

# Farm Commentary

## JULY MEAT IMPORTS OFF 44 PERCENT

U.S. imports of meat subject to the Meat Import Law totaled 59.4 million lbs. during July, USDA disclosed last week. That's down 44 pct. from a year earlier - and the lowest monthly import total since Nov. 1969.

This total brings imports for Jan. - July to 615.2 million lbs., down 12 pct. from a year earlier. That's right in line with USDA's current estimate of 1.2 billion lbs. for the year. The 1973 total was 1.355 billion lbs. Imports subject to the Meat Import Law are primarily fresh, frozen, and chilled beef, but also include veal, mutton and goat meat.

## FARM POPULATION NOW STABILIZING

The U.S. farm population, which had declined 4.8 pct. a year during the 1960's declined only 8-10 of 1 pct. a year from 1970 to 1973, according to a USDA report issued last week.

Moreover, the Economic Research Service report, "Farm Population Estimates for 1973," ERS-561, showed that while the over-all farm population declined - from 9.7 million in 1970 to 9.5 million in 1973 - it actually showed increases in the West and North Central Regions during that period.

Sharpest decreases were in the South and Middle Atlantic States. Populations totals were off 10.3 pct. for the period in the South Atlantic States, off 8 pct. in the West South Central States, off 5.8 in the East South Central States, off 6.4 pct. in the Middle Atlantic States. On the other hand, population totals were up 14.3 pct. in the Pacific States, up 3.5 pct. in the West North Central States. Single copies of ERS - 561 available on request, of course. (USDA 2495-74).

## MEAT CONSUMPTION SEEN UP 6 PERCENT

Per capita consumption of meats seen up this year, according to USDA's Economic Research Service.

Over-all meat consumption, down in the past two years, is expected to be up 6 pct. from last year, totaling around 186 lbs. (carcass weight), compared to 175.7 lbs. last year. Beef consumption seen at around 115 lbs., up from 109.6 lbs. last year, a 5 pct. increase. Veal consumption seen at 1.9 lbs., up 6 pct. from the 1.8 lb. total of last year. Pork consumption seen at 65.9 lbs., up 7 pct. from last year's total of 61.6 lbs. Lamb and mutton consumption seen at 2.3 lbs., down 15 pct. from last year's 2.7 lbs. (National Food Situation).

## AG PRICES: A PRIMER ON PARITY

One of the most frequently asked questions in agriculture concerns the parity index. Last week, USDA's Statistical reporting Service issued a publication that provides the answer(s).

Agricultural Prices, August Supplement 1 not only explains what the Parity Index is, but goes on to illustrate the 440 separate price series that go toward it and explain the relative importance of each.

Finally, it lists both Parity Ratios and the Index of Prices Paid by Farmers - by months - 1968-74. Single copies of Ag. Prices, Aug 1974 Supplement 1, available on request, of course.

## MILK OUTPUT — THE LOWEST SINCE 1948?

Drought has reduced this year's feed grain and soybean crop prospects and will likely mean high feed prices for dairy farmers in coming months. This may limit grain feeding and reduce milk production during the upcoming barn feeding season. For all of 1974, milk production may total about 1½ percent below 1973's 115.6 billion pounds.

Milk output rose above year-earlier levels in July for the first time since September 1972. Output per cow was showing more normal gains from last year's depressed levels, increasing almost 2½ percent in July. Generally favorable pasture and forage conditions in several important dairy areas contributed to the increase. Also, the decline in milk cow numbers has slackened since the beginning of the year, narrowing to a 2 percent drop at midyear. Declining slaughter cow prices have probably discouraged herd culling on dairy farms.

Farm prices of milk have held about steady during the summer months, after showing sharp seasonal declines in the second quarter. Farmers averaged \$7.62 per 100 pounds for milk in August, about 6 percent higher than last August. Milk prices will likely be increased seasonally this fall and winter, paralleling expected strength in the products market. Gains in cash receipts from dairying slowed in July compared with increases earlier in the year. For all of 1974, gross dairy income should be close to \$9½ billion, up from \$8.1 billion in 1973.

Wholesale butter and cheese prices strengthened in late July and August, after holding close to CCC's support purchase prices since last April and May. Nonfat dry milk prices continue at support purchase levels. Dairy product prices likely will be showing further seasonal gains later this year.

Retail dairy prices dropped in June and July, the first month-to-month declines in almost 2 years. Retail dairy prices may rise seasonally later on this year, although the gains are not likely to match those occurring last fall and winter.

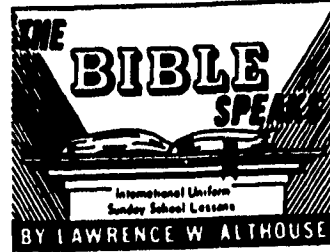
More milk has moved into manufacturing uses this year because of lower fluid milk sales. In July, butter output increased 16 percent and nonfat dry milk production was up over a third. Gains in cheese production have slowed substantially as more milk has gone into butter and nonfat dry milk production.

Fluid milk sales in January-June dropped about 5 percent from year-earlier levels, although declines had slowed to around a 4 percent rate by midyear. Whole milk sales dropped around 8½ percent in the first 6 months this year, while gains in low fat and skim milk sales slowed appreciably.

## Editor's Quote Book

*Anglo-Saxon civilization has taught the individual to protect his own rights. American civilization will teach him to respect the rights of others.*

—William Jennings Bryan



## AFTER RESCUE

Lesson for September 15, 1974

**Background Scripture:** Exodus 3; 14; 19.

**Devotional Reading:** Psalms 46

Less than a month ago I rented a little Fiat and retraced some of the steps of the people of Israel on their exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land. All alone in the midst of this bleak, yet dramatically beautiful landscape, I tried to envision the tribes of Israel following Moses on the slender thread of God's promise. Viewing this vast, inhospitable expanse, I could understand why many of the people of Israel began to wonder whether they had not escaped "from the frying pan into the fire!"

