

# Farm Commentary

## NUMBER OF FARMS: INCREASES SEEN IN SOME STATES

Some interesting things in that Number of Farms and Land in Farms report USDA issued last week. Admittedly, it does show that the estimated number of farms to be operated in the US in 1975 (at 2,819,000) is down But, that total is down only 4-10 of 1 pct from the 1974 total of 2,830,000, and only 1 pct. below the 2,844,000 operated in 1973.

It also shows that land in farms, at 1086 billion acres for 1975 is only slightly below the 1088 billion total for 1974 and 1089 billion total for 1973. And, that average size of farms,

at 385 acres is up only slightly from the 384 average of last year and 1973's average of 383

A closer look shows that the number of farms is expected to increase in New York, Pennsylvania and West Virginia and hold firm in all the six New England States. New York's total is expected to move up to 58,000 from 57,000 last year and 56,000 in 1973. Pennsylvania's is expected to move up to 72,000 from 71,000 last year and in 1973. West Virginia's is expected to move up to 27,000 from 26,500 in both 1973 and 1974.

## PRICES RECEIVED DECLINE FOR 2ND STRAIGHT MONTH

The Index of Prices Received by Farmers decreased 5 points (3 pct) during the month ended Dec 15 to 177 pct. of its Jan - Dec 1967 average. It marked the 2nd straight month of decline and left the index 8 points (4 pct) below a year ago.

Meanwhile, the Index of Prices Paid by Farmers for Commodities and Services increased 1 point (1 pct) to a record 179. It was 25 points (16 pct) above a year earlier.

combination dropped the Ratio of Prices Received to Prices Paid 3 points to 99. It was 120 a year ago.

Under the old 1910-14 formulas, Prices Received declined 13 points to 449 and were 470 a year ago. Prices Received moved up to 613 from 610 and were 525 a year ago. And, the Ratio declined 3 points to 73 - its lowest point since June of 1972. A year ago it had stood at 90.

## COMMERCIAL MEAT OUTPUT HEADING FOR RECORD HIGH?

US commercial meat production just may hit a record this year. The 32 billion lbs produced in November was 2 pct more than a year earlier and brought the Jan - Nov. total to 342 billion lbs. That's only slightly below the 345 billion produced in all of 1973 and within hailing distance of the record 373.6 billion lbs. produced in all of 1971.

Here's the breakdown: Nov beef output at 19 billion lbs, up 4 pct from a year earlier. This brought the 11-month total to 209 billion lbs, up 8 pct from a year earlier and close to the 211 billion lb total for all of 1973. The record 222 billion lbs produced

Nov output was 11 billion lbs down 1 pct from a year earlier. But the 11-month total of 125 billion is close to the 127.5 billion total for all of 1973. The record 146 billion lbs produced in 1971.

Veal: Nov output at 59 million lbs, up 79 pct from a year earlier, the 11-month total, at 396 million lbs, up 32 pct. from a year ago and well above the 325 million lbs produced during all of 1973. Mutton: Nov output of 32 million lbs, down 20 pct. from a year earlier. The 11-month total, at 422 million lbs, down 10 pct. from a year earlier.

## BUTTER OUTPUT UP, AM. CHEESE DOWN IN NOV.

Butter production up, production of American cheese down during November. USDA reported last week that U.S. butter output totaled 68 million lbs during November, up 13 pct from a year earlier. It was the 6th consecutive month that butter output has exceeded that of a corresponding month a year earlier and brought the 11-month total to 862.5 million lbs, up 2 pct from a year earlier.

Meanwhile, production of American cheese, which had been running well ahead of year ago levels, totaled 114.9 million lbs for the month, down 7 pct from Nov 1973. This marked the first time in 15 months that output has been below a corresponding month a year earlier. But, output for the first 11 months, at 1.7 billion lbs, is still 12 pct ahead of a year ago.

## BEEF OVERPRODUCTION ONLY BEGINNING

"We are still getting into beef oversupply rather than out of it," according to an article in the current (Jan 6) issue of USDA's Foreign Agriculture magazine.

The article by Richard J. Goodman, associate administrator of USDA's Foreign Agriculture Service, notes that

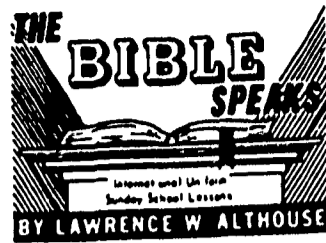
World cattle numbers have been

## AT LEAST PRICES WERE UP IN '74

Farmers may not look upon 1974 as their favorite year, but from the price standpoint, it topped 1973 - up until now the year of record high prices. Prices Received by Farmers averaged 183 (pct of 1967) for the year, up 6 1/2 pct from the year before, according

to the Indexes of Market Prices in the current Ag Prices report.

Most of that gain was in crops, up 30 pct from a year earlier and 212 on the index scale. Feed grains averaged 40 pct higher, feed grains and hay, nearly 50 pct higher.



## THE SECRET

Lesson for January 12, 1975

Backgrounds Scripture: Mark 8:27-38; 10:32; 15:21-39.  
Devotional Reading: Psalms 22:1-8.

The first half of the Gospel According to Mark is a mystery story. There is a great secret that pervades the first eight chapters. The secret concerns the true identity of Jesus of Nazareth.

For one thing, thus far only the "unclean spirits" have hinted at Jesus' true identity: "And whenever the unclean spirits beheld him, they fell down before him and cried out, 'You are the Son of God'" (Mark 3:11).

