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JAMES E. NOLL GRAIN



Farm Talk

Jerry Webb

Something new has been added to the list of games people play. This one is a farm game.

Some farm readers may be thinking that the whole business of farming is just one big game and so who needs another one? But to the uninvolved, perhaps a farm game is a good idea.

Several years ago I played a farm game that was developed by some Cornell University graduate students. And as those kind of games go, it was a good one. No doubt this new one is a commercial variation on that basic theme.

The game is called "Rich Farmer, Poor Farmer" and is described as "a down-to-earth game of farming." I haven't really seen the game, all I have is a promotional brochure that tells what it costs and how to

order. It's described as the only farm game on the market that puts you in the tractor seat and lets everyone experience real life farming.

"Rich Farmer, Poor Farmer" has all the usual game gadgets, including a board with spaces where you move something and it seems to have a lot of cards and a spinner and other gamey features. And it's not just a kid's game, according to the maker. It's "an entertainment and educational game for the whole family."

"Rich Farmer, Poor Farmer" can be ordered from Shop-at-Home, 9600 Detroit Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44102. It's manufactured by the McJay Game Company, Inc. and sells for \$10 plus \$2 postage and handling. Make checks payable to McJay, Inc.

I don't expect every farmer or nonfarmer to rush out and order one, but it is something to add to the list of Christmas possibilities.

A farm family might like one, especially if they have some younger children who are being encouraged to get into farming. Or perhaps a not to serious-minded farmer could enjoy playing this game around the fireside on a cold winter night when he really can't do any real farming.

Better yet, maybe it would make an ideal gift that a farm family could send to nonfarm friends and relatives. How better to help them understand what a farmer goes through than to let them gather around the farm game board and at least go through some of the mental challenges that a farmer faces.

Maybe some farm organization would like to order several of them as "executive gifts" to be sent to top management of companies that deal with farmers. Or to politicians, civic leaders, and others who have a lot to say about the future of agriculture.

You could make an interesting list of people who could benefit from a few rounds of "Rich Farmer, Poor Farmer."

Let's start with the White House. It's been a long time since Mr. Carter has made any farming decisions on his own farm, so maybe the next time he and his Secret Service agents are jetting across the country to some agricultural gathering, they could play a few rounds of "Rich Farmer, Poor Farmer" to sort of get the feel of what their audience might be thinking.

It wouldn't hurt Ronald Reagan either. No doubt he's a rich farmer, but he probably knows nothing about the other side of agriculture.

Closer to home, there are the planning and zoning folks who want to make landfills

out of productive farms. Maybe they should play the game.

Or the highway department decision makers, who are thinking about another four lane highway the length of Delaware might want to play a round or two.

Those true-blue environmentalists who don't seem to have much of a feel for the problems of crop and livestock production could learn something also.

The list could go on and on because when it comes to better understanding of the farmers' problems, there's a lot of educating that needs to be done. If playing a game helps to do that, then I'm all for it.

The farm game I played several years ago had certain given situations and I was asked to make decisions. Then I rolled the dice for things like rainfall and insect outbreaks, and also took my chances on crop prices and fertilizer costs. The object was to make money.

Huge sums were made and lost that evening as a group of armchair farmers sat around throwing dice and spinning spinners to determine their agricultural fortunes.

If you like those kinds of games, then "Rich Farmer, Poor Farmer" might be a good one.

I don't think it's going to replace Monopoly in American homes, or be substituted for bingo in fire halls and churches around the country, but it could provide some cold winter entertainment and certainly if placed in the right hands the games could become an important farm-city relations tool.

One of the most often heard complaints among farmers is that the city folks just don't understand them. Well, fellows, here's a way to see that some of them do understand you a little better.



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