

Farm Commentary

Life on the farm

By: Dieter Krieg

The large barn doors were swung open and warm, bright sunshine touched the cool, dirt floor of the shed. The songs of birds erased the silence, dust danced in the shaft of sunlight, and the pleasant scent of hard clay became less pronounced. It was time for an awakening.

The big machine had been in hibernation for nearly a full year and was covered with dust, pigeon droppings and cobwebs. There was no burst of energy when the key was turned to "awake" this mammoth of the farm machinery kingdom. A squirt of ether into the "nostrils" sparked life into it and before long the engine was coughing and sputtering, filling the top portion of the shed with grey-blue smoke.

Like a big, sleepy bear crawling out of its cave in the Spring, the combine advanced slowly towards the open

doorway and the warm, bright sunshine - being careful not to scrape the sides of the exit. It rested outside beneath a tree for several minutes, flexing its "muscles" while its owner checked for proper belt tension, control responses, etc.

After a big drink at the gas pump and a thorough going over with a grease gun and oil can, the big monster was ready to go to work.

With engine roaring now, the combine paddled its way across the sea of wheat, hungrily devouring the crop. It filled its belly with grain and eliminated straw from the rear.

The waves of grain gradually disappear and only the stubble remains. Thank God, however, there'll be more next year to add beauty to the countryside, provide the population with bread, and give rise to a special inner joy to a farm lover like me.

Tobacco exports lagging

Laddering economies both in the United States and overseas have caused exports and domestic use of U. S. tobacco for the 1974-75 marketing year to slip below last season's record high level. Still, total disappearance is exceeding 1974's output. Thus, carryover will fall below last year's 2.95 billion pounds to the smallest amount since 1947.

Domestic cigarette use for the 10 months ended April 1975 was up about 1½ percent and cigarette exports were up 10 percent. But manufacturers and distributors cut back inventories as output in the year ending June 30 will likely dip about 2 percent below the record high 652 billion cigarettes produced last fiscal year. Reduced cigarette inventories combined with increased sales should help bolster the production in second half of 1975.

Use of cigars continues to trend downward in contrast to the increase in cigarette smoking. For the year ending June 30, large cigar output will be down 5 percent and small cigar production off 10 percent from 1973-74. Output of snuff is holding its own while chewing tobacco production may gain a little.

Unmanufactured tobacco exports in July 1974 - April 1975 totaled 2 percent below a year earlier. Indications of an even slower pace this May and June would mean shipments for the year ending June 30 should total about 5 percent below the record 657 million pounds (export weight) last fiscal year. World cigarette demand for U.S.-type blended cigarettes is still climbing but some overseas markets have slowed their purchase rate or shifted to competing tobaccos because of steep price increases and declining real incomes.

With prospects for a larger 1975 crop and much smaller price increases than last year, unmanufactured tobacco exports for July-December 1975 may exceed the 338 million pounds (export weight) of a year earlier. Despite some slackening in the demand for neutral

filler tobacco our exports are being sustained by foreigners' preferences for full-flavor U.S. tobacco and reduced carrying charges due to declines in short-term interest rates. Exports to countries in the European Community and Southeast Asia have declined this season.

Flue-cured tobacco exports were off 3 percent in July 1974 - April 1975, (farm-sales weight) with the largest drop in shipments to the United Kingdom. For the year ending June 30, about 430 million pounds (570 million, farm-sales weight) will be exported to all destinations, 5 percent below 1973-74. Burley exports for the crop year ending September 30 may equal last year's total of 67 million pounds (87 million, farm-sales weight).

Cigarette tobacco imports for consumption at 205 million pounds (export weight) during July 1974 - April 1975 gained 15 percent from a year earlier. Cigar leaf imports gained 7 percent. U. S. manufacturers' stocks of imported cigarette tobacco on April 1 were 19 percent above a year earlier. U. S. stocks of foreign-grown cigar tobacco were up 7 percent.

With a slowdown in cigarette output and increased use of foreign tobacco, domestic flue-cured use in the year ending June 30 is dropping 5 percent from last season's level. Allowing for smaller exports, total disappearance of flue-cured will run about 5 percent below the 1.3 billion pounds of last season. This about equals the 1974 crop, so the July 1975 carryover of flue-cured likely will remain near the 1.6 billion pounds of a year earlier.

Based on March 1 intentions, this year's flue-cured crop was projected 13 percent larger than last year. Considering past experience, the estimate seems reasonable. For the new season, total supply (estimated carryover plus the projected 1975 crop) may gain a little.

Use of fire-cured, dark air-cured, and domestic cigar tobacco is declining.

Where Are You Growing?

Background Scripture: Ephesians 4; Philippians 3; 1 John 3: 1-3.
Devotional Reading: Colossians 3: 5-17.

One evening last week I stood in the auditorium of our local high school, waiting for my son, Todd, and his graduating class to file past and begin the baccalaureate service.

I could not help but remember my own high school graduation almost three decades ago and compare the two occasions. As I looked at the long procession filing past me, I noted that today's youth are on the average, considerably taller than my own student generation. Physically, young people today are considerably advanced. They also appear to be intellectually advanced, too.

