

Farm Commentary

U.S. Milk Output Dips 1 Percent From 1973

Milk output may total about 114½ billion pounds this year, around 1 percent below 1973. The decline in milk cow numbers has slowed during 1974 partly because of lower slaughter cow prices and the lack of viable alternatives for dairymen. Output per cow should average higher this year, following the unusual drop in 1973 for the first time in almost 30 years.

September's milk production was up almost 3 percent from a year ago — the sharpest year-to-year increase in almost a decade. Reduced herd culling, increased availability of corn silage, and generally favorable fall pastures in several important dairy States contributed to the increase.

However, this kind of gain seems temporary. High feed costs in coming months will likely cause dairy farmers to cut back on grain and concentrate feeding, thus limiting output per cow during the current barn feeding season. In fact, lower milk production appears in prospect this winter, although low slaughter cow prices may prevent sharp increases in dairy herd culling. Production later next year will depend in part on 1975 crop developments and subsequent feed prices, on milk prices, and on the market for cull dairy cows. Although milk production could be increasing in the second half of next year, total 1975 output may slightly trail this year's level.

Farm milk prices are now rising seasonally, following sharper than normal declines this spring and summer. In October, farmers averaged \$8.21 per 100 pounds for milk, up 64 cents from July, but about 11 cents under last October's price. Manufacturing milk prices were about 26 cents over the \$6.57 support level in October. Farm milk prices are likely to be rising seasonally during the rest of 1974 and continue rising early next year.

Gains in cash receipts from dairying slowed appreciably in the third quarter, while feed and other production costs continued to gain by about a fifth from a year ago. For all of 1974, dairy cash receipts should total close to \$9½ billion, up from \$8.1 billion last year.

Wholesale butter and cheese prices have strengthened since midyear. However, nonfat dry milk prices still remain at CCC's support purchase price, where they have been since June.

September retail dairy prices took a slight upturn after dropping this summer for the first month-to-month declines in almost 2 years. Fluid milk prices continued to drop, but retail butter prices rose in September. Retail prices will likely be rising seasonally during the rest of 1974, but the gains are not likely to match those of last fall and winter.

More milk has moved into manufacturing uses this year because of lower fluid milk sales. Larger third quarter milk marketings funneled more milk into butter and nonfat dry milk production — with butter output up a fourth from a year earlier and nonfat dry milk running about 40 percent more.

Commercial disappearance of milk in all dairy products was down slightly in January-September.

However, brisk butter sales and some recovery in fluid milk usage pulled third quarter disappearance slightly above year-earlier levels. Commercial use may remain close to year-earlier levels in coming months. Demand for dairy products could be weakened by strong inflationary pressures, declining real consumer purchasing power, and higher unemployment rates. However, dairy prices probably will be rising more slowly than last winter and more slowly than food prices generally. Gains in butter sales and further strength expected in fluid milk sales help brighten the sales picture, but sales of nonfat dry milk continue to lag.

Home delivery sales of fluid milk products in Federal order markets had dropped to 10 percent of total sales in late 1973. Plastic containers have been increasing rapidly at the expense of both glass bottles and paper packages. Use of gallon size containers has increased substantially to the point where it about equals sales made in half-gallon containers.

Although now declining seasonally, commercial dairy product stocks were equivalent to 7.2 billion pounds of milk on October 1, up 60 percent from a year ago, and a record high for the date. Government stocks of butter and American cheese are at relatively low levels. However, CCC nonfat dry milk stocks reached about 135 million pounds by the end of October; a year ago, CCC had no stocks.

USDA has purchased no butter and only moderate quantities of American cheese under the price support program since early August, but nonfat dry milk removals continue at sizable levels.

January-September dairy product imports were equivalent to 2.3 billion pounds of milk, up from 1.3 billion pounds a year earlier. Almost all the increase occurred during the first quarter of the year, when an increase in the import quota for Cheddar cheese was authorized. Since then, dairy product imports have slackened to more normal levels. All of the temporary increases in import quotas had expired by midyear.

USDA Crop Report Highlights

The USDA's November crop report shows decreases in all major crops except for peanuts, tobacco and oranges. Corn is forecast 18 percent below last year's production, while all feed grains are expected to be some 20 percent under the previous year.

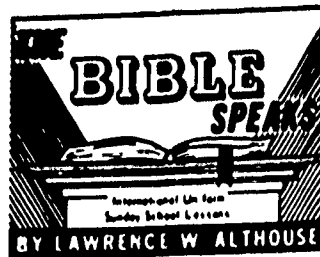
The breakdown by crops was:

CORN — Production is forecast at 4,621 million bushels, 2 percent (96 million bushels) below October 1 and 18 percent below 1973.

SORGHUM GRAIN — Production is forecast at 609 million bushels, down 4 percent from last month and 35 percent below the 1973 crop. The 1974 crop will be the smallest in a decade.

FEED GRAINS — Production of corn, sorghum, oats and barley combined is forecast at 165 million tons, 2 percent below the October 1 forecast and 20 percent below 1973.

SOYBEANS — Production is forecast at 1,244 million bushels (the 3rd largest of record,) but 18 million bushels (1 percent) below last month's forecast and 323 million bushels below last year.



SULKING PROPHET

Lesson for November 24, 1974

Background Scripture: Jonah 1 through 4.
Devotional Reading: Acts 17:24-31.

There are few more interesting nor more misunderstood stories in the Bible than the saga of Jonah.

