

Commissioner Discusses Agriculture In North Carolina

By N.C. Commissioner Of Agriculture Jim Graham

Gambling on weather or agriculture presents some pretty long odds. Yet farmers, like meteorologists, bet on the weather every day as if the one element vital to agriculture was not one over which farmers have little or no control.

Last summer many of them lost.

Heat, drought and pest struck North Carolina and much of the United States leaving only dust and death. With that came shortages, an ally of inflation. The ancient and natural law of supply and demand came clearly into focus. Consumers suffered from soaring prices and farmers suffered from lack of salable commodities. Too many went under.

The following is an outline of what happened. It should be kept in mind that most declines in quality and quantity were the direct result of bad weather.

Corn, soybeans and peanuts suffered the worst. N.C. corn yields, for example, were down 16 per cent from 1979 or only 62 bushels an acre. In good years this can be as high as 80 bushels plus. Soybeans produced only 19 bushels an acre, down 18 per cent from the previous year. Peanuts took a 19 per cent beating

with only 1,850 pounds an acre. In recent years farmers have made over 2,800 pounds.

Fortunately, tobacco maintained its golden lining, at least partly, and a fair crop resulted. On the market flue-cured averaged \$1.46 a pound with a reasonable yield of 2,012 pounds per acre. Quality was down but 750-million pounds were sold bringing a whopping \$1.1 billion in gross farm income.

Still, it was better than the \$1.39 a pound average price of 1979 but costs of production also went up. In 1979 only 603-million pounds were sold grossing \$842-million.

Adding to that, burley growers produced 18-million pounds against a poor 8.5-million pounds in 1979, an increase of 111 per cent. The 1979 crop was a disaster due to blue mold. At this writing North Carolina has sold 11-million pounds averaging nearly \$1.66 a pound. The market will remain open for about two weeks after Christmas.

Cotton quality was excellent though yields were down. Only 50,000 bales were harvested. If weather had cooperated it is believed 80,000 bales would have been produced from the 63,000 acres harvested. Cotton is on the upswing in North Carolina due to higher

demand, prices, (this year it brought 85 cents to 90 cents a pound) the success of the trial boll weevil eradication program and the high cost of synthetic fabrics made from petro-chemicals. This is evidenced in that only 43,000 acres were harvested in 1979.

Hogs saw a reduction in breeding stock in reaction to lower prices but they improved during the last half of the year. In October of 1979 top hogs sold for \$33.82 a hundredweight. In the same month of 1980 prices had increased to \$46.67 a hundredweight.

Beef cattle numbers and prices were stable with slaughter cattle selling at \$65 to \$67 a hundredweight or about one to two cents a pound below 1979.

Milk production increased two to three per cent with about a 10 per cent price increase at the farm.

Broiler production went up 10 per cent. North Carolina produces 350-million birds annually. This is the state's leading food commodity and second in farm income behind tobacco.

North Carolina ranks second nationally in turkey production. Twenty-three million were produced in 1979 compared to an increase of three per cent or 24-million turkeys this year.

Tar Heelia leads the country in sweet potatoes. The 1980 crop was 4.6 - million hundredweight or a 7 per cent drop from the 4.9-million hundredweight produced in 1979.

1980 was a record year for apples with 375-million pounds or 9-million bushels.

Vegetables were down this year in both quality and quantity as a result of the weather.

Small grains were ex-

cellent with 350,000 acres harvested including wheat, oats and barley.

As we look towards the 1981 crop year, the biggest problem I see is the hardship farmers will face in borrowing the money needed to carry this crop.

With the prime interest rate now going to 21 per cent with the prospect of going higher, credit is a great problem. When this burden is added to the risk of putting out a crop, the result could be disastrous.

There are not many

Teacher Of Year Selection Slated For Mid-January

In just a few weeks, the eight regional finalists competing for the 1981-82 North Carolina Teacher of the Year (TOY) will be named. The nominees will be selected by mid-January from competitors representing most of the local school systems.

A screening committee in each of the eight regional education centers is now in the process of interviewing local winners and evaluating notebooks. Once the finalists are named, a visiting selection committee appointed by the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction will observe the teachers in their schools and recommend the first and second state finalists.

The 1981-82 TOY will be presented to the state board at its April meeting. The teacher selected will have no classroom duties during the year's reign and will be entered in national competition.

