

# From Where We Stand . . .

## Few Surprises In Census Report

Most of the general observations over the past few years by people on the local scene were borne out in the preliminary agricultural census report which came off the press last week. Facts like fewer farms, larger farms, and more farms having higher sales volume came as no surprise. These trends can generally be predicted without an actual census, but the statistical survey gives the trends a definite measurement when compared with the previous census.

We would have guessed, for example, that the average farm size in Lancaster County had increased since the last agricultural census in 1959. The figures show the average grew from 68.4 acres in 1959 to 74.8 acres in 1964. At the state level, the average farm increased from 118.6 acres to 130.0 acres.

## COMMERCIAL FARMS LOST

During the five-year period studied, Lancaster County lost 537 commercial farms while Pennsylvania lost a total of 5886. Thus the county farm loss accounted for 9 percent of the state's total loss. This isn't too alarming when you consider that the average Pennsylvania county has 800 commercial farms while Lancaster has more than six times as many as the average of the 67 counties.

In terms of farmland lost, Lancaster figures showed 15,258 less acres in farmland for a loss of 3.1 percent. The state as a whole had a loss during the five-year period of approximately 9 percent of its total farmland.

## COUNTY DAIRY FARMS GAIN?

One figure that did come as a shock until we puzzled it out showed a gain of 300 dairy farms for Lancaster County! The general consensus has been that we have continually lost dairy herds over the past five years, or more. This startling gain of about 15 percent in dairy farms can be explained in the way the census report classified farms. If 50 percent, or more, of a farm's total sales comes from a single item, say milk, the farm is classed as a dairy farm. So, although approximately 400 less Lancaster County farms reported sales of milk in 1964 as compared to 1959, the report classified 300 more farms as dairies because the balance of farm products produced changed.

Farms deriving at least 50 percent of their total sales from tobacco, poultry, livestock, and miscellaneous products all declined in number. Some of these must have added cows and specialized in dairying. Others increased their cash grain production and that classification showed an increase of 68 farms. We think that explains how we actually lost dairy herds and yet the census showed an "increase" of 300.

## LARGER FARMS INCREASE

Commercial farms were also classified on the basis of total sales in the census report. This showed that all of the farm loss in the county was in Classes III, IV, and V, these groups ranged from a \$2500 total sales figure to \$19,999. Classes I and II, combined, showed a gain of 347 farms with total sales ranging from \$20,000 upward during the past five years. This was also true at the state level and affirms the general conclusion that farms are getting bigger in dollar volume. One surprising fact was reflected in both county and state figures, however, that was a gain in farms in Class VI — total sales \$50-\$2499. Farms on that level would be in the subsistence category, and it is impossible from our point of view to account for such an increase.

## FARMER'S AGE

How old do you think the average Lancaster County farmer is? The census shows he's 45.3 years of age, which makes him 5.6 years younger than the state average. This age factor has been a concern in agriculture in the northeast for some time. In parts of New England, it was over 55 seven years ago and has steadily increased, indicating young men are not entering farming in those areas. Evidently this is not the case in Lancaster County, as one might have guessed from the number of active Young Farmer programs here.

## CONSERVATION GAINS

The application of proven conservation practices, in terms of strip cropping and contouring, are definitely on the increase in Lancaster County. During the past five years (1959-64), net gains of 75 more farmers for strip cropping and 100 more for contouring were evident.

So, while the county lost 9 percent of its farms and 3 percent of its farmland, it showed a gain of 15 percent and 14 percent, respectively, in strip cropping and contouring practices.

The state was not quite so fortunate. While Pennsylvania figures showed a gain of 11,411 acres contoured, they showed 728 less farms following that practice, and 1073 fewer farms strip cropping 4 percent fewer acres. It is tempting to draw conclusions from the state figures, but the data suggests several possibilities and is really inconclusive.

But, on the whole, the census comparison of 1959 and '64 suggests that conservation practices are on the increase among farmers remaining in business.

## IMPORTANCE OF TRENDS

There are many other facts and comparisons to be gleaned from these reports, and the census statistics themselves are important in that they indicate trends over a five-year period. The next agricultural census will be taken in 1969, and you can bet many of the trends evident now will be speeded up by that time.

You can get single copies of these reports (Pennsylvania and Lancaster County, or any other single county desired) by writing to the Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C., 20233, and asking for the Preliminary Report for the area you want. Single copies are listed at 10 cents.

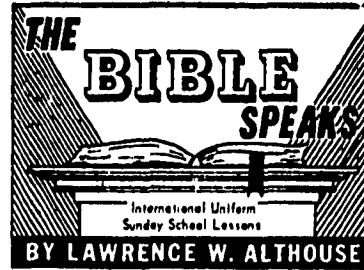
## A Salute To Lancaster County 4-H'ers

When you get 10 or more youngsters together you can have a 4-H Club, according to the official national rules. Lancaster County got 1640 of them together this year, and boasts 62 Clubs.

