

In the older canal systems the increase in gross area almost certainly means that the volume of irrigation water per acre correspondingly decreased. This is a continuation of a long-established trend. Between 1905 and 1950, according to Majid, (15) the amount of irrigation water per acre in the Kharif season declined at a rate of about 1.1 percent per year. In the Rabi season, the amount of water per acre declined at about 0.55 percent per year.

### Marketing and Prices

Within the villages, marketing is largely self-contained, with considerable barter and few quality standards. For export crops there is a commercial marketing system with some quality grading. These crops are generally sold for cash to village merchants, landlords, and traveling buyers, acting on their own behalf or as agents for processors and exporters in urban centers. Such middlemen perform an important assembly function for producers in outlying regions. Much of the cotton grown in Former Sind is sold to cotton ginneries who have financed the farmers' variable costs for the current season.

For such perishable products as poultry, eggs, meat, vegetables, and fruits, prices fluctuate widely at both wholesale and retail levels. Because of inadequacies of storage and transportation, there is a succession of gluts and shortages in the rural areas, with prices falling below costs of production in flush periods. In many cases prices are determined by quantity without-regard to quality. (16)

A relatively small share of wheat production is sold outside the villages, perhaps 15 to 30 percent. The remainder is consumed by the farmers and their fellow villagers, and this consumption probably remains fairly stable except during years of crop failure. Variations in the size of the crop may thus strongly affect the volume of marketed supplies. In a good year the volume of wheat sold probably increases more than the increase in production; the reverse is likely to be true during a bad year.

---

(15) "Note on the Value of Delta for the Various Punjab Canals in the Rabi of 1950-51", Irrigation Branch, Public Works Department, March 1954.

(16) Government of Pakistan, Central Statistical Office, Cooperation and Marketing Department, "Report on the Marketing of Fresh Fruits in Pakistan", 211 pp., Karachi, 1958.