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Changes Noted In Family Picture In Recent Years

Looking at what's happened to families in the U.S. during the past 25 years shows some startling changes.

Helen E. Bell, extension home management specialist of The Pennsylvania State University, points out that 25 years ago there were 35 million households in the United States and seven million of these were on farms. Now there are about 59 million households and only three million are on farms.

Family size is down from 3.7 members per family 25 years ago to 3.3 members today, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture statistics. Part of this change is because more elderly couples are maintaining their own homes today and part because people are marrying and establishing homes at an earlier age than they did 25 years ago.

The "marrying" age for men today levels off at about 22 com-

pared with 24 just a quarter of a century ago, according to USDA figures. Women are marrying about a year earlier, with the median age around 20.

Nine percent of the men and women 25 years ago never married. Today, only seven percent manage to stay single up through age 75.

The U.S. family has shown great strides in education. Miss Bell says that 25 years ago we could only claim eight years of schooling as our median educational level. Now the level is 12 years or the high school graduate level. And 10 percent of our national population over 25 years old has graduated from college compared with 5 percent a quarter of a century ago.

Alfalfa Plants

Alfalfa growers who would like to do something this fall to increase yields next summer might consider the top-dressing of their established stands this fall with a phosphorus-potash fertilizer; both of these soil elements are used liberally by the alfalfa plant and need to be supplied annually; the time of the application is usually following the removal of the last crop of alfalfa. The use of nitrogen in the fertilizer on healthy stands continues to be questionable.

Of all inventions, the alphabet and the printing press alone excepted, those inventions which bridge distances have done most for civilization.—Macaulay.

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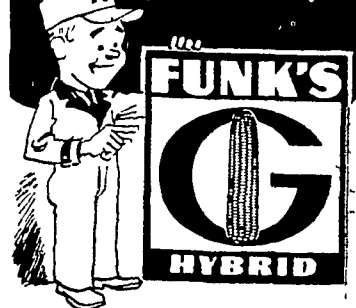
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