**First, God Saves!**

Yet, whenever hope seemed to burn low in their hearts, God would speak through Moses to remind them that he is a God who rescues his people according to his promise. Oppressed in Egypt, the people of Israel were rescued by this God who was not indifferent to their plight. "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters..." (Exodus 3:7).

Still, it was not enough for him to see their affliction, he also did something about it: "... I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians..." (3:8). God did not send the Israelites a sympathy card or note of regret: he rescued them! Later, when in the midst of the wilderness of Sinai, they were losing hope once again, God reminded them: "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings..." (19:4). On the basis of what he had already done for them, they were to continue trusting him and his promises. Thus was established the conviction that the God of Israel was a God who rescued and saved his people.

God's "Now Therefore..." We tend to think of grace as exclusively a New Testament idea about God. Yet here in the early days of the Old Testament we find a clear-cut example of grace: first, God saves his people, then he asks for something in response. In other words, God could have made his act of rescue conditional on the behavior of the people of Israel: if they lived up to certain standards (the Ten Commandments), then he would reward them with his act of rescue. They would have to earn their rescue by their own accomplishments.

Instead, however, God gives them their rescue with no strings attached: he saves them before he asks anything of them. It is only after they have been saved from the Egyptians that God brings to them the Ten Commandments. Instead of recruiting them because they have proven themselves to be "good", they are asked now to be "good" because they have been saved.

So it is with the concept of grace in the New Testament.

## NOW IS THE TIME...



Max Smith  
County Agr. Agent  
Telephone 394-6851

**To Operate Harvesters Safely**  
Safe operation of farm equipment should always be foremost in our minds, but in this busy harvest season we act like we don't have time to be safe. Too many farm accidents occur during the harvest season. It's not that the involved individuals don't know the safe and proper way to carry out the particular harvest chore, but they feel that they cannot afford the time. How ridiculous that we try to save a few minutes and end up paying a lifetime for it. Safety is no accident.

**To Save Fuel**  
A good number of combines will be operating in our county these next couple of weeks harvesting corn. There is no way you can slow a combine engine down and reduce fuel consumption because it is necessary that a combine engine run at a constant speed at all times to do an efficient job of threshing. However, there are things you can do with the engine to make sure that it will perform to its optimum capability and burn less fuel while doing so. Some of the things you can do are:

—Tune up the engine to the manufacturers specifications.

—Clean and adjust the carburetor.

—Service the air cleaner regularly.

—Keep combine well lubricated.

—Do not "hog" in the crop - a steady flow of material will increase efficiency.

—Keep tires properly inflated.

**To Keep Farm Records Up to Date**

As inflation and high production costs begin to catch-up with us, it's tempting to stop services that are not directly related to production. We have heard it said many times, "I just can't afford to be on DHIA and the farm business records system."

The value of farm production records such as

DHIA records has been shown many times. Herds on test produce over 2,000 more pounds of milk per cow a year than herds not on test. Without these records weeding out the losers and properly managing the profit makers is a difficult task. The same is true with farm business records. How do you know what you can "afford" without a good set of farm records? So in these days when efficiency is the name of the game, your farm records may be your best investment.

## To Up-date Farm Wiring

Farm and Home wiring systems that have not been updated within the past 10 years may need remodeling. Electrical loads have more than doubled on most farms and in most homes during this period. Neglecting this task can increase chances of having some serious electrical problems. First is the fire hazard caused by inadequate wiring and secondly, inadequate wiring can be more expensive than a rewiring job in the long run. Studies show that 10 percent of the electricity one buys can be lost in the wiring system. While that may not be so bad in terms of cost, the effect this has on electrical appliances can be a real drain on the pocketbook.

Research shows that a 10 percent drop in voltage has the following effect on your appliances: 10 percent less heat from heating devices, 30 percent less light from light bulbs, 19 percent less starting torque from a motor, 11 percent more current needed for motor windings and 23 percent more heat produced in motor windings.

Motor windings operating 18 degrees (F) warmer than normal will last only half as long.

How can you tell if your wiring is outdated? Watch for dimming lights, sluggish motors that overheat, slow heating devices, blown fuses, or electrical shocks from small appliances.

## Farm Calendar

**Saturday, September 14**  
7:00 p.m. - Buck Tractor Pulls at the Buck

**Sunday, September 15**  
Penn Ag Industries Annual Convention through the 17th at Seven Springs, Champion, Pa.

**Tuesday, September 17**  
Field Day at Rock Springs Agricultural Center on Rt. 45 outside of State College beginning at 9:30 a.m. for people interested in field crops.

**Ephrata Young Farmers Officer and Committee Chairman meeting at the Ephrata Jr. High School at 8:00 p.m.**

**Solanco Community Fair through the 20th.**

**Wednesday, September 18**  
Elizabethtown Marketplace Fair through the 21th.

**Thursday, September 19**  
Third Annual Pa. Maryland Guernsey Sale at the Guernsey Barn beginning at 6:30 p.m.

**Friday, September 20**  
Second Invitational Hog Show and Sale sponsored by the Chester White Association in the Feeder Pig Pavilion, Lancaster Stockyards. Show beginning at 5:00 p.m. and sale at 7:30 p.m.

Paul puts it simply: "... while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). It is by his goodness, not ours, that we are rescued.

Yet, after the rescue, then God comes with his "Now therefore..."