Secondly, whenever he is recognized by them, Jesus orders the "unclean spirits" to keep his identity unknown: "And he strictly ordered them not to make him known" (Mark 3:12).

"Say nothing to anyone"

Thirdly, he frequently requests those whom he has healed to say nothing of his part in it: "And he strictly charged them that no one should know this (that he had healed the daughter of Jairus) (Mark 5:43).

Next, we find that people frequently wondered at who he was, as if they suspected that he was someone more than he appeared to be: "And they were filled with awe, and said one to another, 'Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him'" (Mark 4:41).

Mark, thus, seems to have been building up a sense of suspense so that the reader will be led to ask: **Who really is this man?**

It is in the region of Caesarea Philippi that light is finally shed on the mystery. "Who do men say that I am?" asks Jesus. The disciples had heard the various opinions expressed by the crowds and they repeated what they had heard: "John the Baptist," "Elijah," or "one of the prophets." It was understandable that the Nazarene might be identified with any of these by the crowds.

What is your answer?

The disciples, however, had had opportunities the crowds had not shared. They had the chance to live with him, work with him, and observe him closely. Far more important was their own answers to this important question: "But who do you say that I am?" (8:29)

At last, Peter blurts out with the answer to the great secret: "You are the Christ!" (8:29). In all likelihood they had often considered this question, both to themselves and with each other, so that when Peter answered, he expressed what most, if not all, of them suspected.

Mark does not tell us that Jesus made any reply, but he leaves no doubt that Jesus confirmed Peter's confession of faith. Perhaps a nod, a slight smile, or just the light in his eyes told them that Peter was right.

So here it was at last... the answer they had sought so long! But the next words



## NOW IS THE TIME...

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### To Be Alert For Chickweed

Alfalfa growers should be on the alert for rank growths of chickweed unless the areas have already been sprayed this fall or winter. We get reports of heavy growth on late summer seedings. Young plants are much easier to kill than mature plants; therefore, growers should not wait until spring to do something. The material to use will depend upon several factors such as time of seeding, and if any grasses are with the alfalfa. Growers are urged to contact their herbicide dealer or the current Agronomy Guide.

### To Stop Feeding Parasites

Again we refer to the management practice of eliminating all parasites from livestock in order to have a chance to make any profit. Animals infested with either body lice or stomach worms will definitely not make their owners efficient gains or milk production. In this regard with high livestock population, there are many chances for re-infestation. Several chemical treatments are available that will clean out the parasites and give the animal a chance to become healthy and make efficient production. Sample of the feces submitted to the local veterinarian is the best way to learn the degree and kind of worm problem. Don't feed parasites this year. You will be the loser.

### To Provide Exercise

Most animals prefer to be outside most of the time; if given them too closely by not providing a chance to get outside. Growing animals need exercise to develop proper born structure. In addition, animals with outside exercise will usually need less labor to care for them. Milking cows should get daily exercise in order to show heat periods and to keep them stronger on their feet and legs. Cattle on feed for fattening purposes will usually be more efficient users of feed if given the chance to go outside. Freedom and livestock comfort is needed for many types of livestock.

### To Manage The Sheep Flock

Lambing time is approaching for many sheep growers and this is one of the very important times of the year. The ewe flock should be exercised daily and in some cases can be fed hay on frozen ground, on the snow, or from a rack in the far end of the exercise lot in order to force them to move around. Ewes that have had daily exercise will usually throw stronger lambs than those confined. Good legume hay in liberal amounts is strongly advised for all breeding ewes. The amount of grain should be limited according to the flesh of the ewes. Special care just before and during lambing time will increase the returns from the sheep flock.

# Farm Calendar

### Sunday, January 12

Dave Wilkerson's film "Return to Sodom" will be shown at the Stiegel Heights Brethren in Christ Church, Lititz RD2, at 7:00 p.m. All interested people are welcome.

### Tuesday, January 14

Ephrata Area Farmer's Association Dairy Calf Management, Ephrata Senior High School Ag Department at 7:45 p.m. Mid Atlantic No-Till meeting near Baltimore, MD.

Dairy Breeders Management Meeting at Garden Spot High School at 7:45 p.m. sponsored by Garden Spot Young Farmers.

of Jesus must have brought down the veil of mystery once again: "And he charged them to tell no one about him" (8:30).

Why the great secret? The answer was to be found in what followed as Jesus began to speak about the suffering and death that lay ahead for him. He knew that people would have difficulty in understanding that kind of Christ! He also knew that his own followers would find it difficult to understand why the way of discipleship would be the way of the cross.

The world still has great difficulty with that secret.

Pa. Farmer's Union Meeting at the Host Inn in Harrisburg. Legislative breakfast at 8:00 a.m. and convention luncheon at 12:30 p.m.

Friday, January 17  
17th - 19th - Ephrata Jr. Ag Club Field Trip to Tioga County to cut browse for deer.

Pa. Egg Marketing Meeting at the Colonial Motor Lodge in Denver at 7:00 p.m.

Pesticide Sprayers Workshop at the Farm and Home Center beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, January 21  
Ephrata Area Young Farmers meeting concerning new changes in taxes. 7:45 p.m. Ephrata High School Ag Department.

Cedar Crest Young Farmers Meeting on Feeding Management at the Cedar Crest High School vo-ag classroom beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, January 22  
Farm Income Tax Meeting at the Farm and Home Center 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Thursday, January 23  
Ephrata Area Farmers Association Beef and Poultry Field Trip leaving the Ephrata High School parking lot at 8:30 p.m.