

Increased Size of Farming Operation Not Always Answer to More Profits

HAVE YOU HEARD a discussion of the American Agricultural situation lately that did not eventually get around to "Surplusses" and "The Cost-Price Squeeze"?

These two topics seem to be the favorite subjects of politicians, farm leaders, economists, alarmists, and your neighbors. We must admit that they are both important problems because they both have a bearing on your ability to make a living.

Some authorities have maintained that the only way to beat the squeeze is to integrate the farming operation or handle larger units. We have been told that the family farm is on the way out and only the bigger and bigger farms can survive today. We have been told that the small farmer must increase the total volume of his business or face bankruptcy. We have been told so often that we must increase the size of our operation to meet rising costs that we have begun to believe a high gross return always means a large net profit.

This is not necessarily true. But many people acting upon the advice of so-called experts have doubled or tripled their normal business size. Naturally when the size of the operation is increased the quantity of products flowing to the markets will increase. The situation created is more surplus products and lowering of prices. Then we start thinking in terms of still larger units and more production.

To many people the idea of cutting back the size of the farming business is so novel that the possibilities have not even been explored carefully.

Let's look at dairying for example. Studies show that it takes four cows giving 8,000 pounds of milk each per year to return as much profit to their owners as one cow giving 11,000 pounds. However, those four cows put 21,000 pounds more

milk on the market than did the one good cow.

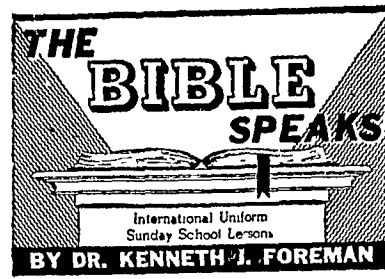
In some cases a dairyman might increase his net income by keeping fewer cows rather than more cows. If making additions to the dairy herd will mean that the dairyman will have to hire additional labor or buy additional equipment or buildings, it is entirely possible that his net income could be lower. Unless the extra labor and equipment can be used efficiently the net farm income will be lower.

The same holds true for field crops. The production of an acre of any crop has certain fixed costs which do not vary with the yield. It costs just as much to plow and prepare the ground and just as much to cultivate an acre of corn yielding 50 bushels as one which will yield 150 bushels.

One acre of corn producing 100 bushels will return to the farmer approximately the same net profit as five acres yielding 60 bushels per acre, but those five acres will put 300 bushels of corn on an already overloaded market.

Of course we all know that farm business volume must be large enough to make mechanization of operation economically sound. This does not necessarily mean that the size of the program must increase with the purchase of each new piece of equipment. If a new piece of machinery helps you market your products at a lower cost, or if it helps you to market a higher quality product, it may well pay its way without increasing total sale of products.

Maybe the time is here when we should stop worrying about how much we can produce and begin to think about how we can produce it more efficiently and of better quality. Competition for the consumer dollar in industry has proved that quality pays off. Competition in Agriculture will prove it too.



Bible Material: Leviticus 19:33-37, Deuteronomy 23:7-8, 24:14-15; Matthew 9:9-13, John 4:7-9, 39-41; Galatians 3:26-28.
Devotional Reading: Psalm 10:10-18.

Minorities

Lesson for August 17, 1958

THE Bible is a man's book. But that's not all. The Bible is a property-owner's book, it is a book for the "dominant classes" of society. This does not mean it is not for everybody. But the fact is, the laws and the letters and indeed most of the Bible, you will discover when you read it carefully, is addressed to people who are in positions of authority. It is all the more remarkable, therefore, and a sign that the Bible is inspired by something besides wishes of the dispossessed—all the more remarkable that the Bible writers speak out clearly on behalf of the depressed classes, the little people, the people who could not speak for themselves, the people who probably could neither read nor write and of course had no Bibles themselves.



Dr. Foreman

The Stranger

In ancient times everybody belonged somewhere. People did not move about from city to city, from farm to farm, as they do here in America, on the average, every family moves once every five years. In ancient Palestine a family would stay in one locality for 500 years, wars and pestilence permitting. Strangers were not (as with us often) interesting people, to be invited out and "cultivated." Strangers were under suspicion—what would a man be doing so far from home? The strangers in any land were a voiceless, voteless, disorganized minority. Yet God commanded the Hebrew majorities to remember that they themselves were strangers once in Egypt, and to take special care of strangers in their own land.

The Hired Man

Some hired men are stable mem-

Now Is The Time . . .

By MAX SMITH

County Agricultural Agent



Max Smith

TO VENTILATE TOBACCO SHEDS — Early cut tobacco has grown very fast this year and is full of sap and moisture. Since the county tobacco crop depends largely upon natural air to dry and cure the crop all available ventilation should be provided during the majority of the time. On wet or foggy days many growers shut the large part of their ventilators. Cross ventilation in all parts of the shed or barn is desirable in order to cure the tobacco and prevent pole burning.

