

Smörgåsbord



Harold Johnson
Editor

Great Christmas gift idea! We've discovered that there's an unselfish trait among FARM SHOW readers. They like to share good things with others.

That's why we're inviting you and other subscribers to give FARM SHOW for Christmas. Many readers who gave FARM SHOW for Christmas last year wrote to tell us that they've never given a gift which generated so much response from appreciative recipients.

Use the handy order envelope inserted elsewhere in this issue to order your Christmas gift subscriptions. Here's a recap of our special Christmas gift offer (expires Jan. 1, 1983):

When you give more than one gift subscription, the price drops.

United States: Your first gift sub is \$9.95. Each additional gift sub is only \$7.95. It figures out to \$17.90 for two gift subs, \$25.85 for three, \$33.80 for four, etc.

Canada: Your first gift sub is \$11.95 (Canadian dollars). Each additional gift sub is \$9.95. It figures out to \$21.90 for two gift subs, \$31.85 for three, \$41.80 for four, etc.

With each gift sub we'll send a card, notifying each recipient of your thoughtfulness. The card and first issue will be processed in time to arrive shortly before Christmas — if you order now!

We'll also imprint the mailing label with "XMAS GIFT FROM (Your Name)" so the recipient will be reminded of your thoughtfulness throughout the entire year as each new issue arrives.

Merry Christmas and please order today so we can give your special Christmas gift orders the prompt attention they deserve. Contact: FARM SHOW, Box 704, Lakeville, Minn. 55044 (ph 612 469-5572).

Free placemats do double duty. New, colorful and information-packed placemats — with messages on both sides — are available free to farmers from Du Pont Agrichemicals. On one side there's a large photograph showing what an average American family of four eats in a year — nearly 2½ tons of food. There are up-to-date facts about food and modern-day agriculture, plus a food-and-fiber quiz on the flipside.

The placemats are especially well-suited for meetings that involve both farm and urban people, such as National Farm-City Week activities in the fall, or National Agriculture Day functions in the spring. Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, John Harvey, Public Affairs Manager, DuPont Agrichemicals, 1007 Market St., Wilmington, Del. 19898 (ph 302 774-9138).

Free land puts new life in dying town — Remember Bud Kissner, the North Dakota farmer who offered free land to "homesteaders" as a means of keeping his home town of Antler from dying? Thanks to the publicity Kissner received in FARM



SHOW, (our Nov.-Dec. issue a year ago) and on nationwide TV and several daily newspapers, the idea is working. Antler lives. This fall, 41 pupils answered the school bell and all but 17 were children of Kissner's "homesteaders", and 6 of the 17 were from new families who chose to come to Antler on their own.

Here, according to a report in the Minneapolis Tribune, is why the families came:

"Jim and Frances Murry came because they had lost all they owned in a house fire in New Hampshire. Mike Ellis, a welder, left a good job in Salt Lake City to start his own business with his sons. Frank and Margie Navarett came to raise goats, which they couldn't do in Los Angeles. All had reasons.

"All have proved up their land, too: fences, wells, houses hauled in by flatbed truck, or mobile homes. All have found work.

"Counting all the parents and kids, more than 60 newcomers have descended upon Antler, which had had just 100 people."

"This is a good place to live, a friendly place," says Kissner. "If the school had closed, Antler would have just passed away. Without a school, little towns like this wither and die. I've seen it happen. It was going to happen here."

Kissner had no children but he had land. He decided to give away 42 acres of it, worth about \$500 an acre, to put new life into his dying hometown. The "giveaway" involved three 9 acre plots and three 5 acre plots. Homesteaders will obtain title to their land in five years if they "prove up" by enrolling their children in the Antler school, staying on the land and improving it with a shelter.

Worth repeating — The older you get, the stronger you get. If you don't believe it, just consider how much easier it is to carry \$25 worth of groceries than it was five years ago.

Farmer commits land to eternity — A dream came true several weeks ago for a retired Pennsylvania dairy farm couple and thousands who sympathize with their concern to preserve farmland. Ivan Martin, 80, and his wife, Fannie, signed a deed restriction which will keep their farm, located near Ephrata, in agriculture forever.

The Lancaster County farm couple are believed to be the first in Pennsylvania to sign such an agreement and it is hoped by conservationists that others will follow suit. A clause has been written into the deed of the Martins' 123 acre farm requiring that the property remain in agriculture forever ("in perpetuity").

Martin, in setting this example for farmland preservation, has been quoted as saying that the Bible calls for men to be stewards of the soil. It's a charge he has taken to heart. Although he would be entitled to certain tax advantages due to the deed restriction, the octogenarian says he won't take them because "preserving farmland is what I should do anyway. I don't want any money for it. I want to set an example." (Excerpted from **Farmshine**.)

U.S. farmland is "dirt cheap" compared to other countries. What's more, prices obtained by American farmers for farm commodities are about the lowest overall in the world.

Those are the conclusions of a study by Robert Lewis, chief economist for the National Farmers Union. He thinks it's the first worldwide survey of farmland prices ever undertaken.

Reported in 1978-79 prices (the most current data available) by farmers' organizations in 23 countries, farmland prices ranged from \$10 per acre for sheep-grazing land in South Africa to \$147,178 per acre for vegetable growing land in Italy. Prices were highest in Italy, Japan and Egypt. They were lowest in South Africa and Argentina.

Land prices in Western Europe, outside Italy, ranged between \$319 per acre in Scotland to \$12,469 per acre in West Germany. In most European countries, land prices averaged \$1,500 to \$5,000 and were rising fast.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported 1978-79 farmland prices in the U.S. as ranging from \$87 per acre in Nevada to \$2,004 an acre in New Jersey. More recent 1981 figures indicate the national average price for farmland at \$790, with land in New Jersey averaging about \$3,000 an acre. Prices last year rose at a 9.3% rate, well below the 15% rate of the year before.

The use of farmland generally determines the prices reported. Price of wheat land ranged from a low of \$161 an acre in Saskatchewan to a high of \$29,635 in southern Italy. The figure given for the U.S. northern plains was \$271 per acre and the next lowest figure was New Zealand at \$930 an acre. Argentina's wheat land was reported at \$1,031 an acre.

The researchers found that all but five of the responding countries had some restrictions on the right to buy farmland. Six countries require buyers of farmland to have farming skills and four require the buyer to make farming his or her principal occupation. Four countries require buyers to reside either on the farm or within the country after the purchase. Five countries place restrictions on parcel size. Norway forbids purchase of farmland for speculative purposes. In order to promote larger and more efficient farms, West Germany prohibits any reduction in the size of farming units. In Italy, the country with the highest land prices, the only restriction was a priority right for neighbors to buy available land. In the Netherlands and Belgium there is no restriction on purchase or ownership, and land prices are high in comparison to neighboring countries. New Zealand has no restrictions for citizens but has tight controls on foreign buyers and land prices are among the lowest reported.

The researchers concluded that farmland prices in the U.S. are not unreasonably high in relation to the price of comparable land in other countries. "American farmland is expensive only in relation to the low income American farmers receive under current government policies," they conclude.

The Fast-ity Belt — Know someone who has tried everything and still can't lose weight? You may



want to send them a "Fast-ity" Belt. This latest new diet gag gift was designed especially for overweight "food lovers" with a sense of humor. It's made of flexible plastic and has adjustable straps that can be locked with a padlock. Sells for \$5.95, including a 12 page comical instruction book. Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Contemporary Novelties, 10758 Trenton, St. Louis, Mo. 63132 (ph toll free 1-800 325-0629).