

HOME and COUNTRY

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THE AGRICULTURAL BATTLE 1943

During the first few months of the war farm folk wondered whether they would be permitted to make an all out contribution by agricultural production. Faced by surpluses, actual and imaginary, there was little encouragement to increase. Farm young people drifted away by the thousands. That picture has long since changed and in 1942 the green light was on for all lines of production. Farmers and their families made a glorious response. During the past winter, we have heard a good deal about shortages, but, as applied to production that was an improper term. The farmers did their part.

Apparent shortages were caused by a greatly increased demand for most major food products. In 1942 Canada produced approximately twice as many hogs as in the first year of the war. Exports of bacon were tripled in the same period. Cheese exports rose from 90,000,000 pounds in 1939 to 140,000,000 pounds in 1942. Egg exports increased from 1,000,000 dozen the first year of the war to 37,500,000 dozen in 1942. City workers were fully employed and their children drinking more milk, with the result that sales increased by 20 per cent. Similar increases might be reported for many other products.

If this great expansion in production had been accomplished with a corresponding increase in farm labour, it would have been normal. If it had been accomplished with the same amount of labour as in pre-war years, it would have been surprising; but when it was achieved with a reduction of some 25 per cent in farm workers, it is miraculous.

While we won our agricultural battle in 1942, we did not finish the war on the agricultural front. Still higher objectives face us in 1943. More food is required for shipment to our allies, to feed our own armed forces and the hard working folks at home. Goals call for increases of bacon 20 per cent; butter 20 per cent; eggs 15 per cent; beef 10 per cent; potatoes 10 per cent and somewhat corresponding increases in other products.

Labour and Machines

How can it be done? Space will not permit a review of the farm labour situation but we may assume that no matter how successful some of the plans now being discussed may be, labour will be short on farms in 1943, for the simple reason there will not be enough men and women in Canada to do all the war jobs awaiting us.

A solution might be found in labour saving equipment but machines are rationed and sales greatly restricted. Because machines are rationed, it should not be assumed that none are available. The distribution policy is to make the limited supply of implements available to those who will produce the maximum amount of food and to those without implements of the kind desired. The new machines, therefore, are going to farmers with a larger crop acreage and who have cows, hogs and poultry in reasonable numbers. If one farmer applies for a machine to be confined to his rather small acreage and another offers to make his available by custom work or otherwise to a larger area, farmer number two should get the machine. Fortunately the supply of some labour saving items was increased this spring. For instance the milking machine quota was doubled. It has been

WORK TODAY, PLAN FOR TOMORROW

This is the message of the Minister of Agriculture of Ontario to the Women's Institutes.

"It is not an easy matter, even in normal times, adequately to appraise the achievements of Institute women. It is still more difficult to evaluate their varied and magnificent services since the beginning of the war.

Organized women usually perform their tasks expeditiously and well. They take their work seriously and they give conscientious attention to detail. Such has been the attitude of the Institute women of Ontario throughout their history. One often reflects upon the void that would have existed in home life and in community betterment without the activities of the ladies of the Institutes.

With the inception of the war the Institutes of Ontario broadened their horizons and soon they were generously and feverishly making a variety of contributions to the War Effort. These are so well and favourably known that I need not recite them.

Each contribution, no matter how small, helps in paving the way to Allied victory. It now appears that victory is in sight but it may still be a long pull. Everyone can help to achieve that victory by his own or her own individual support.

Unfortunately war conditions have tended to loosen the bonds of home and community life. The breakdown naturally has not been so marked in the rural areas. But it is obvious that there will require to be a concerted effort toward restoration and rehabilitation when the war is over. It simply means that when peace has been restored Institute women must return to their community endeavours with renewed zeal.

May I say to Institute ladies of the Province: You were doing a great work before the war began. You have devotedly enlarged upon it during the war. Carry on nobly and be prepared for the problems of post-war days!"

(Signed) P. M. DEWAN.

announced recently that a modification has been made in the ban on the installation of hydro on producing farms. For farmers with large herds and not on hydro lines, a reasonable supply of 1½ and 2 horse power engines is available.

Good Neighbour Policy

How can the 1943 goals be reached in view of this shortage of labour and machines? It is interesting to note that in the British Isles, the U.S.A. and Canada, farmers and other agricultural leaders have all agreed on a policy of "Help your neighbour" as most practical. It has been observed in each of these countries that two men working together on most jobs can accomplish more than if each of them worked separately. This is particularly true if the two farms concerned are not equipped with all the labour saving devices. We noticed in a recent issue of the British Farmers' Weekly that the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Hudson complimented farmers on the success of working together and urged that the "good neighbour" policy be continued in 1943 and that they go further by pooling all machines in a parish and make these available for use on all farms.

