

This Month On the Farm



DECEMBER

Bolivar Pigg, he sez, sez he:
 'This life is like a Christmas tree.
 Givin' is what makes either shine;
 At least, that's how it looks to me.'
 —Sez Bolivar P., sez he.

Farm families are busy preparing for Christmas at this season of the year, but there are plenty of tasks that need attention. So here are timely suggestions from your specialists at State College:

Swine
 The month of December usually means "hog-killing" weather throughout North Carolina. But, warns Prof. Earl Hostetler, there are other things that are important in curing meat besides cold weather. Pork of excellent quality can be cured on the farm if precautions are taken in slaughtering the hogs and in curing, smoking, and storing the meat. Be sure the job is done right. Complete directions are contained in Extension Circular No. 34, which may be obtained free of charge by writing to the Agricultural Editor at State College, Raleigh.

Agronomy
 There are any number of things the crop farmer can do in this twelfth month of the year, says Enos Blair, extension agronomist. The Coastal Plain farmer can disc under all corn stalks, bean stalks, and cotton stalks before Christmas to improve the fertility of his soil. In the Piedmont, the grower should plow all clover and lespedeza lands that are to be planted to corn, cotton, or any other crop next spring. Then, too, the farmer who produces any kind of seed for market can utilize the rainy days of December to put the seed in salable condition. Good weather can be used to clean off ditch banks and irregular places in the field.

Poultry
 December is a critical month for the poultryman, says Roy Dearstyne, head of the State College Poultry Department. Winter is here, necessitating many days of confinement for the laying birds, which should be in production by this time. Careful management must be practiced, since any neglect under such conditions is immediately reflected in the birds' performance. Check carefully the following items: ventilation, drop curtains, dropping boards, nesting material, and breeding pens. Naturally, careful feeding must be practiced, and V-shaped troughs used for feeding scratch. Above all, don't let disease get started in your flock. Cull depressed birds at once.

Inventory
 A farm inventory is simply a list of everything a farmer owns and owes at a particular time, says R. W. Shoffner, State College farm management specialist. It serves as a basis for all other farm records, and for the time spent, it gives more valuable in-

formation about the farm business than any other type of financial record. Here are some of the things a farm inventory will show: the amount of net worth above all debts; whether or not the farmer is getting ahead financially and how much; and a valuable list of all property which may be used in case of fire for settling estates, and other purposes. Farmers should plan now to take a farm inventory at the end of 1939.

Plant Pathology
 Dr. R. F. Poole, plant disease expert, says there are many cases where sweet potatoes now in banks will not rot unless protected from low temperatures and water. Also, he says, this is a good time to cut out dead limbs of trees in yards and orchards. Cut close to the trunk of the tree and apply a heavy coating of paint to the exposed surface.

Dairying
 The dairy cow's four stomachs have a capacity of 40 to 60 gallons. So, says Extension Dairy-

man John Arey, this animal is no nibbler. The cow's digestive organs function best when well filled with good feed. That's the reason roughage is so important in her diet. A pound of nutrients can be produced more cheaply in roughage than in grain. Therefore, it is considered a good feeding policy to give a cow all the roughage she will eat. Legume hay, such as alfalfa, soybeans, lespedeza, cowpeas, or clover, is unquestionably the best hay for dairy cows. Mixed hays, such as a legume and a grass, legumes with oats and barley, are also good. Besides hay, cows need a succulent feed. Silage and winter cover crops are recommended for this purpose.

Tobacco
 Right now, tobacco farmers should begin to get their plant beds ready for the 1940 crop, says Lloyd Weeks, extension tobacco specialist. If possible, choose a new site this year, so as to avoid any disease organisms that might have remained in the old bed. If an old bed site must be used, it should be buried, or sterilized by steam. Locate the bed in a sunny, well-drained place. A loamy type of soil is best.

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OTIS WOODLIEF
 R. F. D. Franklinton, N. C.

This fall has seen farmers of Johnston County turning more than ever to the growing of small grains, reports Assistant Farm Agent R. M. Holder.

An early spring is much better than a hard fall.

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