The Importance of Farm Accounts

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You men who are on the firing line of the farm business know that the least false step may be sufficient to lead to disaster. Time was that farming was the simple life—nature gave and nature took away. Man needed only keen sense to be alert to physical danger and strong muscles to do the heavy tasks of producing food, building a home and "looking after himself." The only "farm record" needed then was a knowledge of what one owned, where it was, and how to protect it. Such records are kept easily in one's head. In fact all the farmers I have ever met have kept such records. Some add the details found in the keen memory of their "better halves."

However, for years now there has been a growing appreciation of the need for written records. The early written records were largely matters of pride or were developed by "men of large affairs." The modern records increasingly stress income and expense, and the successful farmer turns to these records to help in planning for the future.

Every farmer today, whether he desires or not, is a business man to some degree, that is, he depends for survival upon his ability to make a profit. Here well-kept records become highly valuable. Careful study of these records helps to avoid mistakes of the past, to say nothing of their value in meeting the rules and demands of the ever growing army of government representatives, whether they be income tax collectors, AAA representatives, loan agents, or others.

I have watched the situation and have worked closely with men in the farm business for years. It is my belief that the greatest good from farm records may come from a new type with which I am working. This record is designed to aid in estimating for the future what a farmer may gain or lose by the choice of different machines, power, area under cultivation, and many other factors. This is now in process of development. Before the year is ended I hope to have it ready for publication. Meanwhile, may I suggest that this new method will not take the place of farm records. Farm records will always be useful. This new type will make it possible to plan ahead with more confidence than before.

We are in uncertain days. Let us keep track of what we are doing, watch our step, and thus be here to welcome the future.