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The following estimates, forecasts, and projections are mainly taken from recent publications of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, Economic Research Service, and the World Agricultural Outlook Board of the USDA.

Corn. Corn ending stocks for the 2002/03 marketing year are forecast by World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB) to total 929 million bushels, up 5 million bushels from the previous forecast, but 667 million bushels below the 2001/02 marketing year. Projected exports were decreased 25 million bushels from last month. The average price for the 2002 crop is expected to be between $2.20 and $2.50 per bushel.

Soybeans. Soybean ending stocks for the 2002/03 marketing year are forecast by WAOB to total 165 million bushels, down 25 million bushels from the previous forecast, and 43 million bushels below the 2001/02 marketing year. Export prospects were increased 10 million bushels from last month while soybean crush was unchanged. The average price for the 2002 crop is expected to be between $5.10 and $5.70 per bushel.

Wheat. Wheat ending stocks for the 2002/03 marketing year are forecast by WAOB to total 445 million bushels, up 27 million bushels from the previous forecast, but 332 million bushels below the 2001/02 marketing year. Projected exports are 25 million bushels below last month because of reduced global imports and lower-than-expected U.S. sales and shipments to date. The average price for the 2002 crop is expected to be between $3.55 and $3.65 per bushel.

Cattle. Mid-February **prices** for choice steers (Nebraska direct, 1100-1300 pounds) averaged $77 per cwt, down $3 from mid-January. Feeder steer prices (Oklahoma City, medium-large frame, 750-800 pounds) were roughly $80 per cwt, down $2 from the previous month.

Hogs. For the first two weeks of February, hog **slaughter** was running about 102.7% of a year ago. Cash **prices** at mid-February (Iowa-Southern Minnesota direct, 51-52 percent lean) averaged $34 per cwt, relatively unchanged from the mid-January price. First quarter prices are expected to average $35 per cwt.

Other Livestock. January **milk production** was up 1.8% from the previous year. Production per cow increased 1.1%, while the number of cows increased 0.7% from a year earlier. The **cheddar cheese price** (U.S. 40 pound blocks, wholesale) was up the first two weeks of February. Total **cheese** production reported for the month of December 2002 was 4.0% above the previous year. **Butter** production during this same time period was 3.2% above last year. Production of **nonfat dry milk for human food** was down 2.5% from December 2001. U.S. table **egg production** during January 2003 totaled 6.25 billion, up 1% from January 2002. Wholesale market **egg prices** for the first quarter of 2003 (Grade A large, New York) are expected to average 74-76 cents per dozen, compared with 69.1 cents a year ago. Second quarter 2003 egg prices are expected to average 63-67 cents per dozen, compared with 58.4 cents a year earlier. **Broiler**-type chicks hatched during January 2003 totaled 760 million, down 2% from last year. Weekly Broiler-type placements in 19 selected states for the week ending February 15, 2003, were 166 million, 1% below a year ago. The wholesale 12-city average price for whole **broilers** for the first quarter of 2003 is expected to be 59-61 cents per pound, compared with 56.0 cents from the first quarter of last year. Second quarter 2003 broiler prices are expected to average 58-62 cents per pound, compared with the 56.1 cents for a year earlier. **Turkey** poult placements in January 2003, at 25.4 million, were down 2% from last January. Cumulative placement for the 2003 marketing year are 120 million poults, down 1% from a year ago. Prices (8-16 lb. hens, Eastern Region) for the first quarter of 2003 are expected to be 60-62 cents per pound compared with 60.0 cents for the first quarter last year. Turkey prices for the second quarter of 2003 are expected to average 62-66 cents per pound, compared with the 62.9 cents average for the second quarter of 2002. **Supplies in refrigerated warehouses** at the end of January 2003 compared with a year earlier were: total chicken, down slightly; turkey, up 23%; pork, up 2%; bellies, down 34%; beef, up 8%; frozen orange juice, up 7%; butter, up 104% and American cheese, up 11%.

