

## Farm Commentary

### Cattle Inventory Up 6 Million Head

The cattle inventory has probably grown by around 6 million head this year, setting the stage for record slaughter and total beef output in 1975, despite a reduction in cattle feeding, according to the USDA's latest Livestock and Meat Situation Report.

This year's cattle slaughter will exceed 36 million head, up about 7 percent from 1973 and slightly above the previous record of 1972. All of the increase over 1973 will be in steers and heifers off grass or other roughage, and cows; fed cattle slaughter will be down 7 percent.

Fed cattle marketings will continue to lag 1974 rates at least through the first half of 1975 but more cows and other cattle will keep total slaughter supplies above year-earlier levels. Early 1975 beef output, while continuing above this year, is not expected to increase as much as the number of cattle slaughtered because average slaughter weights will be down. A larger proportion of cattle killed in 1975 will be coming off grass, and high feed costs will hold fed cattle market weights down.

The price dampening effect of large cattle supplies will be moderated by sharp cutbacks in broiler and pork output. Also, consumers' collar incomes are expected to rise again, boosting demand for meat.

Feeder cattle and cow prices will probably continue low, averaging under this year. At midyear, there were substantially more cattle suitable for feedlot placement than a year earlier, but demand for feeder cattle is poor. In November, feeder steer prices were running about half the year-earlier price. Financial conditions of the feeding industry are improving slowly at best, as short supplies and high prices for feed grains persist. This situation will continue at least in the first half of 1975.

The low market for feeder calves will result in continued large increases in calf slaughter next year as packers now compete with feeders for the available supply. However,

### October Pa. Milk Production Up 2 Percent

Milk production in Pennsylvania during October was 552 million pounds, 2 percent more than a year ago, according to the Crop Reporting Service.

The number of milk cows in the Commonwealth during October was 665,000 - 1,000 less than last month, and 2,000 less than a year ago.

Milk production per cow averaged 830 pounds in October, compared with 835 pounds in September and 810 pounds in October last year.

### Waste Not Waste

Poultry litter may well be a valuable by-product of poultry production, useful in both livestock feed and fertilizer. USDA economists have determined that the processing and feeding of dried layer waste is economically feasible for poultry operation with 50,000 or more caged layers. New Jersey sources report that a 30,000 bird operation could pay for the drying equipment needed in 2 to 3 years with dried poultry waste selling at \$125 a ton for fertilizer and worth \$85 a ton if fed to chickens. Meanwhile, in California

large calf slaughter will benefit calf producers in the long run by reducing the large supply of feeder cattle and helping to ease the pressure on feeder prices.

Feed supplies, pasture, and roughage will be a critical aspect of the cattle market during the upcoming months. At present, the situation suggests an increase in beef production next year of about the same magnitude as the increase this year over 1973. However, a severe winter, followed by a dry spring and summer, would force a large number of cows and other cattle to slaughter, and the increase in 1975 beef output would substantially exceed that level.

Hog producers have responded to the feed grain situation this year by cutting back breeding stock numbers and planning fewer farrowings. In fact, the cutback this fall will likely exceed the intended 7 percent reduction in the fall pig crop indicated by the September report. Consequently, hog slaughter in the first half of next year could be down 10 percent or more. Additional damage to the corn crop since early September has further reduced corn yield expectations and kept grain prices at high levels. This has probably caused hog producers to further reduce the number of sows slated to farrow this fall.

Sharply reduced slaughter supplies will mean a higher hog market, particularly since broiler supplies are also expected to be smaller.

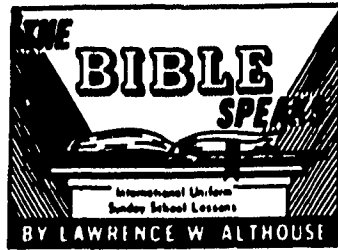
Sheep and lamb slaughter next year will likely decline as continued liquidation in the breeding herd reduces the 1975 lamb crop and slaughter supplies. Slaughter lamb prices will likely average above 1974, but high feed costs will keep feeder lamb prices well below the slaughter market in the first half.

Conditions currently suggest little change in total red meat output in January-June 1975. Larger beef and veal production probably will be mostly offset by smaller production of pork and lamb and mutton. Thus, if meat production is the same, retail meat prices likely will advance.

United States milk production during October is estimated at 9,133 million pounds, 2 percent above a year earlier and practically the same as last month. U.S. average milk production per cow was 821 pounds during October, up 30 pounds from last year and 11 pounds above October 1972. There were 11.1 million milk cows on farms during October, down 14,000 head from last month and 2 percent below a year earlier.

natural drying methods have been used to reduce moisture below 30 percent in 1 to 5 days, making poultry waste an easy to handle fertilizer.

Wastes from beef feedlots may also have a hitherto unknown payoff for farmers who use them on their soils: besides increasing soil fertility, they also effectively restrict soil blowing on cropland lying idle over winter. Studies by USDA researchers in Kansas have demonstrated that animal wastes are about as effective as straw in restricting soil loss on highly erosive sandy soil.



### ON BEING PREPARED

Lesson for December 8, 1974

**Background Scripture:** Malachi 3:1-4 Matthew 3:1-12; John 1:6-8, 19-28.  
**Devotional Reading:** Luke 1:68-79.

The other day a little dog chased my car for about a block before he gave up the pursuit. Two thoughts struck me as I observed the intensity of this canine. For one thing, it was something I hadn't experienced for a long time. (When I was a boy it seemed dogs chased cars almost every day.) Secondly, I couldn't help wondering what the little dog would do if he "caught" me and my car!