"Finding the best classroom teacher in North Carolina would be an impossible task," State Supt. Craig Phillips explained. "We attempt to find one superior representative of the finest in the teaching profession who will represent good teachers everywhere," he said.

Since 1970, when North Carolina first participated in the teacher of the year program, the state has produced four national finalists and two national winners. The national event is jointly sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers, Encyclopedia Britannica, and Good Housekeeping magazine.

The present teacher of the year is Mrs. Linda Lee, an English teacher at Cummings Senior High School in Burlington, who began her term July 1.



IN LOVING MEMORY OF MRS. NINA B. VALENTINE

In loving memory of Mrs. Nina B. Valentine, who departed this life 7 years ago, January 6, 1975.

Yet it seems only like yesterday we often think of how we stood by her bedside Dear God, how our hearts did hurt to see you close your eyes. And swiftly passed away, you did not have time to say goodbye. O, How God gave us strength to bear it and courage to face the blow. Then we remembered how you always taught us "God's" help is only a prayer away. You left a beautiful memory so great that we shall never forget. It will forever be a keepsake deep in our hearts. Though we loved you but God loved you best sleep on Mother, sleep on some day we will meet again in that great beyond.

Your devoted Daughters, Gladys V. Whitaker & Essie V. Morris, & Grandchildren, Great-Grandchildren

farmers who can shoulder all of the expenses necessary without the use of borrowed capital. Paying these exorbitant interest rates may be more of a burden than many farmers can bear.

In spite of the concern this

Attorneys Request Legislature To Retain Felony Provisions

The president of the N. C. District Attorneys Association, Joe Freeman Britt, has announced that the association will work to retain the provisions of the Habitual Felons Act in the coming session of the legislature. The act, which is now scheduled to be repealed in March, 1981, provides that when a person has been convicted of his fourth felony and is found by a jury to be a habitual felon his sentence must be at least 20 years and could be life imprisonment.

The District Attorneys Association feels that none of the provisions of the newly enacted "Fair Sentencing Act" adequately deal with the career criminal, but the current Habitual Felons Act does, since it mandates lengthy

causes, I do have faith in the farmers ability to turn a minus into a plus and I think this will happen this time. I know I hope so and I also know it must if we are to have the abundant food supply we have come to take for granted.

prison sentences for habitual felons and prohibits them from being released on parole until they have served a majority of their sentence.

Dist. Atty. Britt noted that the "one time transgressor" or "youngster that makes a mistake" is not effected by the act. Only a person who has clearly shown himself to be a career criminal by committing four felonies, each one of the series being committed after he was convicted of the previous one can be prosecuted as a habitual felon.

The courts need this effective law, according to Dist. Atty. Britt, to deal with the most hardened and professional of criminals in a manner that adequately protects the people of the State.

So says the VA... LIL' ABNER By Al Capp

BE SHORE AN' NOTIFY TH' VA OF YOURE NEW ADDRESS - WHEN YO' LANDS.

Contact nearest VA office (check your phone book) or a local veterans group.

Notebook

Continued From Page 3-A Bandon's history. Rev. Robert S. Harrell will be installed as our FIRST full time, resident minister. Communion will be served following the installation. Happy New Year to one and all. May God grant us Hope, Faith and Love.

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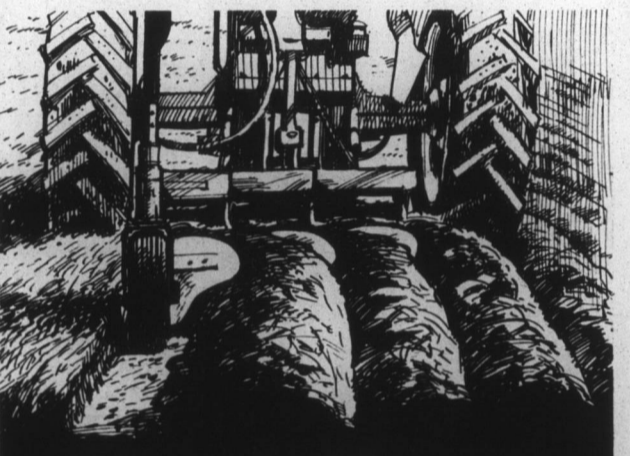
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