

**MASSACHUSETTS CROP
REPORT: BULLETINES
NO. 1-6, SERIES OF 1896,
MAY- OCTOBER 1896**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649386093

Massachusetts crop report: Bulletines No. 1-6, Series of 1896, May- October 1896 by Various

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VARIOUS

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SERIES OF 1896.

BULLETIN No. 1.

MASSACHUSETTS
CROP REPORT

FOR THE

MONTH OF MAY, 1896.

ISSUED BY

WM. R. SESSIONS,

SECRETARY STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

BOSTON:

WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING CO., STATE PRINTERS,
18 POST OFFICE SQUARE.

1896.

CROP REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF MAY, 1896.

OFFICE OF STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE,
BOSTON, MASS., JUNE 1, 1896.

In Bulletin No. 1, Crop Report for the month of May, we present the first of our series of monthly crop bulletins for the current year. These bulletins will not vary much in general style and plan from those of preceding seasons, and we shall endeavor to issue them as near the close of the month as possible. Although we do not this year assist financially in the issuance of the weekly crop bulletins of the Weather Bureau, the section director, Mr. J. Warren Smith, has kindly arranged for the sending of them to all those on our mailing list. The first number was issued under date of April 28. As heretofore, a short article by one of the specialists of the Board of Agriculture will be included in each issue. This bulletin contains a report of the meetings of the Massachusetts Fruit Growers' Association, by the botanist and pomologist of this Board, who is also secretary of the association.

REPORT ON FARM ANIMALS.

[Report No. 123, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Division of Statistics.]

There is a decided falling off in the number of horses throughout the interior, on the Pacific slope, in parts of the Rocky Mountain and upper Missouri regions, and a slight decrease in the Atlantic States; elsewhere there is a prevailing increase. The total falling off in number amounts to 769,261, or 4.8 per cent. The decline in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania is attributed to the introduction of electric and cable cars and to the increased use of the bicycle. The average price has fallen from \$36.29 in 1895 to \$33.07, or a decrease of \$3.22. The only fairly acceptable figures anywhere commanded are for good road-

sters and fancy stock. Colts are unsalable in many sections and breeding has been largely discontinued.

There is a slight gain in the number of mules in the cotton belt and a considerable loss in the central region, due to discontinuance of breeding. Total loss in number, 54,162, or 2.3 per cent, about half that of horses. The average price has fallen from \$47.55 in 1895 to \$45.29, or a fall of about 4.8 per cent.

North of the Potomac milch cows generally increased in number, owing to the city demand. In central and south central regions there is a decrease, on account of the high price of feed; elsewhere in the West there is an increase, due to the increased interest in dairying and starting of creameries. The demand continues steady. The average price has risen from \$21.97 in 1895 to \$22.55. The decrease in number over the whole country amounted to 367,043, or 2.2 per cent.

The total decline in the number of oxen and other cattle amounts to 2,278,807, or 6.6 per cent. The decline is generally ascribed to drought and food scarcity and the raising of fewer calves. The increase in value per head is quite general except in the Atlantic States. The average price in January, 1895, was \$14.06; in 1896, \$15.86, or an increase of 12.8 per cent.

The decline in the number of sheep was 3,995,281, or 9.4 per cent. The cause generally assigned is the low price of wool. In spite of the decrease in numbers, the wool clip is slightly larger than that of last year, owing to a more favorable winter. The average price has risen from \$1.58 in 1895 to \$1.70, or an increase of 7.6 per cent.

The number of swine in the country declined 1,322,957 during the year, or 3 per cent. Cholera and other diseases were the leading causes of the decline. The average price fell from \$4.97 in 1895 to \$4.35, a decrease of 12.5 per cent.

On Jan. 1, 1896, there were estimated to be 15,124,057 horses on farms and ranches in the United States, valued at \$500,110,186; 2,278,946 mules, valued at \$103,204,457; 16,137,586 milch cows, valued at \$363,955,545; 32,085,409 oxen and other cattle, valued at \$508,928,416; 38,298,783 sheep, valued at \$65,167,735; 42,842,759 swine, valued at

\$186,529,745; total value of farm animals, \$1,727,926,084, as against \$1,819,446,306 in 1895.

The number of horses on farms in Massachusetts was 65,102; average price, \$72.49; value, \$4,719,255. Milch cows, 174,572; average price, \$34.63; value, \$6,045,428. Oxen and other cattle, 80,476; average price, \$26.36; value, \$2,121,662. Sheep, 48,395; average price, \$3.30; value, \$159,703. Swine, 60,726; average price, \$8.44; value, \$512,647.

The condition of farm animals, except in a few States along the Atlantic seaboard, is reported as generally good, partly because of the unprecedented corn crop and its low price.

PROGRESS OF THE SEASON.

