

From Where We Stand . . .

Census And Nonsenses

Not meaning to be cute with the above title, but we couldn't resist that play on words, especially since there is a nonsensical side to the government's five-year agricultural Census.

While we realize it's an immense undertaking to collect and analyze the data from America's approximately 3.1 million farms (we'll talk about that questionable figure in a moment), it doesn't seem entirely reasonable that two years should elapse before the preliminary reports are published. With all the high-powered data processing equipment available to the statisticians today, a year would seem long enough to get the job done. Of course, we understand that with these modern machines more sophisticated analyses are possible. It is also possible to "over-analyze" data, just for the sake of analysis. However they can manage it, the Bureau of the Census should try to expedite this task in the future.

WHAT IS A FARM?

According to the Census definition, anything is classified as a commercial farm if its agricultural sales exceed \$50 a year, or, \$2500 if it contains less than ten acres.

Using this definition, the 1964 Census shows a loss of "commercial farms" in the U.S. since 1959 of one-quarter million, and a loss of total "farms" of one-half million.

This gives a distorted view of the farm situation, in our opinion. Let's look at the farm breakdown by economic classes Class I (sales over \$40,000), and Class II (\$20,000-\$40,000), showed actual gains in numbers since 1959 — 39,653 and 49,403, respectively. In terms of percentage, these changes reflect gains, respectively, of 38 and 23 percent.

It is reasonable, then, to expect that the next lower group, Class III, would show a decrease since many from this class would have expanded.

These changes toward bigness in agriculture dramatically indicate that large scale farming is increasing in the U.S. One independent agency close to the Washington scene reported recently on an updating of these two-year-old Census figures. It showed that the rate of growth among the true commercial farms — those with sales over \$20,000 — has accelerated even beyond the 1964 Census figures. It also found that Class III farms had increased since 1964, and have now more than off-set the previous five-year loss in numbers in that class.

The updated figures also showed that 15 percent of U.S. farms, those with sales above \$20,000, are producing 70 percent of all farm goods. When one includes the next lower group, Class III, in the above calculation it shows that a little over 30 percent of all farms are producing 90 percent of our total farm products.

To carry that reasoning one step further, it means that about 70 percent of all "farms" account for only 10 percent of the nation's farm production!

We think a reclassification of farm terminology is very much in order. Not only would such a move give a far truer picture of what's going on in American agriculture, it would also greatly reduce the quantity of data — and the cost of collecting and processing it — and would get the results off the press considerably faster.

Enjoy Old Man Winter

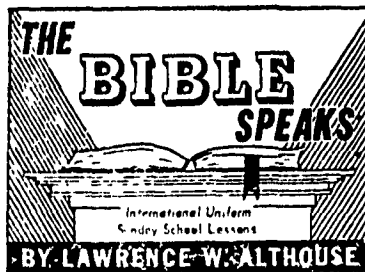
Christmas is just around the corner, and if you wonder why so much of your shopping and last minute errands must be done in blustery weather, don't forget that old man winter appears on the scene officially just three days before Christmas — December 22. Since we cannot all escape to happier climes, even if we so desired, now is the time to check again on preparations for living comfortably through the short bleak days that lie ahead.

How is the family car? The tires should be in good shape, chains should be carried, anti-freeze should be checked along with windshield wipers, lights, heater, etc.

Leaving the car for a moment, next on the list should be the fuel supply, protection of house plumbing against freezing and checking of furnaces, flues and chimneys. Haven't we all heard the chilling sound of a siren in the middle of a bitter winter night?

After all the preparations have been made, we may look forward to winter as a time of surcease from the chores and exhausting fun of summer.

There is nothing like the security of a warm fire and perhaps a little popcorn on a cold dark evening, when old man winter is howling around the eaves of your house. You may as well relax with a good book and enjoy it. For most of us, summer is some thousands of miles away — somewhere to the South, where whirling snowflakes never brush the palms and silver beaches with winter's mantle.



Prepare His Way!
Lesson for December 18, 1966

Background Scripture: Luke 1
Devotional Reading: Isaiah 40:1-5

Several years ago, two members of the town council of a village in Thuringia, East Germany approached the bourgomeister with a plan that would seriously curtail the observance of Christmas by the people of the village church. They knew that Christmas is one of the events in the year which still draws large numbers of people, even though worship attendance during the rest of the year had dwindled drastically.

The Church in East Germany, of course, is officially tolerated, although the state does all it can to make difficult the operation of congregational life. The goal of these efforts is to make things so difficult that people will voluntarily give up their Christian faith rather than lose out on the sparse benefits of the Communist society. Thus, although the state does not officially ban the Church, it aims at the same result.

Too Sentimental

The two councilmen had drawn up a strategy to make it virtually impossible for the church to hold its services. The services would not be forbidden, but few would attend under the circumstances. The plan was submitted to the bourgomeister for approval. Instead the bourgomeister shook his head and smiling, said "It is not necessary to do this. People in church on Christmas do not mean anything. It is only a custom that the people are too sentimental to give up. Let them have their Christmas service . . . they've forgotten what it really means!"

