

From Where We Stand . . .

Federal Assistance For Low-Income Farmers?

Should the federal government make monetary contributions to the sub-poverty-level farmer with the aim of keeping him on the farm? A national farm leader stated this week that a revamping of the Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP) should have this goal in mind. He suggests it would be an important step in slowing the annual migration of farmers to the cities, and would be an integral part of President Johnson's anti-poverty program in rural areas.

This suggestion is about on a par for common sense with most of the Administration's approaches to the poverty question. It would put a premium on inefficiency and indolence, and for that reason might stand a good chance of being incorporated into the official anti-poverty line.

This farm leader would further revamp the distribution of conservation funds so that any of the larger, more efficient farm units would suffer an outright penalty. And to further confuse the problem of who should be blessed and who penalized, he would leave the definition of a "family-farm" to the discretion of each county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office! A definition over which economists and politicians have argued for years, and one that still has to be redefined by each user.

In a recent Economic Research Service bulletin which examined the economic picture of the family farm, that unit was defined as one in which the operator is a risk-taking manager who, with his family, does more than half of the farm work. For a working definition, this study classifies a family farm as one hiring less than 1.5 man-years of labor.

It goes on to show that in 1949 family farms accounted for 95 percent of all farms and supplied 66 percent of total farm sales in the U. S. In 1964 it is estimated that family farms still comprise about 96 percent of all farms in number, but now they account for about 73 percent of total farm sales.

In fact, since 1949 it appears that farm numbers in all categories have declined, with the exception of family farms in the \$10,000, or more, total sales sector. In 1964, there were about 1 million farms in this \$10,000, or more, expanding category, and they accounted for about 81 percent of all farm sales. These progressive family farms are the

real guts of our American agriculture, and the evidence suggests they will continue to be.

Meanwhile, the so-called poverty farms that are really the subject under discussion (less than \$2500 gross sales) declined in number by 1.2 million between 1949 and 1959, and by nearly another half million from 1959 to 1964. So you see the problem, agriculturally speaking, is adjusting by itself — this is not to say these people should not be helped through retraining programs, or whatever; but they should certainly not be encouraged by the federal government or anyone else to remain in an agricultural technology that has long since outgrown them!

What Do YOU Think?

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Drought Drops Dairies

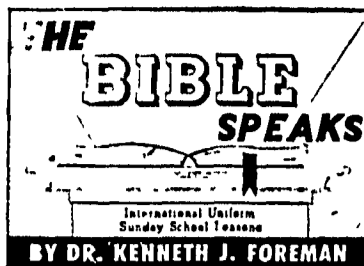
The effects of three to four years of drought conditions in some areas of Pennsylvania is reflected in the drop in the state's dairy cow and herd numbers, and to some extent in total milk production.

Pennsylvania still ranks fifth in the nation in milk production, but since 1960 we have lost 10.8 percent of our cow population. The other top four states also lost cows during that time, but not nearly to that extent. Also, these other states have shown a rise in total milk production since 1960; Pennsylvania lost some in 1964, and is presently running about 1 percent behind last year.

The trend toward fewer but larger herds with higher producing cows has been evident since about 1950, but we wonder if local dairymen realize how many herds have actually evaporated from the milk production scene in that fifteen year period — 25,400 herds! That means that just under 50 percent of the dairy herds in existence in Pennsylvania in 1950 are no more.

Larger herds and higher individual per cow production have more than taken up that slack, but when you think of the loss in terms of herds, it is startling.

Much of this decline has been attributed to the persistent drought with its accompanying high feeding costs. It will be a slow process for many Pennsylvania dairy farmers to climb back up that steep road to recovery and rebuild depleted herds. Most of those that went out will probably never come back into dairying, but in the long run this may make more room for expansion for the survivors.



Humbly Wise

Lesson for October 10, 1965

Background Scriptures: Exodus 2:16-22, 4:16-20, 18
Devotional Reading: Proverbs 22:17-25

Some men are famous for great discoveries, others for genius in art, warfare, business or what not. Jethro (he had no second name but Reuel) is famous for being a father-in-law. Of course that is not the whole story. He



is remembered not for having a son-in-law, but because that son-in-law was to become one of the greatest men of all time. His daughter Zipporah (Hebrew for Birdie) was the wife of the renowned Moses, the Moses everybody has heard about. The first time Moses saw his future wife was at a well in the wilderness, where Zipporah and her six sisters were trying to haul water for their sheep-herder father Jethro. Other shepherds were being rude to the girls and Moses drove them off. (A big man, he must be.) So Moses, then a fugitive from an Egyptian chain-gang or worse, first became a boarder in Jethro's tents, and then his son-in-law. Moses, we know, went on to high fame; Jethro stayed a sheep-herder to the end of his days.

Obscure men

Zipporah so far as we know never did Moses any good, though she did bear him two sons who were never heard of again. But Jethro did Moses a lot of good with sensible advice at a critical time. Jethro is one of that large but never famous company of obscure men who have been close friends of others who were by far their superiors. Most presidents of the United States have had intimate friends who could never have been elected president, but who on occa-

alon could offer humble advice which turned out to be good. (Sometimes the advice is bad, but that's another story.)

