

BY CURT HARLER, EDITOR



Lancaster Farming says...

Census packs two big shockers

There are a few surprising statistics in the preliminary census of agriculture released by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The first is the sudden appearance of an extra 25,776 acres of farmland in Lancaster County.

The second is that dairying no longer is the number one farm industry in Lancaster County.

There are some other interesting numbers in the report, too.

Before looking at each of the developments it might be well to point out that the data are "preliminary," from the 1978 census of agriculture. The Commerce Department, which does the census, takes a good bit of time to digest all the data gathered and this is only the first spewing out of numbers.

The Lancaster County report is part of the general Pennsylvania agriculture census which placed sales of all farm products in Pennsylvania at \$2.2 billion.

Dairying remained tops state-wide, with product sales of \$762.7 million from 16,026 cows. That seems acceptable.

But none of the agricultural, tax, or elected officials in Lancaster County was able to pinpoint where the additional 25,000 acres came from... if indeed they exist. In every case, agricultural experts noted the erosion of the farmland base in Lancaster.

Best guess from the Census is improved methods of gathering data resulted in the big jump in farmland reported. Similar incidents have been noted in the 1974 census neighboring state West Virginia showed an amazing increase in acreage. The jump later dwindled to almost nothing under close rechecking.

The bottom line? Don't count on picking up any of that "extra" land if

you're planning on expanding your operation.

The second surprise to many Lancaster farmers will be the fall of the county dairy industry from first to second place.

The poultry industry is reported as number one in total value of products sold.

The agriculture census shows poultrymen outsold dairy farmers by over \$265 million. Total poultry receipts were put at \$130,580,000.

There are a couple of cautions before poultry is crowned king of the county. First is the uneasiness raised by the question of the farmland figures. If the product sales numbers are as far off base as the acreage figures, there may be a major adjustment yet to come.

The second is the Census shows total sales of poultry products in the county as nearly doubling in four years. The 1974 figures say the poultry industry had just

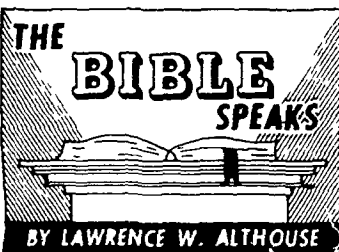
\$75,181,000 worth of product sold. And in recent months, poultry has been depressed.

Still, \$26 million is a lot of money for dairy to make up. It looks like Lancaster has a new farm industry leader, and congratulations are in order.

Pennsylvania farmers will be pleased to know the census says they are getting younger. Average age of state farmers dropped from 50.6 years to 49.8 years.

Welcome ladies—2881 state farms are operated by women. That's a full five percent of the state's 59,973 farms.

Other tidbits: 91 percent of farms are owner operated, of the 981 farm corporations, 864, or 88 percent, are family held, just seven percent of state farms report sales of \$100,000 or more, the largest single group, 38,822 had sales of less than \$20,000.



LET GOD BE GOD!

Lesson for August 3, 1980

Background Scripture:

Isaiah 45 through 47

Devotional Reading:

Psalms 98

Here's a text that has

never found its way into Sunday sermons:

"Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus..."

The reason for its unpopularity is that word "anointed," which means Messiah! If Isaiah heard God rightly, the Lord is saying that Cyrus, the King of Persia, is his Messiah! There must be some mistake! Surely God would not say something like that! Are we to explain this away as a senile lapse of divine memory? God, Don't you know that Cyrus can't be your Messiah? Don't you realize there is only one Messiah and that Cyrus

never even acknowledged you as Lord?

To Subdue Nations

Well, the fact is that, as it was revealed to Isaiah (the otherwise trustworthy prophet of the Lord), God did regard Cyrus of Persia as his anointed, his Messiah. And, even though Cyrus did not know this God, the Lord was able to use this man for his divine purposes: "Cyrus, whose right arm I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and unbind the loins of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed" (45:1).

