

SPECIAL REPORT NO.

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Subject: Ques. #333 - "ANNUAL WORLD WOOL PRODUCTION & NUMBER OF SHEEP IN THE WORLD"

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As reliable statistics with regard to the production of various commodities in China are not available now any more than they have been in the past, this questionnaire must be answered on practically the same basis as it has been answered in previous years. Chinese wool production occurs chiefly in interior provinces where general industrial, social and political conditions are very little changed from what they were a century or more ago. Production is principally in the hands of tribesmen whose grazing fields extend over vast areas. Wool is produced in practically all of the provinces north of the Yangtze River, but wool for export is only known to be produced in the provinces of Suiyuan, Shensi, Szechuen, Kansu and the districts of Mongolia, Manchuria, Chinese Eastern Turkistan and Kokonor.

The bulk of the exports of wool from China is exported through Tientsin, although a considerable amount of what is known as Szechuen wool is exported through Chungking and Shanghai.

A great majority of the people living in the wool producing areas of China are dependent for their existence upon some form of animal life, their goats, sheep, cattle, horses and even camels representing their material wealth. There are various collecting

centers for such products as wool, but eventually the bulk of the wool for export reaches Tientsin. It is probable that the average number of sheep in existence in China varies very little from year to year, but as to obtaining an accurate estimate of what the actual number is, under existing circumstances in China this is impossible.

As a result practically the only means of estimating the number of sheep is that adopted by Assistant Trade Commissioner Venator in his report of February 4, 1931, on this subject. Assistant Trade Commissioner Venator based his estimates on the only statistics that are available, namely, the Customs Returns showing the exports of wool to foreign countries. Since exports of wool from China during each individual year are influenced by political, transportation and economic conditions and since none of these factors have any considerable affect upon wool production which probably remains fairly normal, it was necessary to arrive at an average export figure to be used as the arbitrary figure for estimating the number of sheep in China. To obtain this, Assistant Trade Commissioner Venator took the exports for the past ten years and found that the average annual amount of wool exported from China was 46,500,000 pounds. No reliable figures covering the consumption of wool in China are available, and it is variously estimated that China consumes between one-fifth and three-fifths of her average total production. This being the case it was reasonable to estimate that China exported three-fifths and consumed two-fifths of the normal production and working on this ratio it was found that average yearly exports

amounted to 46,500,000 pounds and the estimated average native consumption should equal around 31,000,000 pounds, making a total average annual production of 77,500,000 pounds.

As to the number of sheep in China, this must be estimated from the amount of wool produced. Various authorities have informed us that the average production per sheep of wool each year amounted to between two and three and one-half pounds. Taking this with the estimated total production, it may be roughly estimated that there are between thirty-five and forty million sheep in China.

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