TO ORDER LIME — Winter grain fields that are to be seeded to legume mixtures next spring or summer should be treated with lime this fall during the preparing of the ground for winter grain. With ground limestone several months are needed for the lime to work in the soil and reduce acidity, the best time to apply this lime is in the fall when mixed with the soil and not next spring on top of the winter grain. A lime requirement test or complete soil test through our office will give this information.

TO PREPARE FOR WINTER OATS — Some years the winter oats crop is much better than the spring oats. This largely depends upon the severity of the winter and the drainage of the particular field. We recommend that the winter oats be seeded around the middle of September on well drained ground. La Conte or Du Bois are the two recommended varieties.

TO MAKE SORGHUM-SOYBEAN SILAGE — This forage mixture that was seeded around the middle of May will no doubt be ready to cut by the first of September. Weather conditions this year have been very favorable and a very heavy yield of silage is expected. The time to cut this silage mixture is when the soybeans have a small green bean in the pod and the sorghum grain is doughy when broken open with the finger nail also the sorghum seed head will be turning a darker brown. No preservative is needed.

TO ENTER STATE FARM SHOW SAMPLES — Sounds a bit early but all exhibitors of milk at the 1959 Penna. State Farm Show must request an entry blank from Mr. John McCool, Director Penna. Farm Show, Farm Show Bldg., Harrisburg, Pa. by not later than September 1st. The rules have been changed and all exhibitors are urged to take note. The entry blank is then to be completed by the producer or the dealer and returned to McCool, by October 1st. Further instructions will be given at that time.

Lancaster Farming

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Wagon Trains to Roll

In Penna. This Month

"Wagon trains will roll again in Pennsylvania this month, and your farm can be represented.

This is the word from Mr. Charles Passmore of the Pennsylvania Farm Machinery Dealers Association.

The association has the job of getting 88 tractors and 176 farm wagons to be used as sightseeing trains at the National Plowing Contest at Hershey on August 21 and 22.

The tractors do not pose any particular problem since they can be supplied by the machinery dealers. The farm wagons are another story. You can help by contacting your local machinery dealer if you have a wagon that could be used in one of the trains.

The Machinery dealers also need drivers for the trains. Any one who is over 16 may apply directly to the local machinery dealer. There will be no pay but it will be one way to get a view of the plowing matches from a tractor seat.

THIS WEEK

—In Washington

With Clifton Davidson



Davidson

Where To Find A Husband

When we started writing this column three years ago we had no idea it might become a sort of matrimonial bureau but now we feel compelled to pass on a tip from the Alaska Chamber of Commerce.

Girls the A. C. of C. reports there are eight unmarried men in Alaska for every unmarried woman. This startling news, it is expected may cause a stampede that would make the gold rush look like an afternoon stroll in the park.

Throw away those uncouth pictures you have of Alaska men with a six month growth of bread and rough clothing. They are out of date. In Alaska one out of 12 men is a college graduate, a third higher percentage than in the continental U. S.

And if you are thinking of what a terrible place the 49th state is to live in, forget it. Alaska has a lower death rate and a higher birth rate than any of the 48 states now in the Union.

Three Out of Four Have One
In the United States probably only two out of every three women have found a man to vow to love, honor, cherish and pay the grocery bill. Alaska women have been much more successful. Three out of four have like the Northwest Mounties, got their man.

The fourth one, so the statistics would indicate, either is a confirmed old maid or might choose. These statistics, of course, do not include the native Eskimos who are busy raising families in their snug little igloos. Husbands are not hard to find

in Alaska. We are told, despite spaces so wide open that they make Texas look like a New York suburb. There are four square miles per person compared with 57 persons per square mile in the United States.

Texans, of course, will have to eat some of their bragging words if and when Alaska becomes the 49th state. You could put the whole state of Texas in a corner of Alaska's 586,000 square miles, and all it would do would be cool off.

Growing Like Topsy

Alaska has been experiencing some phenomenal growth, populationwise. Between the 1940 and 1950 censuses the population increased by 77% five times the rate of the continental U. S.

About two thirds of this increase was accounted for by natural causes — excess of births over deaths — and about one third by net immigration. The birth rate is one third larger than in the U. S. and the death rate is only a little more than half.

This the A. C. of C. modestly concedes is due not to the climate but to the fact that most people in Alaska are younger than in the U. S. The median age is 26 years, five years below that of the U. S.

There are no large cities in Alaska, mainly because three people live in the country for every city dweller. A reversal of the U. S. ratio. Anchorage is the largest city with a population of 32,000 and Fairbanks is second with 16,000. Juneau, the capital and Ketchikan each have less than 10,000.