

# Former Local Man Reports Again on Farming in Australia

Perhaps many of you have heard Australia called a "Land of Contrasts." It has certainly proved to be true, in the case of our recent weather changes

Following the worst drouth in Queensland history, we have experienced the wettest three months in 75 years in Eastern Queensland.

Toowoomba Bay had 35 inches of rain since December 1 and Brisbane had 45 inches.

Thus far, March has returned to a normal rainfall pattern.

Some of the summer crops never got planted, and many that were planted got flooded out. Thousands of acres of lucerne (alfalfa) were even killed out by water standing on the fields too long.

I seemed to fare better than most in that I did not lose more than six or eight acres out of about 75 acres.

Hay has been an abundant crop and the top price for lucerne has been about \$20 a ton. I have about 4,000 bales in the shed that was rebuilt following the wind storm in November. I have sold nearly that much since we started making hay in November. The fifth cutting should be ready to cut in about two weeks and it will no doubt be the last for this season.

So far I have neither sprayed nor fertilized any of my crops. I have about six acres of soybeans which show real good promise, although they will not be ready to harvest for six weeks at least. The harvesting of sorghum, millet and corn is just starting. In some areas that had good drainage, the crops look excellent. There will be sorghum crops of over 100 bushels to the acre and a few corn crops could reach that.

Other years, I have always been disappointed with the corn crops here, but believe now it was mainly a lack of moisture, as this year there are some excellent crops. We have about six acres of corn which were never sprayed, fertilized or cultivated and I would estimate 60 to 70 bushels per acre. We lacked the machinery to cultivate, and the weather

would hardly have permitted it anyway.

Since the feed company I work for will be short on soybeans this season, my boss is thinking about giving contracts on lupines. They are a winter growing crop and quite high in protein. Understand they have been growing them in some areas of the States. He estimates a price of \$60 a ton and said a reasonable crop would be one ton per acre.

I have 24 cows inseminated with Charolais semen now, and so far have had only three heifers.

Most of this year's calf crop are ready to wean and I had a buyer look at them yesterday. I will keep about six of the best heifers to add to the breeding herd and with eight heifers I

bought a few days ago, I should be up to 40 cows by next year.

I have a young man hired to farm for me, and he will start about April 10. He is to be married on March 27 and will occupy the newly decorated farm house that has been empty for six months.

He has worked on large cattle and sheep stations in the West and told me one property he worked on was 200 miles around the boundary. Do not know if he can confine himself to an area of 211 acres? He has his own horse and dogs for handling sheep and cattle.

The export business that I am to be associated with has had a long series of delays in getting started, but looks now that it will definitely be starting very soon. Another large company from Maryland has bought an interest in the business and they have a man here in Australia now to see about getting it moving almost immediately.

In the last three months, there have been three new American families settled here in Toowoomba. I have not met

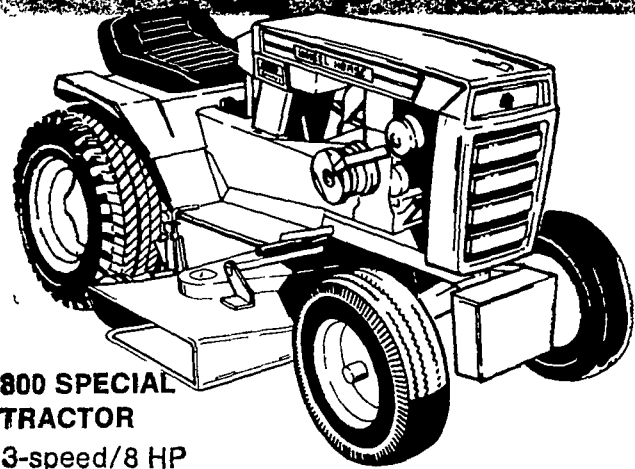
any of them personally as yet. One family from Iowa has 11 children. The others are from New Jersey and Florida.

We also had a lady from Ohio visit us a month ago. So you see Australia is being discovered at last.

And we don't lose much time in changing the Head of Government as you undoubtedly heard on the news.

So long from the Land down under.

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(from Chemical & Engineering News, Dec 21, 1970)

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