in increasing the growth rate of children who have "simple growth failure."

Simple growth failure is a general condition resulting from improper dietary management which they say is found in about a third of the school age children.