

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK  
IN  
AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS  
STATE OF OKLAHOMA

E. A. MILLER, Director

OKLAHOMA AGRICULTURAL AND  
MECHANICAL COLLEGE AND  
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# SAFE FARMING FOR 1924

By BRADFORD KNAPP, President  
Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College

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## THE GOSPEL OF SAFE FARMING

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1. *Remember the fertility of thy soil that thy days may be long on the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee.*
  2. *Take heed of thy garden and thy cow, thy sow and thy hen that thy wife and thy children may eat though all else shall fail thee.*
  3. *Put not thy trust in one crop only upon thy farm but provide against the evil days by producing thine own food and feed.*
  4. *Despise not the day of small things. Thy bread grain, thine own vegetables, meat, milk and eggs are thy sure rock of safety in time of trouble. Neglect them not upon thy farm.*
  5. *The wise man leaveth nothing to chance but produceth for his family their food in season and for his livestock their feed and forage. The foolish man risketh all upon one crop and great is his sorrow and the lamentations of his family when disaster cometh to that crop.*---BRADFORD KNAPP.
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## SAFETY

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1. Put an *insurance policy* on your farm business in 1924 by producing food for the family and feed for the livestock before you bet too much money on an uncertain cotton price.

2. Make good "cows, sows and hens" help feed the family and the surplus help pay the family grocery bill. It is good business whether cotton remains high or the price goes down.

3. Hay and grain for stock feed will be worth more than money in your bank this fall and next winter if you have to buy feed.

4. The garden, fruit and potatoes for home use will help whether cotton sells for 30c or 10c. Why not be safe?

5. Don't try to eat cotton this fall. Cotton is a mighty poor living crop but a good cash crop. Make your cotton crop your clean surplus by producing food for the home use, feed for livestock and your own milk, meat and **eggs**.

6. As a safety plan have something else for sale besides cotton.

7. Be prepared for every emergency. Don't bet everything on cotton.

Yours for safe farming,

BRADFORD KNAPP.

# SAFE FARMING FOR 1924

BY BRADFORD KNAPP, *President*

*Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College*

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Since 1915 the writer has published annually a bulletin on the subject of SAFE FARMING for the purpose of bringing to the attention of farmers the cotton situation and again reminding them of certain fundamental principles which are described under the title of SAFE FARMING. There never was a time in the history of the South when it was more important for cotton farmers to understand the situation than the year 1924. The great danger at present is a misunderstanding of general conditions, overplanting and overproduction resulting in a low price and a halting of our progress toward a degree of prosperity.

Farming is a business and like every other business it should pay a profit to those who are engaged in it. It is important that farmers should understand the economic laws governing all business. The business of farming is subject to the same general rules that influence all other business. We must understand what the conditions of the world are, what the prosperity of the world is, whether the world can absorb and use a large crop at a good price and whether a large production means a low price or possibly cotton at lower than the cost of production. It seems to me we have had about all the experience we need in this job of producing cotton for less than cost of production but unless we show some degree of wisdom we may be facing that situation in 1924.

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SAFE FARMING?

SAFE FARMING is a term used to describe a definite idea in farming and by it is meant the system which:

1. Maintains and builds up the fertility of the soil as the first great necessity in all prosperous and successful agriculture.
2. Produces as nearly as possible food for the people and feed for all livestock on the farm.

3. Produces a number of well selected crops and livestock products suitable to the soil, climate, and market conditions to sell on the market for cash.

### THE PRESENT COTTON SITUATION

PRICES.---The present relatively high price of cotton is the chief factor of danger. We are all glad to see the cotton farmer receive a fair price but the danger lies in our failure to estimate world conditions and hence in throwing away our prosperity by producing an enormous crop of cotton which the world will not buy except at a low price. What is the cause of the present high price of cotton? Nothing more nor less than short crops, or in other words, a limited production of cotton such as the world has been perfectly willing to buy at good prices. Bad seasons and excessive boll weevil damage due partly to seasons and partly to mild winters have held down production.

What will defeat these causes of good prices and bring low prices? The answer is a large acreage, a good season and a small amount of boll weevil damage. These three things will bring us a large crop of cotton and that means lower prices. In the following table I present the acreage and the total crop in five hundred pound bales of cotton for each year since 1914.

# THE COTTON CROP

Acreage, Production, Estimated Farm Value, Yield per Acre and Value per Acre in the United States and in Oklahoma by years from 1914 to 1923, inclusive. Data taken from U. S. Census and U. S. Department of Agriculture publications.