Trade. January U.S. **trade projections** for soybeans improved while 2002/2003 export prospects for wheat, corn, and turkeys declined, compared with last month. Rice, cotton, beef, pork, and broilers were unchanged from December. January projections for the volume of exports for the 2002/2003 marketing year compared to 2001/2002 are: **wheat** down 6%; **corn** down 3%; **rice** up 12%; **soybeans** down 12%; **soybean meal** down 20%; **soybean oil** down 12%; and **cotton** down 2%. January projections for the volume of meat exports in calendar 2003 compared to 2002 are: **beef** up 4%; **pork** up 2%; **broilers** up 8%; and **turkeys** up 5%. The **U.S. trade** deficit for goods and services increased to $44.2 billion in December, from a revised $40.0 billion in November. The **U.S. agricultural trade** surplus was $1.22 billion in December, compared with $1.48 billion in November.

Prices. The rate of **inflation**, as monitored by the **CPI** for all urban consumers, increased 0.4% in January and has increased 2.6% over the last 12 months. The **PPI** increased 1.6% in January and has increased 2.8% over the last 12 months. The January **prime rate**, averaging 4.25%, is unchanged from December. Compared to a year earlier, **feed** prices in January were up 9%; **feeder livestock and poultry** down 4%; **fertilizer** up 6%; **ag chemicals** up 3%**, farm machinery** prices were down 1%, **seeds** up 7% and **fuels** up 57%.

World Weather and Crop Developments (February 9-16). In the **United States** a large area of low pressure that developed in the eastern Pacific delivered much-needed rain to the Southwest early in the week. In California, the rain halted work in fields and orchards, and some crops experienced lodging, but the moisture was mostly beneficial, especially for dryland grains and forage crops. In addition, mild temperatures promoted vigorous growth of vegetables and other winter crops in California's valleys. The interior Southwest also received abundant rainfall. As the flow of sub-tropical moisture moved east, it met cold arctic air and produced a mixture of wintery precipitation along a boundary that extended from the western Corn Belt near midweek to the Atlantic Coast by the end of the week. Most of the precipitation in the Corn Belt fell as snow and boosted low soil moisture reserves west of the Mississippi River. In the interior Mississippi Delta, eastern Corn Belt, and Ohio and Tennessee Valleys, the precipitation was a mixture of rain, freezing rain, and snow. Where most of the precipitation was rain, soils became saturated, and low-lying areas along rivers and streams were flooded. In the interior Southeast, many areas received freezing rain that knocked down power lines and tree limbs and disrupted travel. Along the Atlantic Coastal Plain, especially in the southern Piedmont, the precipitation reduced soil moisture deficits. Rain also reduced moisture shortages in the Florida Panhandle and northern areas of the Peninsula. In southern Florida, warm, dry weather supported fieldwork and promoted vegetable crop development. In the **FSU**-Western a moderate to deep snow cover protected winter grains from bitterly cold weather. Cold, dry weather prevailed across most of **Europe** as ample snow cover protected dormant winter grains across eastern Europe from bitterly cold weather. In central **Turkey**, seasonably colder weather stressed winter grains after several weeks of mild weather, while widespread precipitation boosted irrigation supplies for winter grains across eastern Turkey and the **Middle East**. Widespread rain returned to most of northwestern **Africa**, except in southern **Morocco** where rain was needed to alleviate short-term dryness. In **Australia** showers boosted topsoil moisture and reservoir levels for irrigated summer crops, but much more rain was needed to end the severe drought plaguing the region. Showers continued to favor reproductive rice in Java, **Indonesia**. Locally heavy rain returned to the Yangtze Valley, while on the North **China** Plain, mild weather continued to favor overwintering wheat. Showers brought additional relief to heat-stressed summer crops in **Argentina** and southern **Brazil**. In South **Africa** scattered showers in the corn belt were too light to prevent net evaporative losses and declines in crop conditions in the east. Rain increased irrigation supplies for winter crops across northwestern **Mexico**.

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