

Family Farm Continues to Hold Own In Changing Agricultural System

Family farms continue to be the dominant type of farm in the United States, after several decades of rapidly changing technology in farming, the U S Department of Agriculture reports. However, the revolution in farm know-how is resulting in larger and fewer farms.

The trend to larger farms has caused many persons to see the family farm giving way to large-scale units—“factories in the field”—with marked separation of management and labor. The increasing investment needed and the larger size of farms associated with modern farming have raised questions as to the ability of operators of family farms to compete with large-scale operators.

A growth in farm size is to be expected during a period when improved farming methods have nearly doubled the work capacity of farm labor. The rise in operating costs makes farmers strive for high output per man, per machine per farm. The study views growth in farm size in relation to changes in farm output per man-hour of labor and prices received by farmers. Viewed in this way, family farms appear to be holding their own. Today, as 25 years ago, some 96 per cent of all farms are family operated.

Here are some of the changes in the picture during the past quarter-century.

Since 1930, the total number of farms decreased by 14 million from 62 million to 48 million. During that time there was an

even greater drop in the number of commercial farms -- 1.6 million. In that period, almost a million commercial farms in the South dropped from the census count -- largely the result of a reduction in the number of share-cropper units.

Farms classed as “non-commercial” in the 1954 farm census have increased rapidly. They comprised only 15 per cent of all farms in 1930, but accounted for nearly a third in 1954. Most of the farms in this group were residential or part-time farms, and their operators depended for their living largely upon non-farm work.

Subsistence farms -- those with annual sales of less than \$250 and thus the major source of cash income of the farm family -- numbered more than one-half million in 1930 and 1940, but today total less than 200,000.

Farm size is generally thought of in terms of acres, but the nation's farms have grown in other dimensions as well. Volume of business, income and expense figures, net worth and investment are among other measures -- and they, too are up.

Family farms -- those commercial units lying between the extremes of farm income -- still make up the vital core of American agriculture, the study repeatedly points out.

Surprisingly, a quarter-century of technological progress has brought with it a slight increase in the proportion of farms that are smaller than one-man units. One

56 Lancaster County Youths Listed In Chicken of Tomorrow Contest

Fifty-six Lancaster County boys and girls have entries in the Chicken of Tomorrow contest to be judged May 7.

They are Glenn Aldinger, R3 Elizabethtown, Robert W. Armstrong, R1 Drumore; Fred Bernhard, R2 Mt. Joy; Esther M. Binkley, R4 Lititz; Kenneth E. Binkley, R4 Lititz.

Raymond L. Bomberger, R2 Lititz; Ronald Bomberger, R3 Manheim; Grafton K. Brabson, R1 Peach Bottom; Jerry Brandt, R1 Marietta; Luke E. Bruckhart, R3 Manheim.

Third of the family farms in the 1954 census would not provide full-time work for one man at the existing level of technology.

Low incomes are a chronic problem on many of these smaller commercial farms. Even though the number of commercial units has been reduced by about a third in the past 10 years, there has not been much improvement in the real income of many of the small commercial farmers who remain in farming.

The USDA study has much to say about the current and future problems of family farms. It concludes that the family farm will continue to be an important factor in our agriculture. It also suggests that failure to reach farm sizes of family proportion is a more clear and present danger to the family farm than is the development of larger than family-size units.

Marlin L. Cassell, R1 Manheim; David Connor, Rohrerstown; Charles Cooper, R3 Manheim; David Halladay, Spinaway Farm, Kirkwood; Tom Halladay Jr., Spinaway Farm, Kirkwood.

Edwin Hamley, R1 Reinholds; John Hastings Jr., Kirkwood; Louise M. Herr, 2237 Marietta Pike, Rohrerstown; Sara A. Heir, 2237 Marietta Pike, Rohrerstown; Donald Hershey, R3 Lititz.

Bonnie Jackson, R1 Christiana; Jill G. Jackson, R1 Christiana; Glenn Kauffman, 510 Peach St. Elizabethtown; Marilyn Longenecker, R1 Elizabethtown; Mildred Longenecker, R1 Elizabethtown.

Daniel K. Miller, Rohrerstown; Charles Moore, 780 Eden Rd. Lancaster; Floyd H. Moore, 780 Eden Rd. Lancaster; Grace I. Moore, 780 Eden Rd. Lancaster; Joseph Moore, 780 Eden Rd., Lancaster.

Clay Mumma Jr., R1 Elizabethtown; Walter E. Myers, R1 Mt. Joy; Kenneth Redcay, R2 Quarryville; Charles Rohrer, R1 Paradise; Richard Rohrer, R1 Paradise.

James Rutt, 167 New Haven St., Mt. Joy; Carl Shelly, Kendrick, Manheim; Jay R. Shelly, R4 Lititz; Vernon T. Shenk, R2 Denver; Ronald Shreiner, R3 Manheim; M. Richard Skethway, R1 Paradise; J. Richard Snavely, R3 Elizabethtown; J. Wilbur Solenberger, R2 Holtwood; Kenneth Stoltzfus, Gap; Charles Warfel III, R1 Conestoga.

Nebraska Steers Butcher Out Record Yield

OMAHA, Neb. — A Nebraska-fed load of Hereford steers butchered in Omaha, hung up what is believed to be an all-time national record in beef yield.

The whitefaces, fattened by veteran feeder Harold Nellor of Beemer, produced an amazing yield of 68.04 per cent, according to Carl From, owner of Union Packing Company which processed the shipment. Cattle buyer W. G. (Bill) Meyers purchased the 1,537 lb. Herefords on the Omaha market at \$25 cwt. Beef or dress-out yield is the average percentage of table beef that can be realized from any given group of cattle.

Nellor got the Herefords as feeder stock in the Sand Hills of Nebraska. The steers had been fed for 17 months.

The Nellor beef will be forwarded to exclusive clientele in New York, according to Frohm. “Some of the steaks and roasts will probably wind up in the Waldorf-Astoria at \$10 a plate,” he said.

Judy Warfel, R1 Conestoga; Guy H. Weidman, R1 Gap; Carolyn Wilson, R1 Bareville; Robert M. Wilson, R1 Bareville; William I. Wilson, R1 Bareville.

Raymond K. Winters, R2 Conestoga; Frank J. Yost, R2 Narvon; Glenn D. Yost, R2 Narvon; Ivan R. Yost, R2 Narvon; John S. Yost, R2 Narvon; and Wilmer E. Yost, R2 Narvon.

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