

FARM REVIEW and FORECAST



ALTHOUGH FINAL RESULTS are not yet available officials of the Seaboard Farm Equipment Auction reported this week that approximately 640 items valued at a total of \$50,000 were offered for sale at the annual auction

last month. J. P. Spencer reported that the 40 members of the Lions Club, sponsors of the sale, counted 86 sellers and 213 buyers and that about 90 per cent of all items were sold. "People came from all over," Spencer said.

Farmers Fear Federal Price Ax, Free Market

(Last in a series by FRANK ADAMS)
Twenty years ago a man tending 350 acres and feeding out the litters from 50 brood sows would have been a prosperous Gates County farmer.

Today, a farmer with the same resources is likely to be thinking about how to make a living — off the farm at other work. Government policy, new technology, inflationary operating costs, high land prices, scarce labor, low

return on huge investments are factors which are forcing him to think about going out of business.

For every farmer I talked with in the past three weeks, and perhaps most of Gates County's nearly 500 farm operators, the last straw would be elimination of federal price supports and acreage allotments.

"If they cut out price supports and allotments today, I wouldn't plant a hill this spring," one young farmer said. He tends 100 acres and fishes.

The farmer tending 350 acres agreed. "I couldn't farm as I have in the past without the price support programs," he said. "There are many reasons for this, but the outcome is that I would have to stop farming."

Federal and state agricultural workers and Gates bankers and businessmen who depend on farming for their livelihoods, generally agree with farmers that price supports and allotments are the cornerstone of the local farm economy.

There is no agreement, however, on the actions taken since December by the Nixon administration — except that those actions could lead to elimination of price support and allotments.

Most farmers interviewed have a wait and see position. The programs cut to date have yet to have a tangible effect their lives, although the total 1972 expenditures by the county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service were \$479,425.

One or two farmers even supported the President's decisions to cutback on the

Department of Agriculture's budget. As one put it, "These programs have been tried for over 30 years now. They haven't worked. In fact, I get a lower return on my investment today than I did 15 years ago. And I work harder. The same's true with most farmers."

"But I don't agree with this free market idea he (Nixon) and Secretary Butz are talking about. (Butz is Secretary of Agriculture.)

Here was another common worry among farmers interviewed. The so-called free market. In sum, farmers felt the idea was a deception that would result in higher food prices for the consumer.

They argued that big farm corporations could freeze prices once price supports and allotments were ended, and that this could be done several ways, but especially by selling at or below the costs for one or two harvests. For example, Gates farmers must average at least \$300 per acre of peanuts to break even. Corporate peanut producers with other income sources could sell at the break-even point or below for several years and thus drive smaller farmers out of business. "And don't think they wouldn't do it," one farmer said ruefully.

Then there's the traditional farm problem of being forced to buy most supplies and

equipment at retail prices, plus interest on loans, and having then to sell crops at or below wholesale prices.

Farm-oriented bankers and credit sources in Gates were unable to provide figures on the extent of farm indebtedness for the county. But they agreed farmers here in the last year had borrowed record amounts, as did farmers across the nation.

"If my creditors called up my notes today," one farmer



NEW MEMBER OF THE 2 1/2 Ton Peanut Club is Bill Turner of Seaboard. His record is 5,285 pounds per acre in the past season.

Fertilizer Needs Assured In County

JACKSON — Fertilizer dealers in this area have practically assured Northampton County Extension Chairman B. H. Harrell that they can handle the needs of their regular customers. The good news came when Harrell talked with the dealers last week.

North Carolina Agriculture Commissioner Jim Graham recently stated, "It appears there simply will not be enough fertilizer to meet the

demand for the 1973 crop." Graham also stated, "When the export price of material is \$33 to \$38 a ton higher than the domestic market, it is easy to see where the fertilizer will go when current contracts expire."

Harrell said Northampton dealers did agree that it probably was "a wise idea for county farmers to purchase their fertilizer as soon as possible to take advantage of current prices."

Advice On Growing Corn and Soybeans

JACKSON — Northampton County farmers gathered in the agricultural building here last Thursday to receive tips on corn and soybean production from North Carolina State University specialists.

County Extension Chairman B. H. Harrell made arrangements for Dr. A. D. Stuart and Dr. John Clapp, specialists from N. C. State University to discuss latest production practices for these two crops.