## COTTON IN THE UNITED STATES

Year	Acreage	Production in 500-lb. Bales	Estimated Farm Value	Average Farm Price Dec. 1	Yield lbs. Lint Per Acre	Value Per Acre
1914	36,832,000	16,135,000	\$ 549,036,000	6.8	209.2	
1915	31,412,000	11,192,000	631,460,000	11.3	170.3	\$19.46
1916	34,985,000	11,450,000	1,122,295,000	19.6	156.6	30.64
1917	33,841,000	11,302,000	1,566,195,000	27.7	159.7	45.12
1918	36,008,000	12,041,000	1,663,633,000	27.6	159.6	45.03
1919	33,556,000	11,421,000	2,034,658,000	35.6	158.2	59.00
1920	35,878,000	13,440,000	933,658,000	13.9	170.8	25.14
1921	30,509,000	7,954,000	643,933,000	16.2	124.5	21.05
1922	33,036,000	9,762,000	1,161,846,000	23.8	141.5	35.03
1923	37,420,000	10,081,000	1,563,347,000	31.	128.5	41.98

## COTTON IN OKLAHOMA

Year	Acreage	Production in 500-lb. Bales	Average Farm Price Dec. 1	Yield lbs. Lint Per Acre	Value Acre Per
1914	2,847,000	1,262,000	6.5	212	
1915	1,895,000	640,000	11.3	162	\$17.52
1916	2,562,000	823,000	19.	154	29.26
1917	2,183,000	959,000	26.5	165	39.75
1918	2,998,000	577,000	25.5	92	21.68
1919	2,424,000	1,016,000	35.2	190	66.88
1920	2,765,000	1,300,000	10.5	225	23.62
1921	2,206,000	481,000	15.4	104	16.02
1922	2,915,000	627,000	23.	103	23.69
1923	3,295,000	620,000	29.6	90	26.64

From the above table you will readily see that on an acreage less than last year's acreage we have produced over sixteen million bales of cotton. Look at the figures for 1918 and 1920. We can do that again if we have a good growing season which will be favorable to plant production and unfavorable to weevil damage. Such seasons are perfectly possible. The boll weevil has been in Oklahoma since 1906 and it has been in the great cotton producing section of Texas since 1904. It has been in all of the cotton territory as far east as Alabama since 1909. In all of those years we have had good crops and poor crops whether the boll weevil was present or not. We have had a severe winter the past winter, more so than any for a number of years past. Will we destroy the prosperity of the South by planting "every field and fence corner" to cotton and throw away our prosperity? I am afraid it is going to be done. The object of this bulletin is to put the matter straight before farmers and ask them to do certain simple things which may save us from the disaster in case it comes.

The European situation is not settled down yet. Bad exchange values of European money are still with us as they have been for several years past, only they are worse than ever today. Buying power in Europe is still low. They are still poor. Our own country has not more prosperity than last year; at least, if the buying power of our people has greatly increased we do not know it. There is talk of prosperity but that is the prosperity that is just coming; possibly it will come unless things go wrong. We can easily turn this possible prosperity into hard times in the cotton territory by overproduction.

### PROPAGANDA

There is a lot of propaganda in the papers and elsewhere regarding the need for a large production of cotton. Let me quote from an eastern Oklahoma paper: "A greater acreage of cotton will be planted than was put in last year, the idea being that the boll weevil will get a lot of it and the larger the acreage the better chance the farmer will have to get a profit." From a Kansas City paper I take this: "In spite of all the advice to the contrary, the South will plant its fields and fence corners to cotton to the extent labor can be found to do it. Since the great weevil invasion started several years ago it has been found that now and then we have a season so favorable to cotton and so unfavorable to the weevil that nearly a full crop is made. Should that condition prevail this year on an acreage in excess of forty mil-

lion it would cut the price in half and give a serious set-back to new growers throughout the world."

Other papers are trying to scare the farmers into believing that Brazil, other South American countries, Africa, China, and elsewhere in the world will be competing with us in cotton and take away our monopoly. I think that most of this comes from sources that want cheap cotton. If we should produce fourteen or fifteen million bales of cotton in 1924, unless there is a remarkable change in the world not now possible to foresee, we will have to sell such a crop at a low price. Twice in the last ten years farmers of the South have sold cotton for less than cost of production. Each time they have gone heavily in debt and it has taken some years to pay out. In 1914 this happened and again in 1920. We did not recover from the disaster in 1920 until very recently. Do we want to repeat that experience?

### COTTON IN NEW TERRITORY

The influence of the good price without a proper appreciation of world conditions and the causes of these high prices is leading to an extension of the cotton area here in the United States. I have a bulletin published in Kentucky regarding cotton production which is being extended there. Missouri will almost double her acreage this year. Illinois is putting in thousands of acres. Out in the Panhandle and in Northwestern Oklahoma where cotton ordinarily is an unprofitable crop, farmers are being tempted to go into it and will lose all they hope to make if we get a large crop.

