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FARMERS PLAN to grow about the same acreage of corn in 1960 as in 1959—85.8 million compared with 85.5 million, according to a recent USDA survey. On the other hand, declines are indicated for oats and barley, down 5 and 4 per cent, respectively, while an increase of 6 per cent is indicated for soybeans.

While the total corn acreage is nearly the same as last year, increases are indicated for the Corn Belt and North Atlantic states. Missouri farmers intend to plant 6 per cent more corn, the largest increase for any state. Iowa and Illinois, the two leading corn states, plan increases of 2 and 3 per cent, respectively. South Dakota, which was affected by drought last year, has an indicated decline of 1 per cent. On the other hand, acreage in the South Atlantic, South Central and Western regions is to be down 4 to 6 per cent.

This prospect for 1960 is in sharp contrast with prospects a year ago. The acreage of corn in 1959 was increased 15 per cent, while oats, barley and soybean acreages were reduced substantially. The reasons for that shift: discontinuance of the acreage reserve program of the soil bank, removal of acreage allotments on corn, a higher support price for corn grown on farms not complying with allotments and lower support prices for other feed grains and soybeans.

Much speculation had surrounded the possible direction of acreage shifts in 1960. Price support for corn has been announced at \$1.06 a bushel compared with \$1.12 last year. Support prices for the other feed grains and soybeans will be the same as last year.

Soybean acreage also is indicated to be higher in the Corn Belt, up 10 per cent in Iowa, 8 per cent in Missouri and Ohio, 6 per cent in Indiana and 4 per cent in Illinois.

Most of this planned shift in acreage would come at the expense of oats and hay. Farmers in all of the Corn Belt states are planning cutbacks in oats and, with the exception of Missouri, hay.

Crop Planting Intentions
(million acres)

	Indiana	Illinois	Iowa	Missouri	Nebraska	U.S.
<u>Corn</u>						
1959.....	5.4	10.1	12.6	4.7	7.2	85.5
1960.....	5.5	10.4	12.8	5.0	7.2	85.8
Change (1959-60) .	+1	+3	+2	+3	0	+3
<u>Soybeans</u>						
1959.....	2.3	4.8	2.4	2.3	.2	23.2
1960.....	2.5	5.0	2.7	2.5	.2	24.7
Change (1959-60) .	+2	+2	+3	+2	0	+1.5
<u>Oats</u>						
1959.....	.9	2.4	4.6	1.2	1.4	36.1
1960.....	.8	2.2	4.6	1.1	1.2	34.3
Change (1959-60) .	-.1	-.2	0	-.1	-.2	-1.8

The expansion of corn acreage reflects, in part, further adjustments to the removal of acreage allotments last year and, in part, the impact of the changing technology of corn production. Soybean acreage is apparently responding to the strong demand for soybeans last fall which pushed prices above support levels.

Sorghum apparently will be planted on approximately 20 million acres, nearly equal to the acreage last year. However, an increase of 16 per cent is indicated for Nebraska, while a reduction of 5 per cent is indicated for Texas, the largest sorghum producing state. Iowa farmers also plan to plant a smaller acreage of sorghum. If the spring should continue wet and cold, planting of oats and barley probably would be reduced from current estimates, with the acreages of corn and sorghums being expanded somewhat.

Spring wheat acreage is estimated at 12.8 million, 5 per cent below 1959 and 28 per cent below the average of the past ten years. Favorable yields and prices for durum wheat in 1959, compared with hard spring wheat, are reflected in farmers' plans to increase durum acreage by one-third this year. Other spring wheat acreage is indicated to be 9 per cent below a year ago. The Dakotas and Montana, the major producing states, indicate declines of about 10 per cent.

Cotton acreage will be slightly larger this year, 17.5 million acres, compared with 17.3 million last year. More farmers are switching to the program which permits up to a 40 per cent increase in acreage allotments if a lower support price is accepted. The effect on production will apparently be relatively larger since almost all of the acreage increase is in the high-yielding areas of the West.

SHIPMENTS OF STOCKER AND FEEDER CATTLE AND CALVES into eight North Central states during February declined 7 per cent as compared with a year ago. Indiana showed a sharp increase, with inshipments more than double the 1959 figure. South Dakota and Nebraska, on the other hand, have indicated rather sharp decreases of 25 and 40 per cent, respectively.

The February inshipments brought the total number of feeder cattle and calves received in the eight states during the first two months of 1960 to 647,685 head, 4 per cent fewer than in the corresponding period in 1959.

Research Department