It is interesting to note the extent to which women are working the farms of Great Britain. In 1942 the "Women's Land Army" included 45,000 many of them from towns and cities who had never before attempted farm labour. In one county 26 threshing outfits were operated entirely by women, except for two men in charge of each machine outfit.

In communities where neighbourliness can override line fences, and all man power and machinery be made available for co-operative use, the greatest production will be possible under present conditions.

Farm Women Serve

What additional service may be expected of farm women? That is a poser to anyone familiar with the achievements of this group in 1942. Such a person would not doubt that the production of last year was due in no small measure to the additional farm labour undertaken by women and

girls. Young women who had never milked before became acquainted with cows. More women assumed complete responsibility for poultry flocks, and vegetable gardens. Many without previous field experience mounted tractors and drove horses through long dusty hours and undertook heavy pitchfork jobs in haying and harvest. We cannot ask these to do more, but we grasp this opportunity of expressing appreciation and congratulations.

Plan for Efficiency

But the agricultural battle must be won and if we are not to work harder, can any additional contribution be made? Scarcity of labour and material increases the importance of planning. All of us were very proud when we learned last autumn that the greatest armada of all time had arrived in North Africa. Do we fully appreciate that this was possible only by hours, days and weeks of careful and often tedious planning, to the most minute detail. That was a difficult undertaking. If the farm situation in Ontario is as serious as we deem it to be, then farm operations for 1943 should be planned as carefully.

Planning cannot fully replace labour, but it may reduce it. It should be obvious to all that precious hours should not be wasted on crops from poor seed. Self feeders and a rearrangement of pens, paddocks and poultry yards, may save steps. Pasture should be our best crop as animals do the harvesting. A systematic spraying or dusting will protect potatoes, a crop on which women and children usually spend much hard labour. Bulletins on these and other subjects may be obtained from the County Agricultural Representative, or by writing the Publications Branch, Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto.

Girls and Boys Share

Over 20,000 boys and girls attended rural schools in 1942. Most of them had chores to do, and many of the older ones took the places of men. Is there any additional contribution they may make and enjoy doing? The patriotic zeal of young people is easily developed. Most of them would

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JAM FOR BRITAIN

Ontario Institutes again look forward to the opportunity to send jam to Britain in 1943. Responses to the questionnaire asking for an estimate for the coming season are flooding into the department, and we look forward to the best years yet.

Already about \$650,000 has been sent in for the Sugar Fund, with promise of much more. These contributions of money may be sent any time, but we would like to have them all in not later than August first.

Other Institutes have promised already to send 98,000 pounds of jam or honey, factory-made or group-made. This is good,—but only the best we can do will be enough. So let us know your plans.

Do you need inspiration to continue this good work this season? If so you will surely find it in the following letter from the Women's Voluntary Services for Civil Defence, Nottingham, received by the Wentworth County Women's Institutes:

"We have received a number of tins of jam from you with which we are really delighted. It has been distributed over our County for Christmas Parties to be given to our little evacuees and refugees from the bombed cities, and it will do a great deal to make them feel festive.

As you know, in these days, although we have plenty to eat and are very well, we do not have a great number of luxuries, and your delightful gift has therefore caused the greatest pleasure.

Our kind Canadian friends will be in our thoughts at Christmas time, and we send you warm thanks and good wishes, and may 1943 bring us Peace and Victory."

SEEDS ARE PLANTED

Ontario Women's Institute seeds are being distributed in England again. Already we have received a few letters of acknowledgment.

From Monks Elleigh, Ipswich, "We have a garden plot which one of our members takes charge of and all the produce is sold for funds for Women's Institutes. The seeds came just at the right moment as I was buying some this week. We are only a small Institute of 30 members, most of us agricultural labourers' wives. We are 16 miles from a town so the women look forward to our monthly meetings. The last monthly meeting we had a talk on The Women of America."

From the Northamptonshire and Soke of Peterborough Federation of Women's Institutes: "It was with great joy that my Committee received the box of seeds so generously sent to us from your Federation.

We have nearly 150 Institutes in our County, so that we decided that we should ballot for them. We know that many saved the seed from similar packets that Canada sent us last year, great enthusiasm being evoked by the unfamiliar varieties that were grown.

In spite of wartime difficulties most of our Institutes are holding their own and are finding amusement as well as knowledge in organising Fruit Conservation Centres, Thrift classes, Dig for Victory shows and of all Cookery classes, demonstrations and competitions.

Wartime diet necessitates that some of our meals shall be mostly vegetarian so here again we shall think with deep appreciation of your generous gift, and with admiration of the efforts of our sailors in bringing them to us."