

Farm Families Live Better --And Pay More to Do It

Farm families have made tremendous gains in levels of living since 1941. This shows up in all categories of family spending. More money is going for medical care for modern equipment and labor-saving materials which give homemakers more leisure, and for improving homes for more comfortable, more pleasant living.

Findings from a recent analysis of farm household expenditures by home economists in the USDA Institute of Home Economics provide evidence of the gains. Data used for the analysis come chiefly from a survey in which nearly 4,000 farm-operator families living in all parts of the United States reported their 1955 expenditures, from a recent survey of urban family living expenditures, and from a survey of both farm and urban family living expenditures in 1941. These data were supplemented by information from the Bureau of the Census on housing facilities and equipment.

Farm families spent about two thirds more money in 1955 than in 1941, when dollar values are adjusted for price changes. This rate of spending is about half that of city families. The rate in 1941 was about 30 per cent. Rural levels of living are closer to urban spending than these figures indicate, however, because farm

families usually have much home-produced food and usually don't pay separate rent for the farm dwelling.

Medical care made most gain in this category. Farm families approached the closest to city levels of spending. Farm families spent an average of \$325 in 1955, as compared with \$155 spent in 1941 (in dollars of constant purchasing power). The 1955 level is about three-fourths that of city families.

One reason for the gain is the widespread growth of medical prepayment plans and health insurance. These enable families to procure surgical and medical treatment when needed. Also, new hospitals built under the rural community health assistance program make medical care more readily available to farm families.

Almost impossible to measure is the improvement electric power and equipment brings to country living. The rapid spread of power lines is an indication of the value farm families put on power. In 1940 only 33 per cent of farm households had electricity, 18 per cent had piped running water, and 15 per cent a mechanical refrigerator. By 1956, 94 per cent of farm homes had electricity, 64 per cent piped running water, and 90 per cent a mechanical refrigerator.

A goodly number had washing machines, telephones, indoor flush toilets, and other facilities and labor saving equipment.

How much use of electric current has increased is indicated by expenditures for current. In 1955, rural families spent a yearly average of \$81. In 1941 the average was \$39 and the rate for current was higher.

More farm families now purchase piped and bottled gas for cooking and fuel oil for heating and fewer buy wood, coal, and kerosene. That's just another evidence of how city conveniences are spreading to the farm.

Farm houses also are being improved. In 1955 farm families spent an average of \$125 for repairs and remodeling. Work most frequently reported was painting, papering, and installation or repair for plumbing, awnings, storm windows, or screens. And more than twice as many families bought furniture in 1955 than in 1941.

Food was one item which took the same percentages of the farm family dollar in 1955 as in 1941. The pattern of food spending, however, has changed. Farm families eat out more and, like city families, they buy more of the convenient processed or semiprocessed foods. Less food is home produced. This may result in fami-

Four Lancaster County Farmers Attending PFA Washington Meeting

A group of Lancaster County Farmers were in Washington, DC this week to talk to Congressman Paul Dague about legislative problems affecting farmers of the area.

As a part of a state wide delegation of 150 leaders of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Assn., the entire Congressional delegation the local men helped to entertain on Pennsylvania at dinner on Tuesday evening.

Those from Lancaster County attending the Washington meeting were J. Roy Greider, R1 Mount Joy, Henry Sheiner, R2 Lititz, Noah Keider Sr., R2 Manheim, and John Weidman, R2 Mount Joy.

On the agenda for discussion with the Congressmen were the questions of price supports and farm program, trade with foreign countries, labor problems affecting the farmer and various

other related subjects. Also while in Washington, the group was scheduled to visit the offices of the US Department of Agriculture. Meetings were scheduled with under Secretary of Agriculture True D. Moore and Miles Horst, former Secretary of Agriculture in Pennsylvania.

The Lancaster County folks were scheduled to arrive in the Nation's Capitol at 2 p.m., Tuesday and were to return home the evening of March 12.

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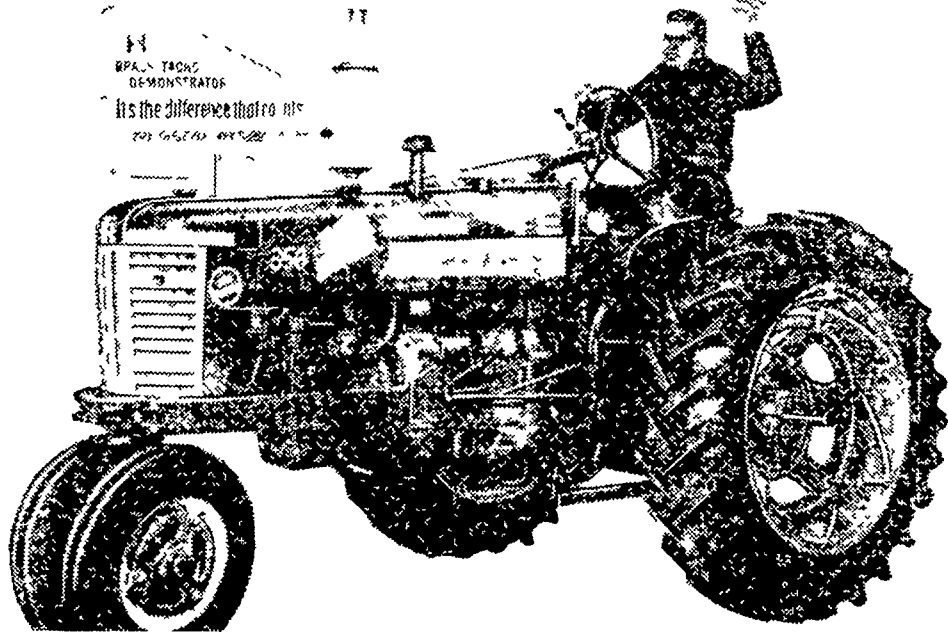
Down Due to Weather

The winter potato crop is now forecast by the Crop Reporting Board at 4,975,000 hundredweight down about 715,000 cwt. from the forecast of a month ago, largely due to adverse weather conditions in Florida.

Families eating less of some important foods they used to produce, because it has been found that families use less when they buy food than when they produced it themselves.

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Monroe C. Babcock

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- 2 A layer is in a constant state of pregnancy and therefore has many cravings for various foods
- 3 Lack of exercises and not enough to do
- 4 A tendency toward prolapses (eversion of the egg laying organs) in some strains.
- 5 Inherited cannibalistic tendencies in some strains.

Picking Among Chicks and Growing Pullets: Chicks may start picking because they are too warm, because they are left too long without feed or do not have an adequate water supply. White-washed walls causing too bright a house may cause picking in chicks and older birds.

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