### FACTORS CONTROLLING PRODUCTION

The factors controlling production of the total crop are:

1. The total acreage planted
2. Fertility of the soil on which same is planted
3. The weather or seasonal conditions, both winter and summer
4. Insect enemies and plant diseases

What are the factors influencing the profit in cotton production? The profit in cotton production is dependent mainly upon four things:

1. *The Prevailing Price.*---The price is affected by the total amount of cotton there may be in existence in the world, the necessity on the part of those who hold the cotton to sell it, and, more

than anything else, by the ability of the world to buy cotton. By ability to buy I mean what some people describe as "buying power". This is influenced by such things as wages of workers, the amount of idleness or employment, the degree of prosperity of farmers and wage earners generally and many other factors.

2. *Production per Acre.*---Production per acre has a great deal to do with the profit in cotton production. What we need in 1924 is not more acres of cotton but a larger yield per acre on less acres. It would too greatly lengthen this bulletin to give figures to show that there is a definite relation between yield per acre and cost of production. The quotation in the Eastern Oklahoma paper above is pure folly. A better yield on less acres will bring more profit to the farmer than an increased acreage and a lowering of yield. It takes just about the same amount of work to plow and care for the land, the same amount of seed to plant it and the same amount of cultivation whether the yield is 100 pounds of lint or 300 pounds, but any farmer will admit that the profit would be very much in favor of the 300 pound yield. Larger production with the same labor and capital invested brings greater profit in farming just as in manufacturing.

3. *Economy of Production.*---By economy of production I mean good management on the farm; handling labor, tools and machinery to the best possible advantage. Do the work well and cover the largest possible amount of ground with a given amount of labor. There are many things entering into this but I am trying to describe what I mean by good management. A part of it is the question of fertility of the soil and the production per acre.

4. *Economy in Marketing.*---The marketing of cotton through a cooperative marketing association which can institute every possible saving for the benefit of the grower and economize in every step from producer to the ultimate consumer, will bring more of the money received for the cotton back to the farmer than for the farmer to part with his title and let the other fellow do all of the handling of it. This bulletin is too brief for me to describe the subject of cooperative marketing, but economy in the marketing of cotton, the saving of waste, and unnecessary expenses and profits to other people will ultimately bring into the hands of the farmer a better profit from his business.



## WHAT SHOULD WE DO REGARDING COTTON IN 1924?

In discussing this subject I am rather inclined to put it the other way---What should we plan to do in order to be safe in 1924? There are a few things which can be done to safeguard the situation. They are as follows:

1. As far as possible every farm in 1924 should produce the family food by making a good home garden and keeping cows, sows and hens to produce milk, meat and eggs sufficient for home needs every day in the year.

2. Every farm should grow in 1924 all of the grain and forage necessary to feed the livestock.

3. Every farm should grow more than one crop or livestock product to sell for cash as a measure of safety in case of disaster to the chief cash crop resulting from either crop failure or overproduction and low price.

Safety and security are prime essentials. It is better to be safe than to be sorry. When the other fellow is wanting to gamble on the situation, let us in Oklahoma follow a safe plan which means our food and our feed and some cotton to sell, and also some poultry and eggs, cream, a few hogs and some other things to sell besides cotton. Feed in the bin or in the hay mow is worth as much as cash in the bank or more when you have to buy feed. The greatest security against speculation in the cotton game is plenty of feed and forage and lots of food for our own people in Oklahoma.

## THE BOLL WEEVIL

What the boll weevil damage will be in the year 1924 is a problem which cannot be foretold. Professor C. E. Sanborn of the Department of Entomology of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College has published a bulletin for distribution, giving sound advice on methods of boll weevil control. Our Department of Agronomy has written regarding methods of control by cultural methods. I urge farmers and business men to secure these bulletins by applying to your County Agent or directly to the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College at Stillwater.

I want to point out here only this, that at least 80 or 90 percent of all the control of the boll weevil will have to be by good farming

or in other words good cultural practices which consist of preparing a good seed bed, planting seed of well known varieties from good sources, particularly those of the early maturing kind, and then good cultivation. These bulletins go into more detail than is necessary here. Every farmer should have a copy.

### WHEAT FARMING

This bulletin is intended mainly for the cotton area and deals with the cotton problem. The principles laid down here apply, nevertheless, to the wheat farmer in Oklahoma. It would lengthen the bulletin too greatly to discuss the wheat situation, but reduction in acreage in wheat until demand can overtake the supply, and the production of home supplies and the other important plans suggested in this bulletin apply with equal force to farmers whose major cash crop is wheat. During the early summer, this institution plans to issue a special bulletin dealing with the wheat problem along these lines.

### SAFE FARMING NOT A CURE-ALL

The writer recognizes the fact that a safe-farming program will not necessarily restore the parity between the price of farm products and the price of other commodities. It will not, of itself, restore prosperity to farmers. It will not straighten out the difficulty in Europe. It is presented as the best self-help plan and as a strong influence toward the restoration of agricultural prosperity.

