

Farm Commentary

It's Our Birthday

This week at Lancaster Farming we embark on our 20th year of continuous weekly publication. From a modest beginning in 1955, Lancaster Farming is now circulated to some 13,000 farmer subscribers who are concentrated in the fertile five-county Southeastern Pennsylvania area.

It's been said that agriculture is a dying industry in the Northeast, and that our bountiful fields will soon be covered by an asphalt smear stretching from Boston to Richmond. We do not believe that prediction. We refuse to believe it. We will not give in to the relentless advance of bulldozers, parking lots and housing developments.

The agriculture community we serve here is a remnant of the heritage that made America what it is today. The Declaration of Independence was written by a farmer, the Constitution was framed by farmers. Farmers left their plows to fight for their country's independence. And farmers spread the American ideal from sea to shining sea.

Two hundred years ago, farmers had to worry about drought, frost, insects, and other natural forces. Nature was at once the Colonial farmer's benefactor and chief opponent.

Today we've learned to cope with nature to some extent, although drought and frost can still deliver crippling blows to individual areas. Modern farmers, though, have a whole new set of problems their forefathers never imagined.

Taxes, land speculation, government interference, consumer complaints, wildly fluctuating markets, soaring expenses, labor shortages, fuel shortages, even trade deficits and the price of gold can drive a farmer's income down, can help him decide that it's time to leave the farm, sell out while he can, and live comfortably on the interest from his principal.

Part of our job here at Lancaster Farming is to help our readers cope with these problems. Market news is an important - and well-read - element of our coverage. We provide a voice for the people and the groups that make up the farm community, because a community without a voice is no community at all. We try to keep abreast of new farm products and practices, and of legislation affecting farmers.

It's a big job, and it gets bigger and bigger every year. When the first issue of Volume 40 comes off the presses some twenty years hence, we hope our farming community is just as big as it is now, and twice as active.

We'll be doing everything we can to make it so.

Pork Prices Are Seen Up Sharply

Pork prices seen up sharply during the first three months of 1975, and poultry and egg prices are expected to be up somewhat. But, retail beef prices, though above fall levels, are expected to be down a bit from the first quarter of 1974.

The reasons: Seasonally reduced marketings of cows and nonfed steers and heifers, compared to levels expected late this year, a major drop in pork output and lower poultry and egg production.

Butter Output Continues Up

U. S. butter production in September estimated at 65.4 million lbs., according to USDA's Crop Reporting Board. Though 11 pct. below that for August, it was 28 pct. above that of a year earlier.

This marks the 4th consecutive month that the Nation's butter output has been above that of a corresponding month a year earlier. At 725,739,000 lbs., butter output for the first 9 months is now down only slightly from the 725,385,000 lbs. for the first 9 months of a year ago, but still well below the 871,685,000 lbs. produced during Jan. - Sept. 1972.

July-September Farm Exports Record High

U. S. farm exports for the first quarter of fiscal 1975 were record high according to USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. At \$4.5 billion, the total was 8 pct. above the previous high (of \$4.15 billion) set during July-Sept. 1973.

Reason for the gain: Higher prices. Volume for most commodities was down about 10 pct. from a year earlier. Gain also came despite lower feedgrain, wheat exports.

Over-all exports of grains and preparations, at \$2.3 billion for the period, were down 9 pct. from a year earlier with feed grain exports, at \$902 million, down 19 pct., and wheat exports, at \$1.17 billion, down 7 pct. from year earlier totals. Higher rice exports, at \$181 million and up 93 pct., were partially offsetting.

Exports of animals and animal products, at \$401 million were up 19 pct., with higher exports of fats, oils and greases, mainly responsible for the big gain. At \$143 million, exports of animal fats, oils and greases, were up 67 pct. from a year earlier.

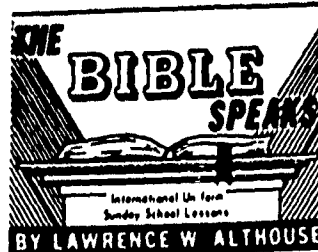
Exports of oilseeds and products totaled \$921, up 55 pct. from a year earlier. Cottonseed and soybean oils exports, at \$169 million, were up 196 pct. from a year earlier, soybean exports, at \$494 million, were up 93 pct. from a year earlier. Other big gains were in cotton, at \$217 million, up 36 pct.; nuts and preparations, at \$28 million, up 78 pct., and vegetables and preparations, at \$104 million, up 31 pct.

Farm Labor

The Nation's farm labor force numbered 4,651,000 workers during October. That's down 3 pct. from a year ago. Farm operators and unpaid family workers totaled 3,331,400, while hired workers totaled 1,319,600.