#### The Kingdom is at hand!

Of course that's a problem that dogs share with people: we often seem ill prepared to deal with our heart's desire when we get it! We can become so engrossed in the "chase," that we are quite unprepared for the "catch."

This was certainly implicit in the preaching of John the Baptist when he came proclaiming: "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." For many centuries the people of Israel had looked earnestly for the promised kingdom of God. Now, John the Baptist was proclaiming, the kingdom was close at hand and the focus must pass from "chase" to "catch."

John's concern was to prepare the people for this kingdom so close at hand. It was not enough that they should have waited so long for it, but that they should be ready for it. Thus his role was, as he quoted from the Prophet Isaiah, that of a "voice crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord..." (Matthew 3:3).

#### The fruit of repentance

The question some raised was that of how a person should be prepared for the coming of God's kingdom. John answered this question with one negative and two positive requirements.

First of all, John made it quite clear that being a Jew or even a scribe or Pharisee was not adequate preparation for God's kingdom. In other words one would not be adequately prepared for the kingdom by simply being a member of the right religious group. No one could feel prepared simply because he could boast: "We have Abraham as our father" (3:9).

Secondly, proper preparation in the positive sense meant repentance. With the kingdom there was judgment. One could not be properly prepared for the kingdom without a wholesale moral housecleaning. Before a person can qualify, he must first acknowledge that he does not qualify.

Finally, the repentant response must go far beyond verbalized good intentions: "Bear fruit that befits repentance..." (3:8). Much more than what people said about their faith, John was concerned with what they did about it. The fruits are much more important than the claims we make.

## NOW IS THE TIME...

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**To Beware Of Electrical Hazards**  
Overloaded fuses and improper wiring account for a high percentage of all fire hazards on Pennsylvania farms according to a recent report from our Penn State Agricultural Engineering office. Motors should be cleaned and all materials kept away from them in case of heating or sparks. Be sure that the proper size fuses are used. Don't put in a heavier fuse because of recent trouble. Check the insulation on wires where they have been exposed to wear or to rodents. The inspecting the electrical system at this time of the year could prevent serious losses.

**To Stretch Antifreeze**  
Using the same antifreeze year after year is fine providing the radiator does not develop a rust condition. Most of the permanent type antifreeze solutions do not break down but the rust inhibitor in the solution does and trouble appears. We know of no easy way to determine if the rust inhibitor is lost except to check the solution for rust. If rust materials and color is found, special solutions should be used to clean and flush the system but this may require a new antifreeze solution. To prevent rust conditions a can of rust inhibitor should be added. Some car owners will drain out a gallon of the old solution and add an equal amount of new antifreeze to strengthen the rust-inhibiting effectiveness of the total mixture.

**To Worm Young Cattle**  
Nearly all young cattle under a year of age in this part of the country will greatly benefit from worm treatment; this is especially true of local cattle that have been out on pasture and feeder cattle brought here from any of the states south of Pennsylvania. There is plenty of research to show that for each dollar spent for worm treatment followed by sanitary feeding and management, producers can expect ten dollars return. The savings in grain necessary to winter young cattle will more than pay for the treatment. Materials may be given by drench, pelleted wormer feed and by injections. Don't allow internal parasites to increase feed costs.

**To Protect New Born Animals**  
New born pigs and lambs need protection from cold weather and from drafty conditions. Some of these little animals are born into open barns and sheds that are very cold. Regular farrowing houses with supplemental heat are fine for the new born pig. If the little animal gets chilled the first few days, it will get sick and the mortality rate will be very high. Closed buildings with heat lamps are suggested in order to give the proper conditions for a good start. Drafts and dampness are profit cutters on both new born pigs and lambs. Good management with a lot of love and tender care will increase livestock profits.

## Farm Calendar

**Sunday, December 8**  
8-11 National Young Farmers Convention, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.  
7:45 p.m. - Garden Spot Young Farmers meeting. Farm management seminar. Ag classroom, Garden Spot High School.

**Monday, December 9**  
9:00 a.m. - Red Rose 4-H Baby Beef Club Show, Lancaster Stockyards. Manheim Young Farmer Association monthly meeting. Year-end tax management.  
9 - 12 National Agricultural Outlook Conference, USDA, Washington, D.C. "U.S. Agriculture in the World Economy".

**Tuesday, December 10**  
9:00 a.m. Southeast District 4-H Baby Beef Show, Lancaster Stockyards.  
7:45 p.m. Ephrata Area Young Farmers meeting. New developments in beef and swine. Ag Department, Ephrata Senior High School.

**Thursday, December 12**  
11:30 a.m. - Red Rose Dairy Herd Improvement Association annual awards banquet, Lancaster Farm and Home Center.  
7:45 p.m. Garden Spot Young Farmers officers meeting, Garden Spot High School.  
Elizabethtown Adult Farmer advisory committee meeting to plan 1975 program.  
Manheim Young Farmer executive planning meeting for 1975.  
Delmarva Corn Technology Conference, Wicomico Youth Center, Salisbury, Md.

**Friday, December 13**  
7:00 p.m. Pennsylvania Egg Marketing Association monthly meeting, Colonial Motor Inn, Ephrata. Frank Urner, guest speaker on egg pricing.  
Manheim Young Farmer annual banquet.

John's challenge is still with us in this Advent season: "...the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And once again the key to that challenge is found in being truly "prepared"!