

News of the arts

often giving advice and demonstrations that meant the difference between success or failure for pioneer farmers in their new environment.

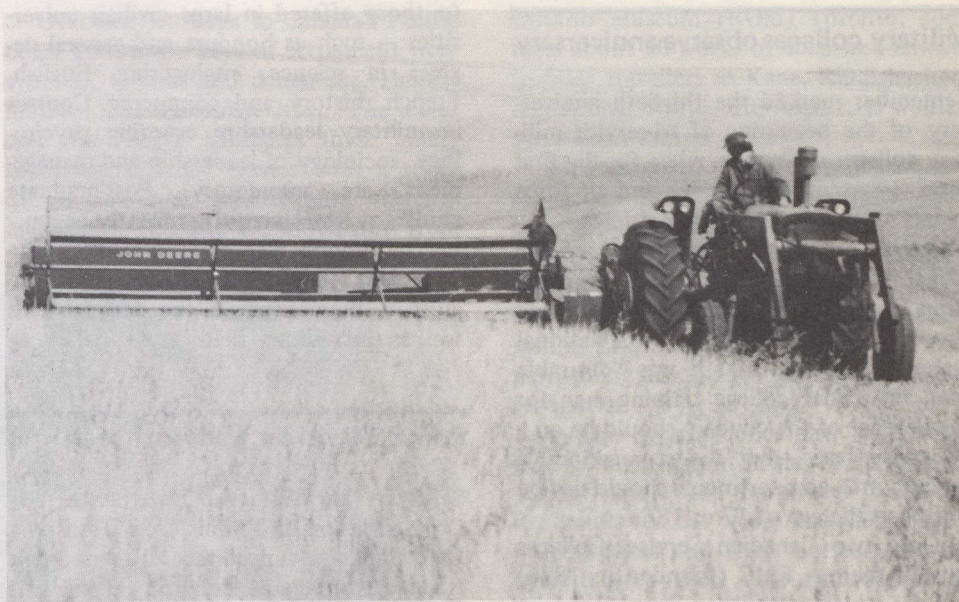
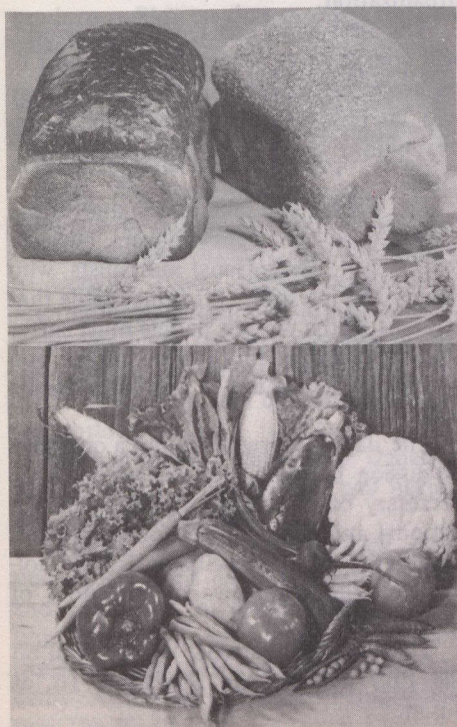
During the twentieth century's first decade the population of Canada increased by more than one third, farm lands grew to 43,200,000 hectares and the value of field crops rose to \$385 million.

Hardships abound

Yet from the beginning farmers faced hardship as well as success. Memories of the first harsh Canadian winters endured in primitive log cabins or sod huts became stories of hardship and bravery to entertain succeeding generations. Each spring more land was cleared and new sod broken for cultivation. Fortunately for Canada, the pioneers stuck it out through the searing heat of summer and the bitter cold of winter.

In this century, the "Dirty Thirties" were a trying time for prairie farmers. Very few farming areas in Canada have gone untouched by some natural disaster such as drought, flood, frost, insect or disease infestations. All these trials are part of the legacy inherited by the modern farmer.

Today, the average Canadian farmer produces enough food to feed himself and 52 others, and Canadians still enjoy one of the least expensive food systems in terms of percentage of income spent to feed themselves.



Harvest scenes like this take place each year in many parts of Western Canada.

Harvest season a time for thanks

For centuries at harvest time people have paused to be thankful for the bounty of the land. However, it is only in North America that one special day is set aside to mark this gratitude.

In Canada, Thanksgiving Day is the second Monday of October; in the United States it is the last Thursday of November. In some other countries no formal holiday is celebrated but religious services during the harvest period are dedicated to giving thanks for the crops.

Canadians can give thanks this year even though the harvest may not be up to expectations. Most areas of Canada had only an average crop in 1978 and few record yields were reported.

The wheat crop is slightly higher than last year's and is expected to reach about 20 million tonnes. Coarse grain production, although down from that of last year, should still be almost 20 million tonnes. Oilseed harvesting has been affected by the wet weather. The August forecast was for a rapeseed crop of 3.4 million tonnes, compared to two million tonnes last year. But with disrupted harvesting it may be less. Soybean production in Ontario was hit by dry weather. Despite larger planted acreages — about 150,000 acres more than in 1977 — the production may only be the same as last year's. The dry weather also reduced Ontario's corn and white bean crops.

The Ontario fruit crop was average and the province's vegetables, although with reduced yields in some areas, are of good quality. Quebec, too, experienced a somewhat reduced vegetable harvest because of the weather but there were good yields for fruits, hay and spring grains.

In the Atlantic provinces, Nova Scotia's apple crop is average but in many cases the fruit is smaller than usual. Spring grain yields are reported as high average. Potatoes in Prince Edward Island are expected to produce mediocre yields in 1978, while in New Brunswick the crop forecast now is looking better but below normal yields are still expected.

Beef and pork supplies are plentiful as is the traditional Thanksgiving turkey. This year it was estimated that two million turkeys were bought for Thanksgiving meals. Other fowl such as geese, ducks and chickens are also in good supply.

Even though food prices are higher than they were last year, and crops have been just average, Canadians have reason to be thankful. In 1949 it took 20 hours' wages to buy a week's supply of food for a family of four. By 1977 only eight hours of work were required to buy the same amount of food.