

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

USDA figures depict riches despite low prices

Facts and figures released by the USDA in recent weeks continue to show how just about everything on the farm has skyrocketed in value, while, ironically, prices received by farmers continue down, and parity is reportedly at a 44-year low.

USDA's Farm Income Statistics bulletin reveals that net realized farm income for 1976 is now pegged at \$21.9 billion, which is up slightly from the revised \$20.8 billion total for 1975, yet well below both the record \$29.9 billion total for 1973 and 1974's \$27.7 billion. It's pointed out, however, that the 1976 figure still ranks as third highest in history and is nearly double that for 1964.

USDA also revealed in a recent bulletin that lower prices for soybeans, all grains, hay, oranges, and tobacco are responsible for the declining trend in Prices Received By Farmers statistics. Soybeans, for example, are down nearly \$2 from where they were a month ago on the national market. In Lancaster Farming's prime coverage area, soybeans are priced at \$5.60 (paid to farmers) while just two months ago they were priced at \$8.50. Shelled corn prices in Lancaster County have dropped from \$2.49 in June of this year to \$1.87 today. Wheat was \$2.42 eight weeks ago and stands at \$2.10 now. That crop is of major concern to agriculturalists, since there's an international glut of it.

USDA reports that under the old 1910-1914 formulas, Prices Received by Farmers declined and that the Parity Ratio is now the lowest since March of 1933. It now stands at 65 points, compared to 74 points a year ago, and 55 during the Depression Year.

Other facts revealed by the USDA report are that cash receipts from

farm marketings hit a record high \$94.3 billion last year, up seven per cent from a year earlier and two per cent above the previous high of \$92.4 billion set in 1974. Though livestock receipts were reportedly record high, they were exceeded by receipts from crops for the third straight year.

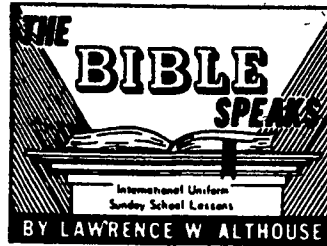
At \$47.9 billion, crops' receipts were up six per cent from a year earlier, but six per cent below the record \$51.1 billion for 1974. Livestock receipts totaled \$46.4 billion, up eight per cent from a year earlier, 12 per cent above those of 1974, but only one per cent above the \$45.9 billion total of 1973.

Realized gross farm income, according to the Economic Research Service, stands at a record \$103.6 billion, up from \$96.7 billion in 1975. But farm production expenses totaled a record \$81.7 billion, up from the previous high of \$75.9 billion set a year earlier and more than double those of 1968.

Getting into 1977, the Economic Research Service reports that cash receipts from farm marketings are up from a year ago. Those for January through May, at nearly \$35 billion, are up nearly two per cent from the same period in 1976. Livestock receipts, at \$19 billion, are down 1½ per cent, but receipts for crops, at \$15.9 billion, were up five per cent compared to a year earlier.

Meanwhile, values of farm real estate continue to soar. USDA now pegs farmland values at \$67.9 billion, up 16 per cent from a year ago and more than double that of five years ago.

And that's how it looks down on the farm, according to the statisticians at the United States Department of Agriculture.



THE POWER OF THE FEW

Lesson for August 14, 1977

Background Scripture: Judges 6 through 8.

Devotional Reading: Judges 6:11-16.

We know that "bigger" is not necessarily "better"...but we usually have a hard time remembering that fact. The tendency to be drawn always to the "biggest" is a childish perspective that some of us never outgrow.

This same preoccupation with physical or numerical size may affect our religious outlook, too. We assume that the biggest denominations are necessarily the most successful ones. We believe that the largest local congregations are the most powerful ones. But that isn't necessarily so!

The power of the remnant
I have often observed that quality and quantity are factors in religious life that are quite unrelated. I have had the privilege of visiting some of the largest Christian churches in the world. Yet, despite their impressive buildings, large staffs, and professional-level choirs, I have often noted that it would be a mistake to judge these churches "successful." I would rather be pastor of a congregation of one hundred committed people than of one of a thousand "luke warm" church members.

You see, the gap between one hundred committed people and one thousand of the "lukewarm" variety is more than filled and excelled by the power of God. This is the meaning of the story of Gideon in Judges 6, 7, and 8. God's instructions to Gideon seem ridiculous: "The people with you are too many for me to give the Medianites into their hand..." (Joshua 7:2). And after Gideon had reduced his forces from twenty-two thousand to ten thousand, God said again: "The people are still too many..." (7:4). So Gideon applied a test that reduced



NOW IS THE TIME...

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TO BEWARE OF SOIL COMPACTION

Soils that are low in organic matter and continuously growing a row crop such as corn can result in soil compaction; and this can lead to reduced yield and lower income per acre. For years we have been aware that soils in this part of the state are low in organic matter as compared to soils in the central and northern parts of the state. The higher temperatures and humidity, along with more intensive farming and double-cropping, break down the organic matter faster in this area. Farmers who notice extra hard clods, soils that dry slowly and leave more puddles, and the need of more power to pull the plow, could be having a compaction problem. Heavy equipment on wet ground also adds to the compaction possibility. The inclusion of sod crops, legumes, and extra manure and organic matter is suggested. These danger signals of soil compaction should be recognized before the ground becomes hard like concrete.

