

Hoosier Farmer Set to Bet On Old King Corn

'Greatest of All Gamblers' Puts Chips on Indiana Bumper Crop

By HAROLD H. HARTLEY
Times Business Editor

The greatest of all gamblers, the patient, sun-and-rain loving farmer, again is shoving his pile of hope chips into Hoosier corn fields.

Corn is Indiana's prosperity crop. There are other crops, wheat, soybeans, oats and some rye, but King Corn sways his golden tasseled scepter over the Hoosier farmer's prosperity.

It looks like another bumper crop for Indiana. Despite the three per cent reduction in acreage, if the weather is ideal from now on, the farmer may wind up with a corn crop worth around \$388 million.

But this year weather has been fickle. The week before last farmers were complaining. Fields were powder dry. Then last week came the deluge. The tornado brought a torrent of chilly rain, soaked the northern part of the state, leaving some of the fields near Benton County flooded so planters could not get in for at least a week.

This pushed their planting over into June, corn with hardly enough time for corn to mature before frost.

Another Factor

Another factor which may cut the crop is early planting. Purdue University has warned Indiana farmers repeatedly against planting before May 20. Early planting encourages the corn borer and chinook bug which can lay waste millions in corn.

Basically Hoosier farmers should be about as well off as last year, and perhaps better. Eighty-five per cent of the state's huge corn crop (third among the states with Iowa and Illinois, one, two) is fed to livestock, principally hogs, right on the farm where it is grown.

Last year about half of the surplus was stored in sealed Government bins which permitted the farmers to borrow about \$1.42 a bushel from the Government.

Uncle Sam's Corn

With No. 2 corn now selling at \$1.25, these farmers are turning the stored corn over to Uncle Sam. Just last week the Government began rolling 25 carloads of "loan corn" out of Southern Indiana for export.

If you look at the figures, the Hoosier farmer might have something to fear, especially those whose corn does not qualify for Government loans. The present price of December corn is \$1.16. Last year at this time, December corn was \$1.10, the reason being that the 1947 crop was a lean one, burned out by hot July and August winds.

Farmers who stored their corn last year were depressed, and so was the price. Last harvest time was a wet season, the corn coming in with 21 to 25 per cent moisture which discounted the price as much as 20 to 30 cents a bushel.

No. 2 Rating

But this wet corn has been drying out in the last 60 days. It gets a No. 2 rating and is rolling into market in good condition. That helps the farmer although the price is still under the Government support level.

Farmers in Indiana today have about 145 million bushels of corn in storage as compared with 75 million last year at this time. The short figure last year reflects the short 1947 crop, and last year's crop was the second largest in history.

He stored his wet corn last fall every place there was a chance of keeping it dry. He built makeshift cribs out of fence wire and put a temporary roof over it. He had to save it until he could (1) sell it on the open market or (2) turn it into pork or beef.

The Hoosier farmer gets more for his corn when he converts it into pork. It takes about 12 bushels of corn with other supplements to bring a hog to 220 pounds. He gets about \$50 for the hog, \$25 of which is the price of his corn. In the other \$25 he managed to get a little added profit on his corn, upping the price enough to more than pay for his extra labor.

But the big gamble, this year as always, is still the weather. The farmer works as hard in bad crop years as in good years. But if the crop is thin, he gets more per bushel. If the crop is heavy, he gets less per bushel and has more bushels. This levels off his income.

The Indians farmer is not satisfied with his income. But who is? He complains that the city workers gets more for his labor and that the factory wage earner has a higher per capita income, which is true, but the farmer, year in and year out, with the various forms of crop insurance, manages to put a little money in the bank, renew his equipment, and lead a busy and healthy life.

No one ever saw a farmer begging, which is more than can be said for the payroll people of the cities.

And in this, big crop or small, the farmer takes his own measure of security. It's hard work, he tells you, but he'll always eat.

DEATHS OF INJURIES

James Snyder, 21, Montgomery, died yesterday in the Daviess County Hospital of injuries received when he fell into the path of a car driven by James King, stationed at the Crane Ammunition Depot. State police said Mr. Snyder was riding on the front fender of the car and fell from it while passing through Montgomery Friday.

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What Would You Do? Success Seen Near in Ford Strike Talks

Way Paved for Return Of 106,000 to Jobs, U. S. Conciliator Says

DETROIT, May 29 (Sunday) (UP) — Federal Conciliator Arthur C. Viat said early today that the Ford Motor Co. strike "will be settled within half an hour," paving the way for return of 106,000 Ford workers to their jobs.

The negotiators, grim and drawn by marathon sessions, had returned to the conference table last night to attempt to clear the final hurdle in the strike.

Top Ford and CIO United Auto Workers officials needed only to choose an arbitrator to end the 24-day walkout. Both felt that the issue of rehiring 20 fired Ford strikers was secondary.

Neither the UAW nor Ford had any comment as negotiators filed back into the sessions, broken off 12 hours to permit them to get much-needed sleep.

They expressed confidence that agreement reached earlier on arbitration of the major manpower work-load issue had disposed of the principal stumbling block preventing settlement of the walkout.

5 Points Settled

Five other points had been ironed out as the talks resumed at 9:30 p. m. (Indianapolis time). They were held in the "Victory Room" of a hotel, which UAW President Walter P. Reuther suggested was significant.

Negotiators agreed to a review of production standards, uniform flow of work along assembly lines, relief periods, absenteeism and placing of additional workers when auto body types are mixed.

The question to be decided by the arbitrator was:

"Does the company . . . on the basis of health and safety or otherwise, have the right to require an employee to perform his work assignment . . . in less time than the company's time standard?"

Split on Engineer

John S. Bugas, chief Ford negotiator, and Mr. Reuther offered similar proposals, but the split lay in the question of whether the arbitrator should be an industrial engineer.

Similar points in the two plans called for the 62,200 strikers and 43,800 other idled Ford workers to start up production as soon as possible. The company said it would take about nine days after settlement before production could pick up to a full output.

Crowded?

Well, in a few months Mrs. Riggle will add another child to the family, and her husband, who's been working on a construction job in Illinois, will be back in Indianapolis in June.

That has been the Swift's spring since their home on Cold Spring Rd. was sold two years ago.

At least they can be together at 215 N. Walcott St.

Mr. Swift has tried about every way he knows to find other lodgings.

"I've answered every ad I saw. I've called every number that was listed. I had a four-room house in Mars Hill promised, but that fell through," Mr. Swift says.

"I answered an ad the other day, for a house 27 miles out of town, but I never got any reply. He said, 'It's the usual reason: We've got too many children,'" Mrs. Swift said.

Mr. Swift nodded. "I suppose you can't blame landlords for not wanting too many kids around, but, anyway, sometimes a man gets so heartsick and disgusted he doesn't know what to do. He just doesn't know what to do."

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