God guides . . . but how?

Christians talk a good deal about the guidance of God, about Providence and divine care and protection. How God guides men we do not always know; that he guides men we can be sure. We get a hint of the "how" in this story. How did Jethro and Moses get together? Neither of them planned it. Moses was just the only available man. If he hadn't married Zipporah, he would have married one of her sisters and in any case would have had Jethro for a father-in-law. Yet because of this close relationship, Jethro was able, in later years, to offer Moses advice which saved him, it would seem, from something like a nervous breakdown.

Old shepherd's advice

What was this wonderful advice which the old sheep-herder offered Moses? Nothing very wonderful, actually. The point is, it was just common sense, only Moses, like some other great men, had a mind that moved in the stratosphere and ordinary down-to-earth matters did not always occur to him. He was trying (Jethro discovered) to decide all the arguments and quarrels of thousands of people all by himself, and he was of course in danger of becoming a nervous wreck. Jethro suggested that Moses set up a system of graded courts to hear cases of ordinary difficulty or importance and save himself to be a kind of Court of Appeals where cases of the greatest importance could be tried. A perfectly simple solution of the difficulty. Moses would preserve his strength (and he would need it for the long years ahead in the "great and terrible wilderness") and the people's needs for justice would be more promptly met. The plan worked, too, worked so well that more than thirty-five years later, as we read in Deut. 1, Moses failed to give Jethro the credit for it. To suggest wisdom to a man so painlessly that he thinks it his own idea is a kind of magic. Jethro had it.

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ATTEND THE CHURCH OF YOUR CHOICE SUNDAY

Water Study

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gives the State Water and Resources Board the power to regulate the use of all surface and subsurface water in the State (2) gives broad powers to the Water and Resources Board, to allocate water, (3) leaves users of water at the discretionary power of the Water and Resources Board rather than with the protection of the law, (4) contains no specific provisions for busi-

ness, industry and agriculture, including irrigation, and (5) it's designed to use the police powers of the Commonwealth to circumvent the constitutional question of riparian law water rights.

"A recently released memo by the Department of Forests and Waters stated that H B 1676 was drafted in its present form for three reasons (1) it would enable the Board to deal with critical water problems as they appear (2) overall, statewide regulation and control of all waters would impose an immediate administrative and regulatory burden which would be virtually impossible to meet, (3) by using the police powers of the Commonwealth, the Act avoids various questions of constitutionality involving riparian law water rights."

"Most of the parties affected such as private users and even soil conservation interests have never been asked to state their views. Legislation as comprehensive as the 'Water Protection Act' needs to be studied thoroughly by a House Committee before any further action," the PFA letter concluded.

Topdress Alfalfa To Maintain Stand

Which would you rather do? Plow up that old alfalfa stand or cut hay from it for another year or more?

Dr. Allan Bandel, extension soil specialist at the University of Maryland says, "Research has proven that alfalfa stands, when fertilized adequately, can be maintained for 11 years or longer." Plots at the Plant Research Farm have averaged better than 4 tons of alfalfa hay per acre per year under adequate fertilization practices for 11 years.

Alfalfa stands can be profitably topdressed at any time of the year when labor and equipment are available and the soil is fit to be driven over. Established alfalfa stands seldom need nitrogen topdressing. When recommended amounts of plant food have been used, yields have been equally good for fall and spring applications of fertilizer. Bandel says these needs are best determined by a soil test.

An annual application of 40 pounds of phosphorus and 120 pounds of potash is not

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Now Is The Time . . .

To Make Forage Tests

Livestock producers, and especially dairymen, are urged to adopt the practice of doing forage testing each fall and winter in order to make better use of the feed dollar. Many herds will go into winter feeding in the near future when the quality of the forage should determine the amount and kind of grain ration to be fed. We know of no better way to determine this grain ration than to have the hay and silage tested now and request a grain feeding recommendation. Forage test cautions are available at our Extension Office.

To Eliminate Rodents

Colder weather will start the migration of rats and mice from the fields into the farm buildings. If they can find suitable places to nest and live they will take over and start reproduction. We urge all property owners to clean up their premises and destroy all harboring places, junk piles should be eliminated and stone walls and foundations should be pointed with masonry in order to prevent being inhabited. These practices, along with the use of some poison bait stations, should keep the rodent population to a minimum.

To Make Final Alfalfa Cutting

Since most areas of the county have had a killing frost and since we have had cool weather for a number of days this past week it is advised to proceed with the making of the final crop of alfalfa of the season. The lower temperatures should have stopped growth and restored root/food supplies. The crop may be used as green chop, hay or silage. Do not harvest the growth from seedlings made this past August.

To Seed Wheat

All varieties of winter wheat may now be seeded without danger of Hessian Fly infestation. The newer varieties such as Redcoat and Dual have been safe to seed for the past several weeks since they are fly resistant. On earlier seeded crops that make desirable growth later this fall, it is suggested that the area be grazed this fall and again early next spring. This forage from winter grains will help stretch the winter hay and silage supplies.



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