

# Harvest Moon Is Bright

**L**AST fall, Oklahoma farmers planted more acres of wheat than ever before. Generally, weather has been favorable and they are preparing to harvest the biggest crop in history, estimated to total 172.5 million bushels.

Completion of this harvest will be one of the most significant achievements of the year, not just for farmers but for all.

The nation needs the wheat, because carryover stocks are expected to be down to a two-months supply by the end of the marketing year July 1.

The world needs wheat, too. The rate of population growth may be slowing, but it is still outrunning food production in most countries. More productive nations want more wheat to enable their people to eat better.

Contrary to impressions portrayed in emotion-charged promotions, the United States has been and still is very generous in sharing its abundance with hungry nations, whether they can pay or not. More than three-fourths of all international food aid has been supplied by our country. That is part of the reason why 85 per cent of Oklahoma's wheat crop moves straight to export markets for foreign consumption.

Farmers need the big harvest, too, because their expenses have been going up and the price per bushel has been going down. This time last

year the price of wheat was around \$3.50 per bushel. Current cash quotations at state markets are \$3.06 to \$3.11.

Unless the price declines further, the crop will be worth more than \$500 million, which is a great deal of new wealth. As farmers sell their grain, this money will move into channels of trade, finance, tax funds and contributions to institutions.

Wholesale and retail businesses are noticeably stimulated as soon as cash from wheat begins circulating. Increased sales will improve the state's employment situation immediately. It always does.

The task of moving 172.5 million bushels of wheat from farms to country elevators, terminal markets and export facilities is a tremendous transportation project. At 60 lb. per bushel, total weight exceeds 10 billion pounds, which probably is twice the weight of all the cattle and calves in the state.

Consumers are directly concerned with the size of the wheat crop, because an abundance assures ready supplies of foods and tends to stabilize retail prices.

The new crop year may be the first time in five years when wheat production will exceed disappearance. The state, the nation, and the world need Oklahoma's big wheat crop. When it is safe in the bin, there should be great rejoicing for the harvest.