"Corn is one of our major

secondary crops, and although we were fortunate to produce an abundant crop in 1972, we still encounter production problems all over the county," said Harrell.

"From all indications there will be a substantial increase in soybean acreage in Northampton County in 1973. There are several reasons for this. First and foremost is the fact that soybeans recently have been selling for over \$6 per bushel; also, the elimination of set-aside land for cotton production."

Referendum Vote Set For Tuesday

North Carolina peanut growers will vote on Tuesday, March 13, to decide if they want to continue assessment to finance the operation of the North Carolina Peanut Growers Association. If approved by a two-thirds vote, the assessment will be in effect for a six-year period—1973-1978. The amount of the assessment would be \$1 per

ton or five cents per 100 pounds.

Polls will open at 8 a.m. and close at 5 p.m. All persons engaged in the production of peanuts in 1973 are eligible to vote. This includes owners, operators, and tenants including husband and wife if they are farming jointly.

Peanut producers' pennies are used to promote PRODUCTION, MARKETING, CONSUMPTION, AND RESEARCH.

Z. L. Davenport, Gumberry, and Cecil Maddrey, Severn, and currently serving as Directors of the Peanut Growers Association, and they urge every eligible voter to cast a ballot in this important referendum. Polling places have been set up throughout the county to be convenient for all producers. These polling places are as follows:

Community And Polling Place: Conway — Hedspeth Implement & Truck Co; Creeksville — Mrs. Virgie Lanier's Store; Galatia — Blythe's Store; Margarettsville — Garriss's Store; Garysburg — Suiter's Store; Occoneechee Neck — Bell's Store; Gaston — M. C. Dunlow Farm Supply; and Pleasant Hill — Little's Store.

Vulture — H. L. Vincent's Store; Jackson — Jimmy Wood Boone's Scale & Grading House; Lasker — Jesse Wheeler, Feed Mill; Rehoboth — Howerton's Grocery; and Milwaukee — George Warren's Service Station.

Newton — M. P. Mobbly's Store; Pendleton — W. H. Stephenson's Store; Severn — Farmers Supply; Potocasi — Flythe's Market; Woodland — Powell's BP Station; Rich Square — Farmers Feed and Supply; and Seaboard — Gay Implement Company, Inc.

money, and I'd be working the rest of my life paying the interest," said one 48-year-old farmer.

The national problem of inflation is one explanation for the high cost of land. Proximity to the spreading urban centers around Norfolk is another. "People want to get away from the cities, and they will pay high prices for land," is the way one agricultural official described the situation.

The most pessimistic assessment about the prospects facing small farm operators, and farming as a way of life, came from one of the county's veteran agriculture workers, who, like most of the farmers interviewed, asked to remain un-named. He said, "Regardless of what the Young Executive's Report argued, or what the Nixon administration does, farming as a way of life is on its way out."

When asked what they'd do if they were not financially able to farm, younger farmers optimistically figured they'd find "something else". But in Gates County, like North Carolina generally, the average age of farmers is between 50 and 55. These men are usually too old to find new jobs, and too young to retire with any Social Security benefits. Their answers to the question were not optimistic.

Milwaukee

By Pearl Jenkins
Mrs. Junious Martin, Mrs. Loyd Joyner and Mrs. Graham Smith accompanied Jack Barnes to Chapel Hill Hospital Thursday for a check up.

Mrs. Jerry Askew visited her sister Mrs. Sandra Bryant last week, while she was a patient in Halifax Memorial Hospital, Roanoke Rapids.

Mrs. Pearl Jenkins was admitted to Roanoke Chowan Hospital Friday for observation.

Mrs. James Letterman and daughter Gevin visited Mrs. Acre Modlin and Mrs. Troy Martin Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Billy Jenkins of COA Elizabeth City spent the week-end with Mr. and Mrs. Bill Jenkins.