Once again, as we have noted previously, God is able to work in the affairs of men and nations to accomplish his purposes, to use unwilling and unwitting people to fulfill his plan. But we don't particularly like that idea, we'd like to remind God that this is not one of his better ideas, for these people are not worthy to be his instruments in the world, let alone to be regarded as his "anointed."

Our perennial problem here is that we tend to forget that he is God and we are the creatures, that his wisdom is

what controls the world, not ours. We need constantly to be reminded to let God be God and stop trying to take his place. If he wants to anoint Cyrus or anyone else to do his will, who are we to second-guess him?

Striving With Our Maker

Yet, that is what his creatures have been doing since day-one. And that is why through Isaiah God used strong words to remind us: "Woe to him who strives with his Maker, an earthen vessel with the potter! Does the clay say to him who fashions it, 'what are you making?' or 'Your work has no handles?'" Will you

question me about my children, or command me concerning the work of my hands?"

Well, yes, Lord, sometimes we do. Sometimes we need for you to remind us: "I made the earth, and created man upon it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host" (45:12). So if you want to call Cyrus your Messiah or anything else, Lord, go right ahead! It's your world!

Actually, it is not a matter of letting God by God, for he will be anyway, but of remembering who we are and what he is.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Max Smith, Lancaster County Agricultural Agent
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support legislation to our satisfaction.

It often has been said that farmers do not make enough "noise" when it comes to agricultural legislation. This is no doubt true, but it should not be that way.

You have heard the phrase, "The wheel that squeaks gets the grease." I feel that too many times those who sound off the loudest do not represent the majority views of our farmers.

Don't hesitate to be on good terms with your elected legislators; they will appreciate your opinions and it

will help them with their major decisions.

TO CHECK LIGHTNING RODS

This summer has been one for a great number of severe thunder storms.

Folks who have rods on their buildings can feel fortunate for this protection. However, if the rods are not properly installed and well grounded, they may be of little value.

I'd like to suggest that owners check their rod systems to be sure they are free of debris and be sure they are grounded into moist soil. Too many times they

may not be grounded deeply enough to absorb the charge.

During hot, dry weather the ground dries out and may not get the job done. Frequent inspection of the rod system during the thunder-storm season is very much in order.

TO KEEP GOOD PESTICIDE RECORDS

Several times this summer I have inquired about the name and amount of a certain spray material that was applied to a certain crop. This information is often needed in the planning of the future crops on a field.

To my surprise, the far-

mer did not recall what had been applied and the amount — it was some material recommended by another person.

Again, we say that it is important to keep accurate record of all pesticide applications. In case a surplus residue is found in the product, these records could mean the difference between continued production, or the loss of a market.

Record blanks are available and we continue to feel they should be used. Documentation is becoming very important in many phases of today's farming and living.

TO BEWARE OF JOHNSONGRASS SEEDS

The control of Johnsongrass needs and is getting more attention.

This fast-growing weed, which resembles sorghum,

spreads rapidly over a farm and will soon make it difficult to grow any crops.

When these plants get to the point of developing seed-heads, extra care is needed to keep from spreading the seeds over a field. This often happens with a corn picker, or grain combine. Small grain fields that have Johnsongrass stands should be allowed to grow to the early seed-head stage and then be sprayed with Roundup.

Be careful about buying straw or other materials from a field containing any Johnsongrass plants.

A plant that is permitted to mature this summer will mean hundreds of plants in the same area next spring. Join the effort to eradicate Johnsongrass from all farms.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, August 2
Chester County 4-H sheep roundup; Goshen Fairgrounds; 9:30-4 p.m.
Schuylkill County 4-H dairy show, 11 a.m.; Carl Snyder Farm, Pitman.

Maryland hog field day; University of Maryland research farm, Clarksville, Maryland; 9:30 a.m.-3:15 p.m.

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RURAL ROUTE