### A SAFE FARMING PROGRAM FOR 1924

A SAFE FARMING PROGRAM for 1924 consists of the following items:

1. *A good home garden for every farm family*, including the potato, either Irish or sweet or both, for home use, and where possible, a patch of cane for syrup.
2. *Grain for feed for the livestock*. This should be from crops adapted to conditions in each section of the state. It may be corn in one section and kafir or milo in another, or any other crop suitable for production of grain for feed for the livestock.
3. *Hay, forage and pasture for livestock*. Here alfalfa, sudan grass, grain sorghums, corn fodder, etc., come into play and grazing

of winter grains and good grass or alfalfa pastures are the important thing. These must be adapted to the different parts of the state and the County Agent has bulletins from this institution which will give explicit directions applying to each particular section.

4. *Milk, meat and eggs for the family* by keeping good cows, sows and hens and improving their quality through good breeding, care and management.

5. *Cash crops for sale.* In the cotton territory the leading one of these is certainly cotton. In planting cotton I certainly would not increase the acreage, but rely upon the yield per acre to give me the production. We have greatly increased the acreage in the past two years. For profit we do not need more acres but a greater yield per acre. In addition to the cotton, I suggest that we have something else to sell for cash. On some farms this may be sweet potatoes, on others an increase in poultry flock, in another section and on other farms it may mean more milk than is necessary for the home use, therefore, the sale of some cream to cream stations. On some others it may mean a few hogs or an acreage in some other crop that can be sold for cash.

6. *Don't put all the eggs in one basket.* Have something to fall back on in case an enormous crop of cotton should make the cotton a poor proposition. It is a mighty good thing to make the surplus miscellaneous products of the farm support the family and save the main cash crop like cotton for cash sale. It is a good plan to make the cotton crop a surplus crop and not a crop out of which we live on credit.

## COOPERATIVE MARKETING

The writer believes cooperative marketing so important in cotton production that I cannot close this discussion of the cotton situation without impressing the importance of that movement. It is important for farmers to remember that no amount of good marketing will save us from a lowering of the price if we over produce cotton and the world knows there is more than the world can really buy at a good price. Cooperative marketing cannot overcome the disadvantage of an immense crop to market any more than the business world can do the same thing. The subject discussed in this bulletin is, therefore, of importance to the cooperative marketing movement. The economy in marketing is one of the big things. Wisdom in the sale and the distri-

bution of the crops of this state is tremendously important to our people but it will be a disaster to the state to be helping the world to a fifteen million bale crop and then expect cooperative marketing to hold up the price. European conditions and the economic situation in this country do not warrant any such hazard.

The following are some rules for SAFE FARMING AND HELPS TO HOME OWNERSHIP worked out by a group of bankers, business men and the staff of our Experiment Station, together with the able help of some representatives of the good farm papers of Oklahoma, at a recent meeting where all were deeply interested in the success of the farmers of Oklahoma. I attach them because I believe they are wise rules and they may be of assistance in enforcing the very points brought out in this bulletin.

1. Build up and maintain the fertility of farm soils through the use of legumes, livestock, rotation of crops and terracing where needed.
2. As far as possible, have the farm produce the family food supply by making a home garden, and having "the cow, the sow and the hen" produce milk, meat and eggs sufficient for home needs every day in the year.
3. Plan for and plant crops as will insure feed for the livestock every year. A surplus of feed every year is better than a shortage any one year. Feed in the bin is worth more than money in the bank when feed has to be shipped in.
4. Increase the income from cows, sows and hens through better breeding, along with proper feeding and housing.
5. Grow more than one crop to sell for cash each year.
6. Standardize the sale products produced in your community.
7. Study the business side of farming, including farm management, the cost of production and the savings due to good business management and thrift.
8. Organize for cooperative marketing through commodity marketing associations, both local and on a large scale.
9. Make education in the rural schools do more for the business of farming. See that farm boys and girls get a chance at high

school and college education equal to that of town boys and girls.

10. Read such farm papers as will keep you informed on all new farm facts found at experiment stations and also tell you about the experience of other farmers. Get and read bulletins of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the State Experiment Station, and the Extension Service. Work with your County Agent and County Home Demonstration Agent on local problems.
11. No farmer can ever get ahead who does not manage some way to live inside his income.
12. Get a year ahead instead of staying a year behind.
13. Every farmer who owns his home today has followed some of the rules laid down above.
14. Any farmer, who is today a tenant, if he will follow these rules may soon save enough to make a payment on a piece of land. Once he is on that land as his own, he will find it easier and even more profitable to follow these rules to pay for and improve a home for his family.

#### RHYMES TO REMEMBER\*

15. "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, 'I have no hen'."
16. "Ill fares the farm, to hastening ill a prey, where motors accumulate and cows decay."

\*Written by John Fields.