World Sugar Crop Is Seen Record High

World sugar production for the 1974-75 crop year -- that's May 1 - April 30 -- now seen at 81.1 million metric tons (89.4 million short tons). Though it's about 2 million tons below earlier forecasts, it's still record high, according to USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. The previous record high was set in 1973-74 when the world total hit 80.5 million tons. Meanwhile, world sugar consumption are seen at 81 million tons, up 2 pct. from 1973-74.



A NEW DAY

Lesson for November 17, 1974

Background Scripture: Ezekiel 36 through 37.

Devotional Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14.

Recently one of my sons came home from high school with the assignment to analyze the meaning of this popular saying: "Today is the first day of the rest of your life."

We decided that this saying is essentially a statement of hope. On any particular day we can be linked either with the defeats and frustrations of the past or the promises and opportunities of the future. We can concentrate on what has gone wrong or we can concentrate upon a better tomorrow. Some people are so encumbered by yesterday that they ruin every today and tomorrow.

A new spirit

To say "Today is the first day of the rest of your life," however, is to affirm your belief that you can cut yourself off from the past and enjoy a better and different future. We can put the past behind us.

Actually, we decided that the saying would be more accurate if we were to say instead of "Today is . . ." to say "Today can be the first day of the rest of your life." There is certainly nothing automatic about today and tomorrow. A new day is not delivered with the morning milk. The key is what we make of a new day. If we are to break with the past and build a better tomorrow it is incumbent upon us to take some affirmative action. A better "rest of your life" doesn't "just happen."

This was essentially the message that the prophet Ezekiel brought to the Hebrew people in exile. His was a prophetic message of hope for the future. He saw a "new day" coming for these captives in exile. A beautiful promise was given them by God through the prophet: "For I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land" (Ezekiel 36:24).

"I will deliver you. . ."

Yet, if the people of Israel were to enjoy this "new day," they could not simply wait for it. Something was required of them: they had to be willing to let God transform them. God wanted to renew them, but they had to be receptive.

A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. (36:26)

Sometimes there is nothing we need so much as a new beginning. This is when it is not enough to make some changes here and there, when what is required is a major overhauling. We are likely to have the same old today and tomorrow unless we are willing to let God make some radical changes in our lives. Jesus told his disciples that you can't put new wine into old wineskins. So it is in our lives if we want a "new day," we have to be willing to let God make a new "us."

NOW IS THE TIME . . .

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To Evaluate Farm Records

Good farm records are not only important in making out the Income Tax Report but should be used to make plans for the future. Since the end of the year is approaching, it might be a good time to do some evaluating of the various farm enterprises and study the returns on the various commodities. If decisions are to be made to go stronger in some areas, then now would be the time to make that decision and order the needs for 1975. Good farm accounts should reveal the enterprises that are most profitable and point out where the money leaks are found.

To Order Seed And Fertilizer Needs For 1975

Good farm management suggests that farmers plan ahead for their farm supplies; this has always been true but in times of scarcity and rising prices, it becomes more important. Reports reveal shortages in some kinds of fertilizer and seed varieties. To wait until the item is needed next spring might mean taking what is left on the market. Order soon so that your dealer will be able to provide your needs.

To Control Chickweed In Alfalfa

Cooler weather could mean more rapid chickweed growth in new or old alfalfa fields. Too many producers recognize the problem next spring when it is too late to do a good job of control. Young weeds are easier to kill than mature weeds and this will prevent so much damage to the alfalfa stand. Several herbicides may be used this fall when the plants are small and should give good control. Contact your dealer or the 1974 Agronomy Guide for details. Don't let the weeds get too big and too mature before spraying.

To Beware Of Heating Corn

Corn put into storage carry too much moisture may heat this fall or next spring when the weather turns warmer. We have heard some reports of corn that is heating. The use of forced air through the pile or crib will often reduce the problem. When piling ear corn on solid floors we often get into trouble because of the lack of ventilation. Rails or boards may help but forced air will be more satisfactory to remove the moisture. Corn is an important farm crop this fall; every effort should be made to keep it in good condition until used or marketed.



BEST EVER . . . This could be the best-ever weather photo of the earth, received at the Army's White Sands Missile Range from a satellite launched in May from Kennedy Space Center. Florida peninsula is at upper left.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, November 16
Corn Field Meeting at the Levi S. Stoltzfus farm located on White School Rd., 2 miles northeast of Honeybrook. Observation of different corn hybrids with husking in the afternoon. Bring a lunch for noon.

Monday, November 18
Agway Annual Meeting at the Farm and Home

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Center at 7:30 p.m.
Tuesday, November 19
Garden Spot Young Farmers Meeting at the Garden Spot High School. Review of the corn contest will be discussed, 7:45 p.m.
Wednesday, November 20
20th through 22nd Pennsylvania Holstein Association annual Convention at Pocono Manor Inn, Pocono Manor, Pa.
22nd through 28th - Farm City Week for Pennsylvania.
Sunday, November 23
Chester County Farm-City week open-house tours.