

## Farm Commentary

### Corn, Soybean Seed Supply Seen Tight

U.S. agriculture officials haven't completely determined how bad this year's corn and soybean harvest will be, but there is already some bad news about next year's crops: Seed is going to be in tight supply, more expensive and of uncertain quality according to a report this week in the Wall Street Journal.

That means farmers are going to have a tougher time rebuilding the nation's extremely low corn and soybean supplies. Last week the Agriculture Department said U.S. stocks of corn on Oct. 1 are at a 26-year low.

This year the corn and soybeans that were being grown commercially for seed were hit by the same heavy spring rains, summer drought and early-autumn frosts that have crippled crops generally.

The loss to seed corn — corn planted for future seed use — nearly wiped out the modest surpluses with which some companies began the growing season. Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc., Des Moines, and DeKalb AgResearch Inc., DeKalb, Ill., which together sell about half the 20 million bags of seed corn produced each year, both report their 15 percent to 25 percent carry-overs were practically wiped out by corresponding field losses. Pioneer, DeKalb and other major producers were fortunate, however, because their fields are dispersed over wide geographical areas and some plots escaped major damage.

But many of the 200 local and regional seed-corn companies that together produce about 25 percent of the total supply saw their closely clustered fields suffer severe losses. That means their regular customers will be trying to buy from the major producers, who aren't quite prepared to take on too many more customers.

The soybean-seed picture is still hazy, but may be equally bleak.

Farmers have been watching the developments anxiously and have been ordering seed, especially for corn, at a record pace. The most-popular sizes and varieties of the major producers are in short supply already and some smaller companies' entire inventories are already sold out, sources say. Most of the seed will be delivered after the first of the year.

Most farmers have reconciled themselves to paying at least 20 percent more for corn and nearly 50 percent more for soybean seed.

Though companies this year are shying away from publicly quoting probable prices, farmers apparently will have to pay about \$42 for a bag of seed corn capable of planting about four acres, up from \$35 last year and about \$13 for a bag of soybean seed that will sow one acre, up from \$9. These expected prices for seed easily could be higher, depending on the extent of the frost damage.

### Cattle, Hog Price Predictions

Feed supplies and prices are the critical concerns to the livestock industry in the months ahead. Prospects for reduced feed grain and soybean output have resulted in rising feed prices and cutbacks in livestock feeding. Hog producers are planning to farrow the fewest number of sows this fall since 1965. Numbers of cattle on feed are the fewest in

over 6 years and poultry production is being cut a tenth, according to USDA's current Livestock and Meat Situation report.

However, since it takes time for hog producers to respond to the changing feed situation, hog slaughter this fall will continue to run moderately above a year ago. Hog prices are expected to average lower than summer as slaughter increases seasonally. But look for smaller supplies and higher prices next year. On September 1 there were 7 percent fewer hogs in the lighter weight groups that will make up the bulk of winter slaughter supplies. Farrowing intentions suggest even further cutbacks in spring slaughter. Average slaughter weights will run under the record levels of last winter and spring. The combination of reduced numbers slaughtered and lighter slaughter weights in the first half of 1975 could drop pork output 10-15 percent below January-June 1974.

These slaughter patterns and production levels suggest seasonally declining prices for hogs this fall, followed by a strong market into mid-1975.

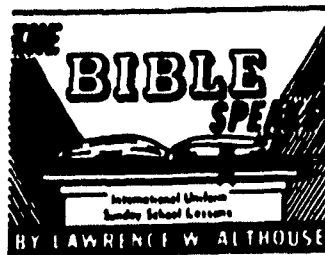
Cattle slaughter this fall is running moderately above both year-earlier and summer levels, with all of the increase in cows, and steers and heifers with little grain feeding background. Grain-fed cattle slaughter is trailing last fall but probably will total a little larger than in the summer. Average cattle slaughter weights are now lighter than in the summer or a year ago.

Fed cattle prices this fall likely will average below the \$44 summer average of Choice steers at Omaha but above the \$40 October-December 1973 average. Prices are expected to strengthen some in the first half of 1975 as marketings of cows and nonfed steers and heifers decline when pastures green up again, and pork and poultry output declines.

Feeder cattle supplies are large but prices are not expected to drop much below current levels, especially in the South and Southeastern States. Short-run demand for feeder cattle could improve if the profit outlook for cattle feeders improves. Feeder prices may strengthen seasonally next winter and spring as the heavy seasonal run subsides.

Pastures have improved in the East and Southwest, but hay supplies are down from last year and dry conditions persist in the range areas of the West. If there is an open winter, carryover in grazing areas of calves, yearlings, and cows into next year will be very large but heavy snows would force more cattle to be marketed and push prices lower than now expected.

Lamb slaughter will run under year-earlier levels through the balance of 1974 and through the first half of next year. Slaughter lamb prices may average near or above year-earlier levels this fall but rising feed prices will keep feeder lambs lower. Lamb prices early next year will run near this year's first half average with large beef supplies mostly offsetting the effect of smaller lamb marketings.



### I AM NOT MAN!

Lesson for November 2, 1974

**Background Scripture:** Hosea 4:1-3,6; 6:1-2; 7:4-7; 11:8,9.

**Devotional Reading:** Hosea 14:1-7

Asked what he's going to be when he grows up, little Linus, one of the "peanuts" cartoon characters, answers brightly: "I'm going to be a prophet of gloom!"