Most people know his name and associate him with a rather incredible "fish story." Unfortunately, many never realize that there is a great deal more to Jonah and his story: a message that is relevant to us today.

People think of Jonah as a reluctant prophet. They remember that when God called him to go and prophesy to Nineveh, he sought to run away from this challenge. Jonah learned, however, that no matter where we run to hide, God can and does find us there. At last, Jonah agreed to stop running and do what God wanted him to do.

"But it displeased Jonah."

But when Jonah agreed to be God's prophet, that wasn't the end of the story. He had learned that one cannot escape God; now he was to learn a lesson about his fellow man.

The facts were these:

...At last, Jonah went and preached to Nineveh.

...Surprisingly, the people of Nineveh responded to Jonah's prophecy by repenting of their evil and being saved.

One would think that Jonah would be overjoyed with his success. But Jonah's reaction was anything but joy: "But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry" (Jonah 4:1).

What displeased Jonah was that the people had repented and been saved. He had not wanted them to be saved. He felt they deserved to be punished. One of the reasons he had tried to escape from this responsibility is that he had been afraid that the people of Nineveh would repent and be spared.

The reason for this negative attitude was an overwhelming prejudice against the people of Nineveh. Jonah clearly despised these people and he wished for them only the very worst God could offer.

"Do you do well to be angry?"

Jonah is so angry that the people of Nineveh are going to be saved rather than condemned that he wants to die: "Therefore now, O Lord, take my life from me, I beseech thee, for it is better for me to die than to live" (4:3).

What he's saying should be fairly familiar to all of us: If I can't have it my way, I don't want to play! With this Jonah strides out of the city and finding a place to sit and watch the city of Nineveh, he waits to see if God will change his mind.

When God took away the shady plant from him, Jonah sulked even more until God points out to him that the people of Nineveh are worth far more than one little plant.

It seems such an easy lesson to grasp. Yet how

NOW IS THE TIME...

Max Smith
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To Prevent Winter Injury in Strawberries
Winter injury in strawberries has been rather widespread throughout Pennsylvania and other states during the past few years. Crown injury can be reduced this year by checking your beds for the following:

Inadequate mulch cover — settled mulch should be 3 to 4 inches thick, and loose enough so that it will not mat (or pack) and smother plants. Add more mulch if necessary.

Exposed areas — any exposed plants should be recovered with mulch; wind breaks or snow fences should be erected where wind exposure is especially severe.

Crown injury can be expected where plantings have been improperly mulched and exposed to wind, or were over-supplied with nitrogen and moisture after mid-September.

To Take Soil Samples

Fall months are an ideal time to take soil samples to determine next year's needs for lime, phosphorus and potash. Poorly planned lime and fertilizer programs often can be blamed on the rush of spring work when plowing and planting suddenly become urgent. If soil samples are taken now, there will be plenty of time to order the proper fertilizers and take advantage of early-order discounts.

Lime, phosphorus and potash can be applied during the fall months. At this time of year the ground is firm and suffers less from heavy spreading equipment. Since plant nutrient levels in the soil are always low at the end of the crop season, fall is ideal for taking a lime and plant food inventory of next year's crop needs.

To Use Camping Gear

In Winter Emergencies
How can a camp stove and an old suitcase help you out this winter? According to Joseph R. Cardenuto, Penn State Extension recreation

specialist, camping gear such as this may come in handy during a winter emergency. For instance — if a windstorm, an ice storm, or a blizzard knocks out your electricity, a camp stove or a gasoline lantern could be convenient to have. But they should be in good working order and stored where you can easily reach them. Fuel for such equipment should be stored in a safe metal container — never left in the equipment. And, it's a good idea to keep an extra supply of canned foods on hand so you can prepare meals easily during a winter emergency. What do you do with the old suitcase? If it's packed with warm clothing and stored in the trunk of your car, it may come in handy if you're stranded on the highway. So remember — when you're putting away those cots, sleeping bags, air mattresses, and other camping gear, think how useful they might be in a winter emergency. Store them where they're readily accessible and hope you don't have to use them until next summer's camping trip.

To Trap Muskrats

During the past several years muskrats have increased their numbers to the point where they are bothersome and destructive to farm ponds. Part of this build-up in the muskrat population can be attributed to high productivity, good habitat, and to a lack of trapping. Fur prices are improved so there may be more incentive to the trapper for harvesting surplus muskrats this year. Pond owners would do well to trap at their ponds or encourage others to do so. Trappers looking for a choice spot should check with local pond owners for permission to trap at ponds or streams on their property. Check the game law for season dates and other regulations relating to trapping.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, November 23

Chester County Farm-City
Week Open House Tours.

Sunday, November 24

Chester and Lebanon
Counties Farm - City
Week Open House Tours.

many people fail to respond to their fellow man with compassion and like Jonah, the sulking prophet, would rather pronounce doom rather than pardon?

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Monday, November 25

Red Rose DHIA Quarterly Meeting in the Conference Room at the Farm and Home Center 8:00 p.m.

Pennsylvania Forage and Seed Conference at the Hershey Motor Lodge and Convention Center.

Tuesday, November 26

Pennsylvania Forage and Seed Conference in the Hershey Motor Lodge and Convention Center.

Cedar Crest Young Farmers Corn Silage and Haylage Contest at Cedar Crest High School Vo-Ag Shop - 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, November 30
Beginning of National 4-H Congress in Chicago.