With projects ranging from agriculture engineering to wildlife, Lancaster County would seem to be the state's leader in 4-H activities as it leads in so many other agricultural pursuits.

4-H is a training ground for youngsters, and provides a chance to learn for tomorrow, and to test themselves under real competitive conditions.

The face of 4-H, nationwide, is changing. It's not all rural youths and agricultural projects anymore. The 4-H fever has also infected youngsters in urban and suburban areas, and, as we had occasion to remark in this column some months ago, the country and the world have to be better because of this spreading condition known as 4-H "Learning For Living".



## In A Word

Lesson For September 25, 1966

Background Scripture: Jeremiah 31:31-34, Matthew 5:17-20, John 13:34-35, 15:10-14  
Devotional Reading: 1 Corinthians 13:4-10

Little Johnnie was being cross-examined by his grandmother concerning what he had learned in Sunday school. Had he learned the Ten Commandments, she wanted to know? "Well, I was going to learn them," he said with great seriousness, "but I was the most important of all the laws, Jesus summed up all the they are going to law and the prophets with 'You do away with them!'"



Perhaps little Johnnie heard someone say that the "new morality" is doing away with the Ten Commandments. Perhaps he got the impression from his Sunday school teacher that Jesus himself did away with the Ten Commandments. This is precisely what his enemies charged. This shocking Nazarene preacher and his "new morality" were undermining all the old moral absolutes.

## Not Destroy, But Fulfill

Unfortunately, they misunderstood him. "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them." (Matthew 5:17 RSV) Of course, even that statement infuriated them, for why did the Ten Commandments need to be fulfilled? Aren't they completely adequate as they stand? They spell things out quite clearly: they say it is wrong to steal, to commit adultery, to bear false witness, to covet, to murder, etc. How can you fulfill moral absolutes?

If he had listened to him carefully, they would have realized that Jesus was calling for, not a lesser righteousness, but one that went beyond the letter of the law to the very spirit and purpose of the law. This is exactly what he meant when he said to his disciples: "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds

that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom." (Matthew 5:20). The Nazarene's "new morality" aimed higher, not lower.

Jesus did not regard the law and the teachings of the prophets as moral absolutes, as iron-clad laws which could be interpreted simply and without question in every situation that demanded a moral choice. These choices are not always so clear-cut. There are times when one cannot make a choice which is wholly good and free from sin or evil. A man working for a business firm that indulges in certain unethical practices may find it difficult to choose between resigning to witness to his principles or remaining in his job to do what he can to change company policy.

## Behind It All

The law, Jesus knew, was only an incomplete expression of the will of God. Thus, when they came to him asking him what was the most important of all the laws, Jesus summed up all the they are going to law and the prophets with: "You shall love the Lord your God . . . and your neighbor as yourself." In short, the purpose of God could be summed up in single word, love. Thus, the "new commandment" which he gave them was the key to what he meant by fulfilling the law and the prophets: ". . . love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

If we look back to his interpretation of each of the ten commandments, we find that love is the key to his "But I say to you . . ." God desires not only truth from us, but truth in love. The gift of sex is to be employed only within the bounds of married love. In speaking of the child's responsibility to honor his parents, he called for love as both the motive and the power of this obedience. Again and again, his fulfilling of the law and the prophets was dependent upon the power of love.

He was not content, however, to mouth the word "love." The word means too many different things to different people. He made that word become flesh and in one agonizing afternoon on the cross he showed man all that he meant by that one word, love.

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## Now Is The Time . . .

By Max Smith, Lancaster County Agent

### To Prevent Rat Infestation

The common rat continues to take a heavy toll each year in our agricultural circles. The attempt to prevent a greater rat population is the best way to reduce damage from these filthy rodents. The weather will soon be getting colder and driving rodents into or near buildings. Without nesting places they will have difficulty in finding their needs and will move on or stay out in the fields. A good clean-up program including the use of concrete in masonry walls, walks, floors, and other places about the buildings will prevent them from making nesting places. Poison bait stations around the buildings will help eliminate those that come and go.



SMITH

### To Test Soil For Next Year

The fall season is a good time to draw soil samples and have them tested for the 1967 growing season. This will avoid the spring rush and permit ample time to order lime and fertilizer needs. The needs of a soil for any given crop will change very little between fall and spring.

### Courses; some eighty-five different courses are offered in agriculture, horticulture, and home economics. The courses are intended to teach technical know-how on subjects of special interest. The courses are complete in themselves and are given by use of mail delivery. Interested persons are to write to BULLETIN, Box #5000, University Park, Penna. 16802.

Some people don't care how much they pay something, so long as it's later.

## What Do You Need? Lancaster Farming Classified Ads Help

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