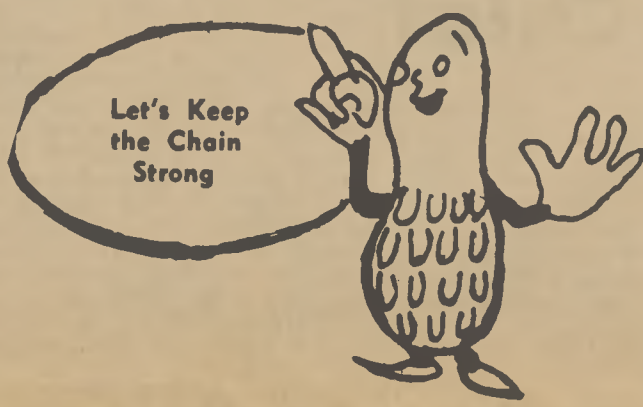
Mrs. Graham Smith visited Mrs. Ellie Britt and Mr. and Mrs. Justin Boss in Chesapeake Sunday.

Mrs. Jimmie Glover of Margarettsville spent the week-end with her parents Mr. and Mrs. Rufus Matthews.

Mrs. Pauline Roberts, Mrs. Graham Smith, Mr. and Mrs. James Vann, Bill Jenkins, Dan Johnson, Mrs. and Mrs. H. W. Pantan and Judge Jenkins visited Mrs. Pearl Jenkins at Roanoke Chowan Hospital Saturday.

Mr. and Mrs. David Earl Flythe and son, Walt of Franklin, were supper guests of Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Pantan. Visitors of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Jenkins Sunday were Mrs. Southgate Byrd and daughter Lou Ann and Mrs. Bennie Vann of Murfreesboro, Mr. and Mrs. David E. Flythe of Franklin, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Vaughan of Lasker, Mr. and Mrs. Roger Warren of Murfreesboro.

Mrs. Mamie Bridgers has returned from Guardian Care Rest Home and is temporarily residing with Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Pantan.



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1 TRAFFIC PANS
Traffic pans are hard pans that have developed in most fields throughout the county, especially on the better sandy loam soils.
(a) The chisel plow has proven to be an effective tool in eliminating traffic pans.
(b) The chisel plow should be run at a depth of 10-14 inches deep (or below pan) as soon as possible.
(c) Do not operate the chisel plow when the soil is wet.

2 ADVANTAGES OF PLANTING ON A BED
Q. Why is planting on a bed favored over flat planting?
A. More optimum moisture - temperature relationship for seedling development. It minimizes the danger of disease organism and herbicide damage.
Q. When is the best time to bed land?
A. As far ahead of planting as possible.
Q. How high should beds be planted?
A. Approximately 6-8 inches.
Q. Can you incorporate herbicide and fertilizer before planting?
A. Yes, if it is done within a month of planting.
Q. What is the best way to mix herbicides and fertilizer on the bed?
A. A rolling cultivator or power driven rotary hoe.
Q. What can I do if no equipment is available for bedding?
A. Run 6 to 8 inch water furrow in the middles immediately after planting.
Q. What are the best tools for making a bed?
A. A disk bedder, middle buster, or rolling cultivator.
Q. Should I break land before bedding?
A. No, the bedding process is a breaking process.

3 SOIL SAMPLES
(a) Even though it is late, it will pay to go ahead and take soil samples.
(b) Cartons and information sheets are available at the County Agents Office and fertilizer dealers.
(c) The County Agents Office is delivering soil samples to the Soil Testing Laboratory at least once a week.

Weekly Peanut Report

VIRGINIA-NORTH CAROLINA SECTION — Light rain and cloudy skies were reported the past several days. Temperatures were mild. Offerings of cleaned jumbos were very light, while fancy offerings were moderate. Offerings of shelled extra large were limited, other shelled grades light. Trading was light. The market was firm. Sales and quotations prompt and April delivery mostly prompt delivery cleaned Virginia jumbo 25-25 1/2 cents, occasionally 26 cents; Fancy 22 3/4-23 1/4 cents, mostly 22 3/4-23 cents, occasionally lower. Shelled extra large very scarce 32 1/2 cents; Medium 28 3/4-29 cents, occasionally 29 1/4-29 1/2 cents, number one 25-25 1/2 cents, mostly 25 1/2 cents, occasionally 26 cents, few lower; Number two 22 1/2-23 1/2 cents, mostly 22 3/4-23 cents, occasionally 23 3/4 cents.

If you need money for farm equipment, come to us.



The replacement of old, worn-out machinery is vital to your farm's productiveness. If you need credit for new equipment, see your Production Credit Association.

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