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**FOUR-YEAR PLAN FOR FARM PRICES
IN GREAT BRITAIN.**

Advices have been received from the Official Secretary of the New South Wales Government Offices, London, regarding action taken by the United Kingdom Government in connection with prices to be paid in relation to home-produced crops, livestock and livestock products.

The Official Secretary encloses a circular issued by the Ministry of Agriculture in London which states that the Agricultural Departments of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, in consultation with the National Farmers Unions of these countries, have conducted a review of the general financial position of agriculture in the U.K. The review was based on economic and financial data accepted by the Departments and the Unions as providing a sound basis for an assessment of the financial position of agriculture and as a reliable guide to the relative position of the various commodities.

After considering the results of that review, and taking account of national food requirements, particularly in the next two years, and after considering, also, the views of the Milk Marketing Boards on milk prices, the British Government has decided on the following changes in the existing or announced prices for the principal crops, livestock and livestock products.

Crops from the 1945 Harvest.

Potatoes (excluding 1st earlies): An overall average increase of 10s. per ton.

Sugar Beet: An overall average increase of 5s. per ton.

Cereals (Wheat, Rye, Barley, Oats and Dredge Corn): No change.

The national food situation, it is stated, calls for a further exceptional effort from home agriculture to maintain the high war-time acreages of potatoes and sugar beet. County War Agricultural Executive Committees are being instructed that the required acreages must be secured, if necessary by the service and enforcement of directions. The Government will do everything possible to secure the necessary labour for harvesting these crops in the autumn.

Weather conditions in the autumn and early winter months of 1944 reduced substantially the sowing of winter wheat. It is desired that full use should be made wherever conditions are suitable of the improved varieties of spring wheat now available, but directions will not be served or enforced for the growing of wheat for the 1945 harvest.

Crops from the 1946 Harvest.

Potatoes (excluding 1st earlies): If it proves possible to allow an appreciable relaxation in compulsory directions to grow this crop in 1946, the overall average increase of 10s. per ton allowed for the 1945 crop will be withdrawn. The question whether this lowering of price should be effected by a reduction in the price per ton, or by an equivalent reduction in the acreage payment, will be decided later, after consultation with the National Farmers' Unions.

Sugar Beet: If it proves possible to allow an appreciable relaxation in compulsory directions to grow this crop in 1946, the overall average increase of 5s. per ton allowed for the 1945 crop will be withdrawn.

Wheat and Rye: If the world food situation permits, compulsory directions will not be served for the growing of these crops in 1946, and the acreage payment will then be reduced from £4 to £2 per acre. Subject to any self-balancing changes in the seasonal range of prices of wheat which may be decided upon after consultation with the National Farmers' Unions, the prices per cwt. of these two crops will remain unchanged.

Barley: The guaranteed minimum price of millable barley will be reduced from 90s. to 80s. per quarter.

Oats:)
Dredge Corn:) No change.

Livestock Prices for the 12 months
1st July, 1945, to 30th June, 1946.

Fat Cattle: Prices will be adjusted so as to produce an overall average increase equivalent in a full year to 2/6d per live cwt. on Fat Steers, Heifers and Cow-Heifers. The question whether part of this increase should be allotted to Fat Cows and Bulls is being further discussed with the National Farmers' Unions.

Fat Sheep and Lambs: Prices will be adjusted so as to produce an overall average increase in a full year of $\frac{3}{4}$ d per lb. dead weight.

Fat Pigs: An average overall increase in a full year of 1s. per score dead weight.

Eggs: An increase of 2d per dozen on eggs purchased by packing stations (on and from 28th June, 1945).

The price increases for pigs and eggs take account of the limited improvement in ration scales for these classes of stock

that took effect on 1st January, 1945, and the level of production that may be expected on the basis of the supplies of feeding stuffs of all kinds, including swill and other waste materials, that are likely to be available during the next year.

Milk Prices for the 12 Months
1st April, 1945, to 31st March, 1946.

Milk prices will be adjusted so as to secure an overall average increase of $\frac{5}{8}$ d per gallon in a full year.

In view of the fact that the special conditions which led to the granting in January, 1944, of the war-time production bonus still exist, the Government has decided to continue the bonus for a further 12 months from 1st April, 1945, broadly on the existing lines.

An increase in milk production, especially in the winter months, is still a first priority national requirement.

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The application in detail to seasonal, area and grade prices of the overall annual increases announced above will be discussed with the National Farmers' Unions and the Milk Marketing Boards and revised price schedules for the various products will be announced as soon as possible.

BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S EXPORT GUARANTEES BILL.

The Acting Official Secretary, N.S.W. Government Offices, London, has forwarded to this Department copy of the Export Guarantees Bill which was ordered to be printed by the House of Commons on 19th January, 1945.

The Bill proposes to amend the Export Guarantees Act of 1939 under which the Board of Trade is empowered, in certain circumstances, to give guarantees in connection with the export from the United Kingdom of goods to any country.

The objects of the present Bill are to make provision for the increase of the limits of liability fixed by the 1939 Act, in order to meet the increased demand from the guarantees to be expected after the war and to authorise the Board of Trade to give guarantees in respect of certain external trade transactions.

The limit in respect of all such guarantees as proposed by the Bill shall be increased from seventy-five million pounds to two hundred million pounds.