

ANNUAL FARM INCOME HITS THREE BILLION AND STILL RISING Farmers' ranks thin, but production is tops

Canadian farmers, their ranks thinned by industrial expansion, are earning, investing, and spending more money now than they did 25 years ago.

Farm values have doubled, the average total investment per farm has tripled and capital expenditures for farm construction, machinery and equipment has increased almost 10 times over that spent in the mid-30's.

At the same time the annual gross income from farming in Canada—only \$906.1 million in the 1935-39 period—topped the \$3 billion mark in 1959 and continues to climb.

CONTAINED IN ARTICLE

These, and a host of other interesting facts and figures, are

Spuds make a comeback

The potato, after suffering a decline in popularity on Canadian dinner tables, is now making a comeback in many new convenient forms, notes J. A. Kitson of the Canada department of agriculture's research station at Summerland, British Columbia.

Sparkling this revival are the products from new or expanded potato processing plants in major growing areas from coast to coast. New facilities are getting underway or are being built in at least seven provinces.

The potato chip still holds top spot, accounting for almost two-thirds of potatoes processed. Its position is being challenged by greatly expanded production of frozen French Fries and the several forms of dehydrated mashed potatoes now being made.

PROOF IN STORES

A recent check of retail stores in Western Canada shows that no less than 13 different forms of processed potatoes are available to the consumer.

Also included in the lineup of easy-to-prepare products are frozen potato puffs, frozen patties, frozen hash brown, diced and sliced potatoes both frozen and dehydrated and a variety of scallop and au gratin mixes using dehydrated slices.

Other products available in the west are canned and frozen whole potatoes, frozen French fried whole potatoes and even a mix for potato pancakes.

Potato consumption which has declined from 200 pounds per person in 1900 to less than 100 pounds in 1955 has levelled off near the 100 pound figure. Wider use of prepared potatoes may bring a slight increase in total consumption.

contained in the article "Agriculture in the National Economy" in the current issue of The Economic Annalist, published bimonthly by the economics division of the Canada Department of Agriculture.

The article was prepared by C. K. Varkaris and G. P. Boucher. Mr. Varkaris has since left agriculture on transfer to another government department.

Other highlights of their report:

Expanding industrialization is reducing the number of people living on farms. In the 1940's about 25 per cent of Canada's population lived on farms. By 1956 this figure had shrunk to 16.4 per cent and is still dwindling annually.

The total farm land area in Canada covers about 173.9 million acres, including farm woodlots. Of this total, only 100.3 million acres are improved, 62.9 million acres produce crops, 24.6 million acres are in summerfallow and 10.1 million acres are in pasture.

ACREAGE IS UP

Acres of individual farms has increased, but the number of farms has declined steadily since 1931 in the Atlantic, Central and Prairie regions. Throughout the country the number of occupied farms dropped from 728,564 in 1931 to 575,015 in 1956. Economists agree that the 1961 census will show a further decline in the number of occupied farms.

The average farm size has increased steadily from 224 acres in 1931 to 302 acres in 1956.

Capital invested in farm businesses jumped from \$4.5 billion in 1935 to about \$11.4 billion in 1959, an increase of 253.3 per cent.

INVESTMENTS

Farmers in 1955 had \$3.4 billion invested in land and buildings, \$0.5 billion in livestock and \$0.5 billion in farm machinery. In 1959 they had \$7.2 billion invested in land and buildings, \$2 billion in livestock, and \$2.2 billion in farm machinery.

The average total investment per farm was up from \$6,388 in 1935 to \$20,783 in 1959.

Farmers' expenditures increased even faster with the increase in the value of their farms. Capital expenditures for construction, machinery and equipment, and their upkeep, climbed from \$71.5 million in 1935 to \$649 million in 1958.

Farmers have other staggering expenses, such as purchases of fertilizers and pesticides. Sales of fertilizers in Canada rose from 212,479 tons in 1935 to 908,214 tons in 1959. Sales of pesticides rose from \$5.4 million in 1947 to a whopping \$19 million in 1959.

The agricultural labor force

has declined steadily in the past 10 years. In 1939 it stood at 1,379,000, but by 1959 it had dropped to 724,000. As a percentage of the total Canadian civilian labor force it has declined from 36.4 per cent in 1933 to only 12.4 per cent in 1959.

Canadian farmers are feeding more people. In 1940 one farm worker "supported" about 10 people, but in 1959 he "supported" as many as 27, "an achievement," say the authors, "which clearly reflects the rapid progress of our agriculture."

FARM TAXES

In 1959 alone, Canadian farmers paid \$142,569,000 in taxes and another \$184,364,000 in wages. They spent \$348,561,000 for feed and seed purchased through market channels, \$19,428,000 for electric power and \$128,923,000 for miscellaneous items including veterinary fees, binder and baler twine, irrigation charges, fence repairs, salt, and so forth.

"The chief characteristic of what many people call the agricultural revolution of the post-war era," conclude the authors, "is the ability of an ever-decreasing number of farms to produce an ever-increasing quantity of products of higher quality to feed the people of Canada and of other countries."

CLOSE EYE KEPT ON SLAUGHTER PRACTICES

Meat inspection service protects \$billion investment in livestock

Meat, one of the mainstays of the Canadian diet, is for that reason also a major item of commerce. Billions of dollars are tied up in cattle, hogs, sheep and poultry and in their feeding, processing and marketing.

The whole existence of these huge enterprises depends upon continued public acceptance of meat as a disease-free wholesome food. This guarantee is provided by the Meat Inspection Service of the Health of Animals Division Canada Department of Agriculture.