TO ESTABLISH "NO RIDER" POLICY

Each year many children are injured or killed as a result from falling from tractors or other farm machinery. I'm aware of the

temptation to take youngsters on machines for the pleasure of having them along and the nice ride for them; however, only one rider should be on the tractor when moving and that is the operator. A sudden bump or stop can throw the child into the path of the wheel; a fall from the drawbar can result in the child being crushed by a trailed implement. There are far too many machinery accidents that could have been prevented; many of these are because of children being the "extra rider". We'd suggest that all tractor and machinery operators on the farm be firm and insist on a "no rider" policy.

TO PROTECT SWEET CORN

At this time of the year several insects are also enjoying the sweet corn in the garden. The Japanese Beetle have had their turn to eat off the silks; now the small green Northern Corn Rootworm beetles are working on the silks. Also, the corn earworm attacks the silk and later we find worms in the tip of the ear. All of these tend to hurt the ear of corn, especially for retail purposes. The Japanese Beetle are declining for this year and should not be a major problem; however, the other two will be with us for the rest of the Summer. We suggest that the new silks be sprayed or dusted twice each week with Sevin for at least four times. This will not effect the ears of corn in relation to pesticide residues.

TO GRUB-PROOF TURF AREAS

We've had more office and phone calls about the control of Japanese Beetle this Summer than in recent years. Not only did these beetle attack rose bushes and grape vines but were working hard on field corn silk and soybeans. We hope they are not returning in numbers as was experienced 10 to 15 years ago. One way to reduce the number next year is to treat lawn and turf areas this fall. The treatment should be made during last August or early September using Diazinon, Dylox, Prozal, or Dursban; these materials may be sprayed on or applied in granular form. Watering after the application is suggested or applying just before a good rain. This treatment will also protect the lawn area from other grubs.

his force to a mere three hundred men. Now, said God, "I will deliver you and give the Midianites into your hand" (7:7).

The rout of the many
Strange and illogical as it seemed, it worked. With but three hundred hand-picked men, Gideon was successful in routing the numerically superior force of his enemies. The battle had depended upon the power of God, not the physical might of Israel's army. It is important for us to realize that God was showing Gideon, not only that he could do the job with fewer men, but that if the job was to be done, there had to be a paring-down of his forces. Gideon was able to accomplish more with a handful of receptive people than with a whole host of men whose commitment and quality left much to be desired. Three hundred men had accomplished what twenty-two thousand could not do, for the power was not in numbers but in the presence of God in their midst.

Farm Calendar

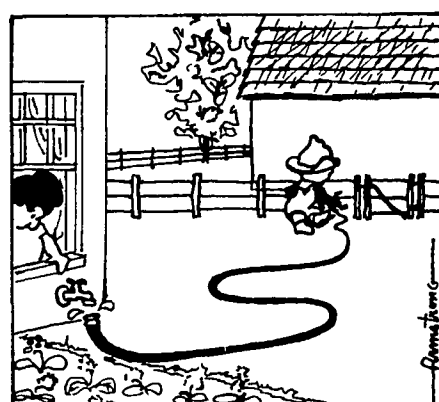
Today, Aug. 13
Southcentral Championship Holstein Show at Lebanon Fairgrounds, 9 a.m.
Cumberland County garden tractor pull, 1 p.m. at Newville.
Monday, Aug. 15
Lancaster County Farmers Association meetings, at Earl Stauffer's Ephrata; Harold Rohrer, Book Road, Strasburg; and Nate Stoltzfus, Gap.
Lancaster County Swine Producers hold Summer Carcass Contest at New Holland Sales Stables.
Lancaster County preliminary 4-H Talent Contest, 7 p.m. at the Farm and Home Center.
Kutztown Fair gets underway, continues through Aug. 20.
Carlisle Fair begins, continues through Aug. 20.
Middletown Community

Fair begins, continues through Aug. 20.
Huntingdon County Fair begins, continues through Aug. 21.
Tuesday, Aug. 16
Lancaster County Farmers Association meetings at Charlie Lefever's Landisville; Paul Hartz, Morgantown; and Robert Wagner, Quarryville.
Wednesday, Aug. 17
Montgomery County Holstein Show, 10:30 a.m. at the 4-H Center.
Montgomery County 4-H Fair at the 4-H Center in Lansdale.
York County Black and White Show at the York Fairgrounds.
Warren County, New Jersey, Fair opens.
Lancaster County Farmers Association meetings at Ken Miller's, Mount Joy; and Lester Wiker, Holtwood.

Thursday, Aug. 18
Middletown Grange Fair begins in Wrightstown, Bucks County.
Montgomery County 4-H Dairy Show, 10:30 a.m. at the 4-H Center.
Chester County alfalfa field meeting at the variety plots near Sunny Slope Dairy on Bridge Street

Extension, midway between Routes 724 and 23.
Lancaster County Farmers Association meetings, at Jim Hess', Quarryville; Earl Newcomer, Washington Boro; and Dale Herr, Kirkwood.
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RURAL ROUTE



By Tom Armstrong