

LIFE on the farm



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Winter was beginning to retreat and it was time to think about upcoming field work. Warm air was already occasionally brushing across our farm; thawed fields released a fresh, earthy scent; and the first ripples of "farming fever" were surging through my heart and mind.

It was on such a day that a man in a station wagon pulled up to the farm in answer to a call for help. The husky, former high school football star stepped out to greet me and we walked up to the implement shed.

By

Dieter Krieg, Editor

There, directly in front of us, was the object of my concern: our largest tractor. Used extensively for years without receiving the best or even adequate care, it had literally died last Fall. It didn't have the power to pull itself, let alone a corn picker or plow. Now buried beneath dust, cobwebs, and a few bird droppings, the tractor looked hopelessly in need of an overhaul. My friend, Ben, had come to evaluate the situation. It was time for me to decide for either a newer model tractor or major repairs. Either way, I had visions of a sizable amount of dollars streaming out of checking account.

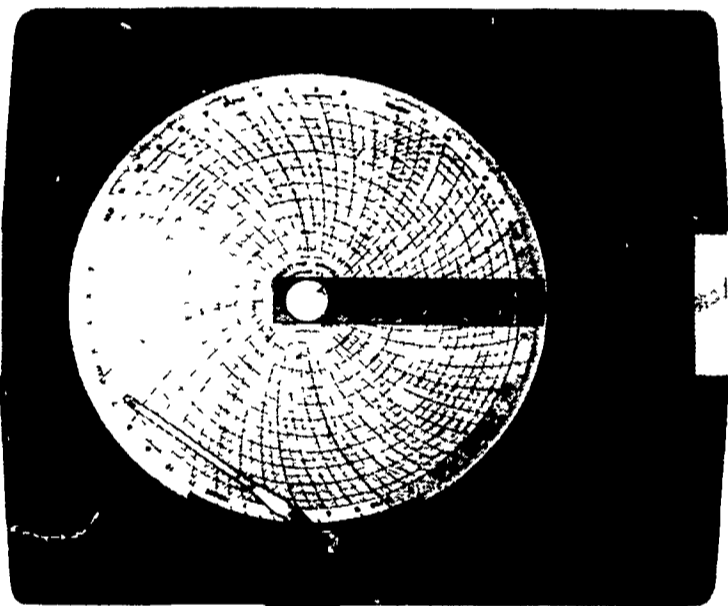
With the battery dead, Ben attempted to start the engine by spinning the pulley on the side. That didn't work either and so we pushed the tractor out of the shed and down the hill to the road where Ben's station wagon was parked. A heavy pair of jumper cables finally sparked life into it and the two cylinders spit and sputtered for several minutes before changing to a steady, rhythmic

pounding. Nevertheless, Ben's verdict of "the tractor is shot" came as no surprise and I was trying to mentally prepare myself for the costs of purchasing a newer model.

Carefully checking various items, Ben, a tractor and implement dealer, said he could fix the tractor for \$350, adding that this particular series of tractors made by the company he represented was the best for the money. I accepted his assessment with a mixture of happiness and surprise because I had expected the ordeal to be much more expensive. A truck stopped by several days later to take the machine to the shop.

Spring field work was more enjoyable than ever before during that and following seasons. I had a tractor, proudly called "Big John," which was in A-1 shape, and as every farmer knows, that's what it takes to get the jobs done. What's more, the eventual costs of repairs amounted to less than half of the original estimate. All in all, the episode resulted in a more pleasant life on the farm.

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Red meat production announced

HARRISBURG — Red meat production in Pennsylvania during January 1976 was one percent below a year ago. Slaughter of meat animals was up for cattle and calves but down for hogs, sheep and lambs according to the Crop Reporting Service.

Cattle slaughter increased 17 percent, calves 33 percent, while hog slaughter decreased 21 percent and sheep and lambs were 20 percent below January a year ago.

Nationally, total red meat production during January was down one percent from a year ago, but virtually the same as for January 1974. Beef production increased seven percent from January 1975, and veal was 24 percent higher. Hog production was down 16 percent, lamb and mutton down 12 percent from a year ago.

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