

# Trend to Part-Time Farming

There's no question that change is occurring in U.S. farming. The change is not new, however; the move from the farm to the city and then back to the suburbs has been underway for decades now.

Within this massive movement of people there have been many trends, such as the one toward bigger and more specialized farms.

But there's one trend which we think probably hasn't been well understood and properly noted. It's the trend toward part-time farming.

In an article on part-time farming this year, the Farm Credit Service magazine stated, "Over the years farming has become more and more mixed with other pursuits, until today about 92 per cent or nearly three million American farm operators receive some of their income off-the-farm."

"One might be tempted to say that we are a nation of 'part-time' farmers, but the amount of non-farm income varies from an insignificant amount for one farmer to a major portion of the family income for another. According to the most recent U.S. farm census, off-farm jobs brought in income equal to 36 per cent of the value of farm produce across the nation. This averaged nearly \$4,800 per farm operated.

"That's a sizable average for any farm, and on two out of every five farms in the country the off-farm income was greater than farm income.

"This outside income comes from many sources such as government payments, property rent, interest in bonds, stock dividends and retirement payments. But the greatest amount comes from salaries and wages paid for work done outside the farm."

The credit service goes on to note that in 1965 half of all farm operators worked off-the-farm during the year and the figure goes up to 60 per cent if other members of the family are considered.

The report continues, "What kind of jobs do these part-time farmers work at? About 60 per cent receive wages and salaries from such jobs as factory work, construction or road work. About 45 per cent report government payments — soil bank, fertilizer and lime values, feed grain program payments — as outside income. Nearly 30 per cent get interest and dividends from loans, stocks and bonds, and a slightly smaller amount from pensions and social security.

"One out of every 10 farmers with outside income reported it from custom work, rent, or a business and profession."

The report also notes the wide diversity in the number of hours worked and the amount of money earned off the farm. The total money involved, however, was a whop-

ping \$8.3 billion in wages and salaries alone.

What is the future of part-time farming? While there is disagreement by various authorities, the report states, "If urban problems and pollution continue to plague our nation, country living on a part-time farming basis will be encouraged. . . .

"And as small towns try to become more attractive by bringing in industry, their labor force may well come mainly from the surrounding part-time farms.

"Without considering the economics of part-time or full-time farming, we can be sure that millions of people will prefer to live on the land close to the quiet and peace of the country and in an environment ideal for raising families."

We're sure that most farmers in Southeastern Pennsylvania know of many persons who are part-time farmers.

There are some with full-time jobs off the farm who keep sheep or feeder calves. Many farmers do custom work or operate or assist in a farm related business. Many work at local industries or commercial businesses.

As we see it, the number of part-time farmers will grow in the years ahead.

One of the keys to staying on the farm is to make the farm produce enough income so that the individual can make as good a living by staying on the farm as by leaving it.

As income in non-farming occupations rises, the farmer must make his farm produce more to stay competitive. This has spurred the trend toward specialization and bigger farms.

But there's generally more than one way to accomplish the same thing. Part-time farming is another way to increase the overall farm income without either getting bigger or leaving the farm.

The more members of the family willing to cooperate the greater the range of choice. Some members of the family can contribute to the overall health of the farm operation by working off the farm for additional income, while others work full-time on the farm.

While we think full-time farming is still a great way of life, we recognize that expanding farm populations are faced with fewer farms. But rather than being a source of disappointment, we think this situation is a challenge to farmers to display their usual ingenuity.

A little thought and cooperation, we believe, will prove to everyone's satisfaction that there is truly opportunity for everyone.

While some may choose to leave the farm, this isn't really necessary. Growing numbers of farmers all over the country are finding it's possible to work off the farm and still remain a farmer.

## Farming - Still a Future

There is much talk these days about the future of farming and trends in farming, such as the move to bigness and specialization. There's also higher taxes, pressures of urbanization and on and on.

At first glance, a farmer could easily

be led to believe there's no future for him on the farm.

But we know a very high proportion of farmers aren't so easily discouraged and, we think, for good reason. Farmers have a lot going for them, including trends toward more people who consume more.

All those figures about fewer and fewer farmers can be scary, but we know that quite a few farmers are reaching the conclusion that someone has to grow food for the growing populations and, since they like farming, it might as well be them. The plain truth is that the fewer farmers there are, the more opportunities there are for the remaining farmers.

The individual farmer, to be successful, may from time to time have to readjust his thinking on the types of crops or products he grows and how he manages his farming operation.

