

Across the

## Editor's Desk

**Editor's Note:** This is an excerpt from an article in which swine breeders were urged to improve the quality of their animals through testing programs. The item appeared recently in *The Drovers Journal*:

In the purebred hog business, "more customers every year are demanding complete performance testing figures on the boars and gilts they buy—we are fast becoming to a day when we will either test or quit raising purebred hogs," Robert Perry, Missouri registered swine breeder told hogmen attending the Nebraska Swine Breeders Seminar at Schuyler, Neb., recently.

He emphasized the need to follow a "plan" on a testing program, instead of using sporadic testing with the aim of boosting sales rather than improving the herd. "If a breeder

really tests to prove his sires and sow herd, the advantage of selling more boars and gilts will come automatically," Perry said.

In his own testing program, Perry believes that the central test stations and the Superior Certified test pens, coupled with a strict plant of testing, have enabled him to make substantial improvement in his Duroc breeding animals over the last five years.

### What Tests Can Show

Tests results have shown that several factors on a tested board are highly heritable and such things as body length, loin-eye area, backfat thickness, feed efficiency, growth rate and per cent of lean cuts can actually be proven in a test station.

If possible, Perry said, he buys a boar that has been raised in a test station or his litter has been tested. "I feel this has kept us

from having to ship but one higher priced boar after we got his offspring tested," he explained.

Perry also noted that he tries to breed a young boar to some proven sows whose offspring from a different sire have been tested previously. This, he said, has helped to find just how the new sire will produce and "help or hurt" the breeding program.

**Editor's Note:** How well is the farmer doing? As cost-price pressures on farmers continue to rise, as numbers of farms continue to decline, and as consumers continue to fail to appreciate the bargain they're getting from the farmer, farmers in general continue to find it difficult to do as well as their urban neighbors. But large numbers of individual farmers have found ways to overcome these problems and to make their farmers yield "the good life" for themselves, as well as for the nation. The following excerpts from a speech by U. S. Secretary of Agriculture Earl L. Butz at a Press Club luncheon in Washington, D. C., January 14 give some national farm income facts and figures, and some commentary on them:

You have asked me to say something about parity and farm prospects in 1972. The figures on parity are well-known, as you and others watch for the figure each month.

Parity is important, but there are some important things which parity doesn't measure, and there are other very useful measurements besides parity that indicate how farmers are doing:

Such as *income* — which is what farm people have to spend. *Average income per farm* — which indicates how much the average farm has to spend.

And average income of farm people compared with the average income of non-farm people — which measures how well farm people are doing in relation to non-farm people . . .

Farmers' realized net income from farming in 1972 will be about \$1 billion higher than in 1971, at around \$16.7 billion—the third highest in history. It would also mean that farmers' realized net would average \$16.2 billion for the four years, 1969 through 1972—compared with \$13.8 billion from 1961 through 1968. That's progress; but it's not good enough.

It's not good enough because the per capita disposable income of farm people is still only about three-fourths as much as the disposable income per person of non-farm people. It has averaged 75 per cent over the last three years. That is better than the 68 per cent average of the preceding eight years.

In 1972 the average income per farm from farming will be the highest on record—an average of about \$5,900, or nearly \$500 higher than in 1971. That will mean that the average income per farm from farming for the four years 1969-72 will be about \$5,600—an increase of 37 per cent over the previous eight-year average. Still, this is not good enough.

Farmers are a long way from getting the average factory wage for their labor and the average percentage return on their business investment.

City people want fair wages, and the businessman wants a fair return on his investment. I think that they want farmers to have a fair return, too.

We have quite a ways to go before farmers do that well. And

I intend to do all that I can to see that they make progress towards that goal.

We would like to see farmers do better so that more of them will find enough opportunity to be able to stay in agriculture. The average decline in the number of farms during the last three years is 47,000 per year. That is considerably better than the average loss of 106,000 farms per year in the preceding eight years. But it still isn't good enough.

In 1972 farmers will take in more money from livestock, due mainly to somewhat higher livestock prices than in 1971. Farmers might take in a little less money than in 1971 from the sale of crops—but this will be more than offset by higher government payments as we try to work down our grain supplies.

You are familiar with the fact that industries seldom run at full capacity. Yet the cost of carrying the excess capacity is built into the prices that you pay.

And the 40-hour week isn't the full working capacity of people (ask any farmer), but that is built into wage rates and product prices. Government farm payments are the compensation to farmers for carrying and conversing an excess capacity—which we will very much need in the years ahead.

Government farm payments in 1972 will be higher mainly to help feed grain farmers run their "factory" at a slightly slackened pace.

**Editor's Note:** The following is the conclusion of an article on "Careful Management of Inputs Vital to Profits" in the recent issue of *New Holland News*. The article points out some of the

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