Meat establishments in Canada under federal inspection total 225 and comprise 65 large animal slaughter plants, 65 poultry slaughter and processing plants, and 95 processing plants.

RECORD HIGH

In the last fiscal year, 8.9 million animals and 56 million birds passed through these plants. This year's slaughter will probably be a record high. In 1956-57, only 161 plants came under federal inspection. Poultry slaughter totalled 15.8 million and the large animals 8.7 million. Since all animals and carcasses are inspected individually, an increase of a few hundred thousand means a

great deal more work for the guardians of the public meat supply.

Despite the opening of more plants, the changes caused by new trends in livestock marketing and the increasing volume of product handled, the Meat Inspection Service has fulfilled the extra demands made on it.

VETERINARIANS SCARCE

Because of the scarcity of veterinarians, the pool of about 420 on the staff of the Health of Animals Division has remained fairly static, but more than 100 veterinarian assistants have been added in the last four years. Furthermore a new course for higher training of these men has been instituted with considerable success.

Veterinarians examine the animals before slaughter and, in the course of slaughter and preparation of the meat products they make continuous inspection of all carcasses for disease, condemning meat where necessary. Besides having assistance for the routine work involved, they can call on the division's Animal Diseases Research Institute for confirmation of diagnosis. About 220 Health of Animals veterinari-

ans are permanently assigned to meat inspection work.

QUESTION SCOPE

Despite the efficiency of the organization, consumer organizations, sometimes question the scope of national meat inspection.

The answer, says Dr. C.K. Hetherington, head of the fed-

eral Meat Inspection Services, may be found in the fact his staff are obligated only to service plants from which meat will be exported either out of the province or out of the country. All meats coming from these plants carry the Canada Approved inspection label; this should not be confused with food grading tags which mean something quite different.

The labels "Canada Approved" also have the blessing of the Food and Drug Directorate of the Department of National Health and Welfare. Graded and branded red meats in all cases

are government inspected; graded poultry is not necessarily inspected.

85 PER CENT OF KILL

Dr. Hetherington estimated that the large animals passing through federally inspected plants represent only 85 per cent of the total kill; an even smaller percentage of the total poultry kill is federally inspected.

Only when a slaughter or processing plant seeks the federal inspection service voluntarily, or when it enters into inter-provincial or international trade, does the Meat Inspection Service come into the picture. From

this point the plant, its personnel and its operations must conform with the high standards set by the department. These standards were, of course, set by the demands imposed by international practice but in Canada they are the same for products intended for consumption in other provinces as for those earmarked for export.

At the larger plants, teams of inspectors are on duty regularly to ensure compliance with the regulations of the Canada Meat Inspection Act and the Humane Slaughter of Food Animals Act.

Insecticides offer help

Selective insecticides offer new help to growers by controlling pests without harm to their natural enemies.

Only a few insecticides of this type have been developed, reports F. T. Lord, of Canada department of agriculture's research station at Kentville, N.S.

However, he points out that other kinds can be used selectively by varying the rate and time of application and by knowing the habits of the pest and its natural enemies.



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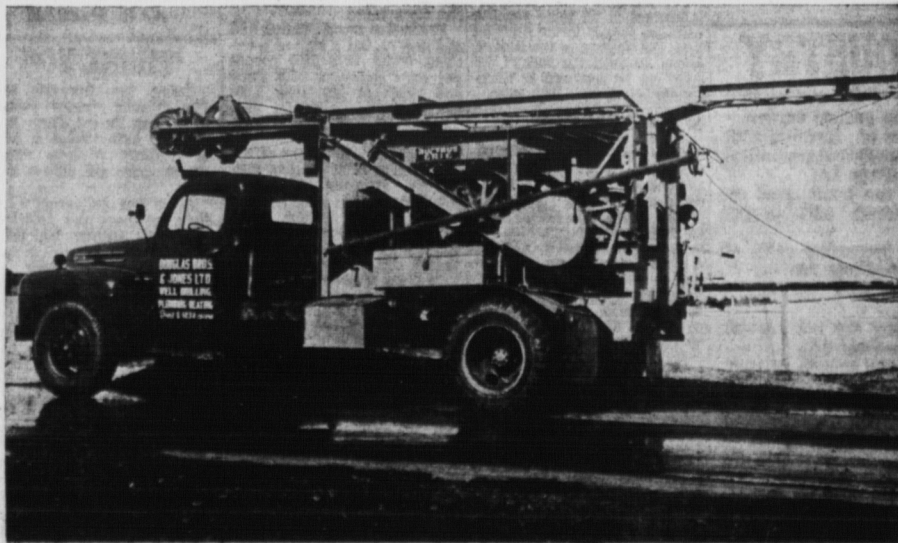
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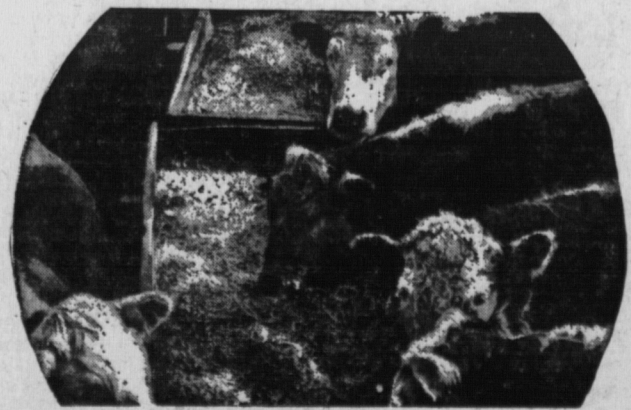


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