But we believe that if he's energetic and sound in his thinking, his future is as secure as anyone else's in a changing world.



### NOW IS THE TIME . . .

By Max Smith  
Lancaster County Agent

#### To Add Phosphate To Manure

Many soils continue to need additional phosphorus. Livestock producers are urged to add super-phosphate in the manure at the barn. Dairymen may put the phosphate in the gutters and cattle feeders may broadcast the phosphate on the manure pack before each bedding. Manure re-enforced with phosphate will make a more complete fertilizer and help with the sanitation practices about the barns.

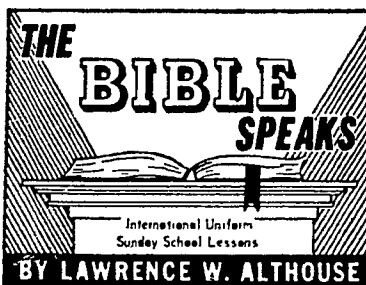
#### To Recognize The Value To Insulation

Buildings filled with livestock during cold weather may need some attention to both ventilation and improved insulation. When warm air strikes a cold surface, condensation takes place and we get sweating and dripping from the walls, windows, or ceilings. In some barns a six-inch cover of straw or hay

on the barn floor above the livestock will serve as good insulation and reduce condensation. Some system of moving out the warm, foul air in confinement barns is necessary.

#### To Raise Dairy Replacements

We have some of the best dairy cattle in the country in this part of the state. The value of good herd replacements is very important to any herd. Therefore, we continue to urge dairymen to do the very best job of raising their heifer calves so their herd will improve. Calves should be in pens or stalls free from dampness and from drafts. Special quarters for young calves is desirable where they will be able to grow rapidly into heifers with size and added physical ability. The demand for surplus herd replacements is good and an extra source of income for the purebred breeder.



**"OLD-TIME RELIGION"**  
Lesson for January 10, 1971

Background Scripture: Matthew 9:14-17, 13:31-33, 51, 52; Mark 4:26-29.

Bishop Gerald Kennedy on the United Methodist Church tells an old story of a hungry Arab, who, one night in his tent, lighted a candle, and peeled open a date. To his dismay, there was a worm, so he threw it aside. A second



and third date also had worms. Exasperated, the Arab blew out the candle and ate the fourth date.

#### "It's good enough for me"

"Rather than face unpleasant realities," comments Bishop Kennedy, "we often find it easier to stay with things as they are and hope for the best. It hardly ever works."

Many of us may be like the Arab: we do not like to face unpleasant realities. One of the most unpleasant realities for Christians today are the rapid changes — sociological, technological, theological, moral, political — taking place in our world. They are unpleasant because they are challenging us to change and we do not want to change. It is not so strange, then, that many of us look back to the "good old days" and sing: "Give me that old time religion . . . it's good enough for me."

No doubt about it, the old-time religion was good. But what we forget is that what made it "good" was that in its own day it spoke to the needs of people where they were. Its genius was that it was not geared to some day gone by, but present circumstances. Though it preserved the best of the past, it was not afraid to push on into the future with whatever new resources God

would give.

#### "We never did it that way before"

When we go back into the Bible we find that all the great moments of spiritual history were regarded as "new-fangled" by people when they first appeared. Moses was often rejected by his people because he would introduce some "new thing" from God. It doesn't take too much imagination to hear the people of Israel greet Moses down from Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments, saying: "But we never did it that way before!"

It was the same story when Israelite leaders tried to unite the tribes into one unified nation, when David sought to build a temple, when prophets challenged the people with their "new ideas." It was also this kind of resistance which gave Jesus so much opposition and which, indeed, brought about his death. His preaching and teaching were radically "new" and "different" and quite contrary to much that the rabbis held dear.

Jesus tried to help them to understand that his message was not really "new," but rather a contemporary interpretation of the eternal truth. No one, he said, "puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment and a worse tear is made." The same is true in trying to pour new wine into old wineskins. The fermentation of the new wine will burst the old, weakened material.

#### Old wineskins

The wineskins are the various forms in which we express our religion. They are our religious institutions, our style of church life, our form of worship, our mode of witness. These forms wear-out in time and the freshness of the Gospel is always in danger of bursting them. The important thing is not the wineskin, the form, but the eternal reality, the new wine. It is the Gospel, not our forms of expressing it, that is eternal. At one time it was normative, to worship secretly in catacombs; today there is no need to do so. The important thing is that we worship, not where or how or when.

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