Whether or not the bourgomeister was correct concerning the people of his village, I do not know. What he said of them,

however, might also apply to many of us. Would we be judging too harshly to say that there are many people in our own country today who have forgotten what Christmas really means, that it is a custom that they are too sentimental to give up.

From Holy Day To Holiday

There was a time when the observance of Christmas was forbidden, not by atheistic governments but by zealous churchmen. For example, on May 11, 1659, the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony passed the following law:

Whoever shall be found observing any such day as Christmas or the like, either by forbearing labor, fasting, or any other way, as a festival, shall be fined five shillings.

The people of the early New England colonies had seen enough pagan Christmas celebrations in England to sour them on Christmas for life. They had seen how quickly this "holy day" becomes merely a holiday. People forget, all too quickly, the purpose of the celebration.

Christmas Without Advent

Someone has said that when we celebrate Christmas without Advent, we will likely also celebrate it without Christ. Advent is the season of preparation for the coming of Christmas. Thus, when we celebrate Christmas without adequate preparation, we tend to miss the whole point of the Christmas season. Jesus is reborn into our hearts and lives when we have prayerfully prepared ourselves to receive him, not when the calendar shows us that the twenty-fifth day of December has arrived.

The coming of Christ always requires preparation. It was thus when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The way had to be prepared. For centuries God had been preparing the way with his prophets. Through the work of these men he tried to make people ready for his own Son. The last of these messengers sent from God was John the Baptist who came to proclaim Jesus as the fulfillment of all that had ever been waited for.

"For you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways," said Zechariah of his son, John. If the people were not to miss the Christ, they would have to be ready for him.

So must we.
(Based on outlines copyrighted by the Division of Christian Education, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. Released by Community Press Service)

Now Is The Time . . .

By Max Smith, Lancaster County Agent

● Producers Co-Op

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1964, and 10 percent in 1965. He also reported that in the two months since the Exchange's fiscal year ended, 28 new members had been added, and that most of these were good-sized cage operations. He added that volume for October and November had already reflected this increase, and he looked forward to further gains.

In discussing the Exchange's growth in the special products division, Souders told producers that those products, including chicken roll, amounted to 11 percent of total sales.

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"These products have been accepted well, and there are plans for enlarging and adding new items," Souders said.

DIRECTORS ELECTED

Two directors reelected unanimously were John E. Melhorn, 334 Donegal Springs Rd., Mount Joy, and Harry P. Metz, Belleville. Elected to a first term as director was George W. Robinson, Kreamer. He succeeds Lester M. Gehman, Manheim R2.

AMENDMENTS APPROVED

Members voted approval on two amendments to the by-laws. One, permitting common stockholders present at any duly called meeting to constitute a quorum, the other, pertained to the issuance of preferred stock.

PA. EGG OUTLOOK GOOD

The featured speaker for the meeting was Berwyn Gaghan, general manager of North American Cooperative, New York City.

Gaghan told the egg men that this had been a good year, and that he looked forward to a bright future for Pennsylvania egg producers.

He said that although there are fewer farms producing eggs nationally, the total production is expanding. He pointed out that, by the most conservative estimate, the population of potential egg consumers is increasing at the rate of eight percent a year.

Gaghan remarked that the U.S. Department of Agriculture is conducting an extensive study of the egg pricing system, and that results are expected by next year.

● 4-H Veal

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farms," Plastow said. He added that roundups in 1966 showed a profit average of \$25 per animal over calf and feed costs for an eight-week period. "This was accomplished with 190 pounds of gain per day, and 147 pounds of milk replacer per pound of gain," he reported.

Participants must agree to feed their veal calf (or calves) a high fat, all-milk, milk replacer, and to house them in an elevated tie stall. Plastow said. Also, calves must have been born between December

To Keep Christmas Tree Moist

One of the greatest fire hazards in the home during the holiday season is a dry Christmas Tree. Homemakers are urged to keep the trunk of the tree either in water or in moist soil or sand. The adding of water needs regular attention because most trees will absorb a quart or more per day.

To Inspect Fire Extinguishers

The recent snow storm should call to our attention the importance of good fire extinguishers on every farm. Many of the winter storms close roads and lanes so that community fire fighting equipment cannot get to the building as fast as needed. Fire extinguishers should be checked to see that

they are in working condition and also, every member of the

10 and December 20. The animals should be Holstein or Holstein-beef crossbreds, preferably.

Plastow said a tentative roundup date has been set for February 15 at New Holland. All calves will be shown by weight class and graded.

Any 4-H'ers interested in participating in this new club is advised to contact the county extension office immediately.

The creative thinker, not the imitator, is the one who gets ahead.



SMITH

farm family should know exactly how to operate the extinguishers. In many cases, a one-man extinguisher can prevent a serious fire. Be prepared to prevent the tragedy of fire.

To Do Farm Planning

Now is a good time to do some farm planning for the coming crop season. When the farm records are completed for the past year, time should be spent evaluating the various farm enterprises. Long-range planning takes time and is one of the important parts of sound farm management. Modern farming is a business and requires planning to be successful.