The May returns of the United States Department of Agriculture (Report No. 137) show an increase in the condition of winter wheat of 5.6 points above the April average, being 82.7, against 77.1 last month and 82.9 in May, 1895. The principal winter-wheat States nearly all show an improvement in condition. Special reports show excellent prospects in Great Britain and France, and other foreign countries generally good, Spain being the only exception.

The condition of barley is 89.2, against 94 in May, 1895. In New York, the greatest barley State, the condition stands at 90. The condition of winter rye on May 1 was 87.7 per cent.

The condition of spring pastures on May 1 was 93.6 per cent, as against 89.7 in 1895, an unusually high condition, attained on account of the spring rains and favorable temperature, in spite of the lack of snow during the winter in some States and the effects of the late feeding last fall.

Though many correspondents report meadows as injured by last year's drought, the timely April rains and high temperature have induced rapid growth, and the condition on May 1, 1896, stood at 91.8, against 89.4 last year and 91.7 in 1894.

Fine weather and a moist soil have made the season an ideal one for spring ploughing, and the amount accomplished by May 1 was 79.6 per cent, 1.9 points above the average, and nearly up to the figures of 1895.

WEATHER SUMMARY, JANUARY - APRIL, 1896.

[FURNISHED BY THE NEW ENGLAND WEATHER SERVICE.]

January opened cold, and an unusually sharp cold wave prevailed from the 4th to the 8th. At Boston fully sixty people were treated at the Emergency Hospital on the 6th for frost bites. The temperature ranged very near zero all day and a high, cutting wind prevailed. Peach buds were almost entirely killed by this cold wave and some damage was done to raspberries and blackberries. Its passage was well forewarned by the Weather Bureau. The last part of the month was milder, but with no pronounced thaw. The ground was not protected by snow during the cold spell, but there was a slight covering during the rest of the month.

February was a rough, stormy month, with damaging floods, heavy snows and an excess of rainy and cloudy weather. The heaviest rainfall was over the north central part of the State. The rain of the 4th to 7th gave from two to three inches in that section, but no serious damage resulted. The snow and rainfall of February 29 to March 3 was not so heavy in this State as in northern New England, but the damage done by rivers flowing into Massachusetts from the north was very great. A severe cold wave prevailed on the 17th and 18th, with a strong wind blowing. The most marked cyclone of the month originated near Texas, on the 4th, moved easterly, then northerly, passing across our State just west of Boston on the night of the 6th - 7th. Hurricane signals were hoisted along our coast for the first time in the history of the Weather Bureau, and were fully justified, as the wind reached a velocity of over 60 miles an hour. On the 11th, at about 9 A.M., while a cyclone centre was passing down the St. Lawrence valley, a short but very severe snow squall or "snow shower" passed easterly across our State. The darkness was almost night-like, and the air was filled with fine, driving snow.

March weather was typical of the month, though rougher and more stormy than usual. The rainfall was considerably above the normal and the number of stormy days in excess of the usual amount. The snowfall was more than usual and there was a fair snow covering till near the end of the month.

The wind movement at Boston was far above the average and at interior stations from 2,000 to 5,000 miles in excess of the usual March record. The changes in temperature during the month were rapid, but the daily ranges were not extremely great.

The first and last parts of April were comparatively cool, with frequent frosts, but the middle of the month gave almost unprecedented heat for the season. The temperature recorded over 80° in western districts on the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th. East winds lowered the maximum along the coast on the 16th and 17th. The rainfall was deficient, and at the end of the month grass and grain were feeling the effects of dry weather. Thunderstorms prevailed on the 17th, 18th, 19th and 21st, that of the 17th being widespread and severe. Farm work was carried on under favorable circumstances and well advanced at the end of the month. The cool weather of the last week of the month held the fruit buds in check, with favorable results.

TEMPERATURE AND RAINFALL FOR THE WHOLE COUNTRY.

[FROM UNITED STATES WEATHER-CROP BULLETINS.]

Week ending May 4. — Warmer than usual in all districts east of the Rocky Mountains except on the immediate coast. In the plateau regions and on the Pacific coast week cooler than usual, being decidedly cool in portions of California and throughout Oregon and Washington. The usual amount of rain fell in the upper Mississippi and Missouri valleys and over portions of the Gulf, Middle and South Atlantic States. On the Pacific coast the rainfall was exceptionally heavy; elsewhere it was less than usual, a considerable part of New England receiving none. East of the Rocky Mountains the week has been very favorable for farm work.

Week ending May 11. — Fifth successive week of abnormally high temperatures east of the Rocky Mountains, the excess being very great north of the Ohio and Missouri rivers. Abnormally cool on the Pacific coast and in the plateau districts; elsewhere nearly normal temperatures. No appreciable rainfall from the Rocky Mountains eastward except over limited areas. On the Pacific coast and in the