I can understand how the prophet's role might have a certain vocational appeal. The essence of that role, it would appear, is to "go around telling people they're going to 'get it,'" as one boy put it. That's what it seems to be when we read some of the prophetic books in the old testament. It is not difficult to find two great themes running throughout: (1) you people are evil, and (2) you will be punished for it.

#### A Compassionate God

Yet, there is more to the prophet's role than to pronounce condemnation and gloom. The prophet Jonah learned this the hard way. When, at last, God persuaded him to go to Nineveh to prophesy, the people of that city surprisingly repented and God spared them. This only made Jonah angry for he had looked forward to the destruction of Nineveh. Obviously, he did not really understand the purpose of prophecy.

Hosea did, however, and along with the other two named above, we find still a third theme in his book: God desires repentance so that he may forgive, not destroy, his children!

To be sure, there is much gloomy prophecy in Hosea. "Therefore the land mourns," he promises, "and all who dwell in it languish . . ." (4:3). And later: "All of them are hot as an oven, and they devour their rulers. All their kings have fallen; and none of them calls on me" (7:7).

#### A Heart That Recoils

Yet, along with the image of the Mighty Judge of the Universe, there is also a picture of a compassionate God, who, although he abhors the sinfulness of his people, wants their repentance, not their punishment. Hosea pictures God as crying out: "How can I give you up, O Ephraim! (another name for the nation of Israel), How can I hand you over, O Israel!" (11:8a). So great is his love for Israel that it surpasses the monstrous evil of this people: "My heart grows warm and tender" (11:8c).

The real purpose of the prophecies, then, are to call the people to acknowledge their rebellion and seek God's forgiveness. "Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn that he may heal us" (6:1), says the prophet Hosea.

The love and compassion of God are always difficult to understand for our responses are conditioned by the vindictiveness of men. When a man is wronged as God has been wronged by his people, punishment, not mercy, is called for. Yet, God's response is different; it is a

## NOW IS THE TIME . . .



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### To Respect Property Rights

The small game hunting season brings the problem of trespassing on land owned by others. Every hunter should respect the man who owns the land and get permission from him before hunting. Many urban and sub-urban hunters enter land that is not posted thinking they have every right to do so. Don't forget that the land belongs to another person who has the right to say whether or not there will be any hunting. Also, shooting near buildings or near livestock is dangerous and should not be tolerated. Many landowners will grant permission for hunters if they are respectful and courteous.

### To Handle Corn Equipment Safely

The mechanical corn picker needs special attention in order to prevent serious injuries. Corn picking is in full swing at this time and we hope all operators will take the time to stop their machine while cleaning or making adjustments. We know of some farmers who wish they had been more careful. All shields and guards should be kept in place and loose-fitting clothing should not be worn. Even though some pieces of machinery, including tractors, get blamed for many farm accidents, it is the operator or farmer that gets reckless and causes the injury in most cases. Take time to be safe and live longer with all your extremities.

### To Care For Electric Motors

Proper care will add years to the life of an electric motor. The most important thing about caring for an electric motor is to keep it clean and well ventilated. A dirty motor runs hot, and heat is a motor's worst enemy. A dirty motor becomes a hot motor, and a hot motor is a definite fire hazard. An occasional wiping is all that is needed on an enclosed motor; an open motor needs more attention and vacuum cleaners are helpful. Lubrication should follow the manufacturer's suggestions because they vary with the make of motor. Both safety and longer life can be attained by proper care of all electric motors now.

### To Try For Lower Costs

This is not easy when all input items seem to cost more each month. However, gains in weight and milk production costs can be kept lower through good management and using more forage crops and less high-priced grains. The objective of topping the market with cattle, or having the highest milk production in the county, are good goals but at this time will cost the producer money. Efficiency is very important in having lower production costs. Parasite control needs some attention in order to get better efficiency. Healthy animals will make better use of all inputs and are the ones to make ends meet at this time.

## Farm Calendar

**Monday, November 4**  
Manheim Young Farmers monthly meeting, Manheim Central High School, discussion topic, "Futures".

**Wednesday, November 6**  
Pennsylvania Young Farmers annual convention, Seven Springs, Pa. Continues through November 7.

9:00 a.m. - Symposium on converting poultry waste to energy, feed, fertilizer. J. O. Keller Conference Center, Penn State

**Thursday, November 7**  
1:45 a.m. or 6:15 p.m. - Penn State Dairy Feeding and Health Clinic, sponsored jointly by York and Lancaster County extension. 11:45 at Quality Court Motel, Lancaster. 6:15 at Avalong Dairy Restaurant, York County.

6:30 p.m. - Lancaster County Poultry Association annual banquet, Good & Plenty Restaurant.

**Friday, November 8**  
Northeast Egg Marketing Association annual

meeting, Marriott Motor Hotel, Newton, Mass.

7:00 p.m. - Pennsylvania Egg Marketing Association monthly meeting, Colonial Motor Inn, Denver.

**Saturday, November 9**  
18th annual Keystone International Livestock Exposition begins in Farm Show Building at Harrisburg. Continues through November 15.

**Sunday, November 10**  
Pennsylvania Farmers Association annual meeting, Penn Harris Motor Inn, Harrisburg. Continues through November 13.

1:30 p.m. - Southeast Grape Industry Association monthly meeting, Farm and Home Center, Lancaster.

### Editor's Quote Book

*The whole, though larger than any of its parts, does not necessarily obscure their separate identities.*

— William O. Douglas

way of redeeming love and mercy, for the Lord is God and not man.