Farm products in Lafayette Parish in 1972 had a record value — $18,420,849. But the
heavy harvest costs — brought
on by the rains, mostly — gave
farmers less profit than in 1971
when the total value of crops
in the parish was less than
$17,000,000.

Dairying continues to lead
soybeans, cotton and other par-
ish farming operations in dollar
value. Last year milk and milk
products produced in the parish
accounted for $4,12,220. The
beef cattle industry was a close
second, though, at $3,343,300 last
year.

Other Products
Other farm products in the par-
ish last year, in order of
their gross value (that is before
all those harvest costs and other
expenses are subtracted) are:

- Rice — $2,237,240
- Sugar cane — $1,449,397
- Soybeans — $1,265,000
- Nursery crops — $1,250,000
- Cotton — $862,968
- Truck crops — $834,345
- (down over $750,000 from two
years ago)
- Swine — $123,120
- Horses — $85,
- Fish and crawfish — $73
- Nuts — $9,600.

In 1972 farmers in the parish
planted only 4,000 acres of cot-
ton — 1,000 acres less than the
year before. And Brackin says
the cotton acreage in the parish
will likely drop each year.

The cotton yield per acre was
very good in the parish this
year, but the rains at harvest
time hurt. There were about
600 acres of cotton in the parish
that were never even harv-
ested,” Brackin said. “Now it
wouldn’t even be worth it to
got that cotton. It will rot
in the fields.

Cotton Crop
In 1970 the parish cotton crop
was worth $1,010,000; in 1972 the
value was down to $862,968. And
Brackin expects the value will
go down as and down as more
and more farmers give up their
cotton acreage.

“Toney wise dairying is still
our leading industry,” Brackin
noted. “But increasing operat-
ing costs are making it more
difficult for our dairymen to
stay in business.”

Edwin Simon of the Youn-
sville area was chosen the top
dairyman in Louisiana last
year, which is great. But increas-
ing operating costs are making
it more difficult for our dairymen
to stay in business.

Sugar cane farmers had a
real hard luck story in 1972.
They got the much-needed
rains during the growing period
and the prospects for a real
bumper crop were high. But
the rains did not stop when it
came time to harvest. The
downpours knocked a lot of the
cane down and tangled it. The
mud made harvesting almost
impossible and very costly.

Top Heavy
“One of the reasons the rains
knocked the cane down was that
we had such a good crop and
the plants were top heavy,”
Brackin explained. Indications
were the parish could expect
21 tons of cane per acre — cer-
tainly not a record for the state,
but real good for the parish.

Because of the drowned cane
and the deep mud, cane farm-
ers were bringing a lot of trash
to the sugar mills. This cost
the farmer more money. The
harvest took more labor than
normal and thousands of dollars
in equipment broke down in the
mud.

Beef cattlemen in the parish
were receiving two to three
cents a pound more for their
meat than they did in 1971.

Brackin pointed out that the
cost of feed today is much
higher than it was 19 years
ago. That means the cattlemen
in 1972 made less profit than
they did in 1954.

Soybean Production
Soybean production is up in
Lafayette Parish. Many par-
ish farmers are shifting from
rice or cotton to beans because
the market is good and less
care is needed.

Bean acreage in the parish
has increased by 2,000 acres in
the last year and another jump
of 2,000 acres in the next year
is very possible.

“Our farmers are finding out
that beans do real well and our
market is good and less
care is needed.

Bean acreage in the parish
has increased by 2,000 acres in
the last year and another jump
of 2,000 acres in the next year
is very possible.

A.J. Brackin, Lafayette Parish
County agent, said, “We
have never had a wetter har-
vest time for cane than we had
in 1972. Cotton in the parish
was exceptionally late maturing
because there was not much
rain during the early growing
season. Normally by the time
the heavy rains come, the cot-
ton harvest is all over, but the
crop was late this year and the
rain caught up.”