Whether they are any more mature or better prepared for life in today's world, only time will tell.

"Grow Up!" Growth by itself is not enough. Everyone grows. Some people grow heavier, some bitter, and everyone older. It is of vital importance to determine in what direction we are growing.

In one of his novels, Louis Bromfield says: But with me there was no growth . . . I had never attained any degree of maturity. I had merely grown older . . .

But it is not enough to grow "older," we are also called to "Grow up!" And Christians are given a specific direction in which to grow. In Ephesians we are told to "grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (4:15). In Philippians, Paul says the same thing in different words: "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (3:14). And the Apostle John admonishes us to "be like him" (1 John 3:2).

Upon receiving that kind of admonition, some people shake their heads in either disbelief or resignation. "But who can be like Christ?" they ask. "He was the Son of God."

The impossible dream?

If we concentrate on the divinity of Christ to the exclusion of his humanity, we exalt him into irrelevance. We will see him as so far above us that he can have little or no influence upon our lives.

Yet, as someone has said, "Jesus became what we are, so that we might become what he is." In him we find, not some "impossible dream," but the example of what human nature can become. Jesus is the Son of God, but he also came to share that sonship with us. The Apostle says, "Beloved, we are God's children now" (1 John 3:2). In Galatians, Paul speaks of us as "adopted" son (4:5) and again in Romans 8:23.

So, in Jesus, God showed all men what he created them to be and challenged us to grow in that direction. It is not so much a matter of arriving at the goal, but always being sure we are moving toward it. As Paul puts it: Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize



NOW IS THE TIME . . .

Max Smith
County Agr. Agent
Telephone 394-6851

To Store Left-Over Seeds

No doubt many gardeners and farmers have bought more seeds than are needed for this season. There's no reason why these seeds cannot be saved for next year's planting. They should be kept in a dry place, away from rodents, and away from any weed killer chemicals. When using seeds that are two years old or more, it might be wise to run a simple germination test on a few of them this winter to learn of the percentage that will grow; then plant them a bit thicker than you did last spring. Keep them out of dark, damp basements or cellars for this storage period.

To Respect Stage of Maturity

Growers of sudan grass or one of the sudan-sorghum hybrids should keep in mind that the plant should get to a certain height before using as pasture or green chop. The sudan grass should be at least 18 inches high before using. The hybrids should be at least 24 to 30 inches high before using in the fresh condition. If animals eat these crops too early, there is some danger of prussic acid poisoning. Second growth of these crops should also be allowed to get to the mentioned heights before using. Many growers will clip the area with their mowing machines at 4 to 6 inches after the first grazing in order to get more uniform second growth. These special crops will make good growth during the heat of the summer but require special handling of the herd or flock.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, July 12
District 3 Jersey Breeders Annual Picnic at the Top-O-Hill Farm in Downingtown. 12:00 noon for the covered dish luncheon. Visitors are asked to bring lawn chairs.

Sunday, July 13
Elizabethtown Area Young Farmers Picnic and covered dish luncheon.

Monday, July 14
PFA Region 2 Ladies Day Out to be held at the Penn Ram Motor Inn in Carlisle.

Friday, July 18
Pa. Young Farmers Picnic at Shippensburg State College.

Saturday, July 19
Western Pa. Junior Angus

of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (3:13,14.)

It is not enough to grow older; we are called to grow up as well.

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To Utilize Testing Services

There are several testing services available through the Penn State Testing Laboratory. One of the most widely used is the complete soil test; hundreds of local folks benefit from learning of their soil needs each year. Another is the Forage Test for livestock producers to learn of the real feeding value of hay, silage, or grains; with this test we urge that producers request a feeding recommendation blank when buying the forage test kit. Other tests available include soil minerals and nitrogen content. In the Forage Test laboratory tests can be made for minerals, non-protein nitrogen, and nitrates. A Leaflet explaining the various tests is available from our local Extension Office.

To Order Seed Supplies

It's not too early to order supplies of winter barley or wheat to be seeded this fall. By ordering early growers are more likely to get the variety and quality of seed wanted. We continue to urge the use of Certified seed in order to get the most satisfactory results. Home-grown seeds should be tested for purity and weed content and treated for diseases; this is not easily done under farm conditions. The very best Certified seed should give the best return for the investment. The 1975 Agronomy Guide may be used as a reference for varieties and for seeding rates. Don't wait until seed supplies are exhausted and then have to take what is left.

Show at the Mercer Co. 4-H Park in Mercer begins at 11:30 a.m.
Lancaster County 4-H Horse Show at the Lancaster Riding Club.

farmers' market opens

HARRISBURG — Truck tailgate to shopping bag will be the way of business Tuesday (July 15) as Harrisburg's newest farmers market officially opens at the Farm Show parking lot.

Farmers from an 11-county area will sell vegetables, fruit, baked goods and meat in the first open air market in the capital city in more than 40 years.

The market, which will be open every Tuesday and Friday from 4 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. through October, will be officially opened when State Agriculture Secretary Jim McHale rings an old school bell.

In addition to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania cities and towns now featuring open air farmers markets include Wilkes-Barre, Erie and Heidelberg.