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Courtesy of Bonnie Jean Bacon Feser (see cover sheet)

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WHAT IS A FARMER

(FROM THE CATO, N.Y. CITIZEN)

A FARMER IS A PARADOX - HE IS AN OVERALL EXECUTIVE WITH HIS HOME, HIS OFFICE; A SCIENTIST USING FERTILIZER ATTACHMENTS; A PURCHASING AGENT IN AN OLD HAT; A PERSONNEL DIRECTOR WITH GREASE UNDER HIS FINGERNAILS; A DIETITIAN WITH A PASSION FOR ALFALFA, AMINOS, AND ANTI-BIOTICS; A PRODUCTION EXPERT WITH A SURPLUS; AND A MANAGER BATTLING A PRICE-COST SQUEEZE.

HE MANAGES MORE CAPITAL THAN MOST OF THE BUSINESSMEN IN TOWN. HE LIKES SUNSHINE, GOOD FOODS, COUNTY FAIRS, DINNER AT NOON, AUCTIONS, HIS NEIGHBORS, HIS SHIRT COLLAR UNBUTTONED, AND ABOVE ALL, A GOOD SOAKING RAIN IN JULY OR AUGUST. HE IS NOT MUCH FOR DROUGHTS, DITCHES, THROUGHWAYS, EXPERTS, WEEDS, THE EIGHT-HOUR DAY, GRASSHOPPERS OR HELPING WITH HOUSEWORK.

FARMERS ARE FOUND IN FIELDS - PLOWING UP, SEEDING DOWN, ROTATING FROM, PLANTING TO, FERTILIZING WITH, SPRAYING FOR, AND HARVESTING. WIVES HELP THEM, LITTLE BOYS FOLLOW THEM, THE AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT CONFUSES THEM, CITY RELATIVES VISIT THEM, SALESMEN DETAIN THEM AND WAIT FOR THEM, WEATHER CAN DELAY THEM, BUT IT TAKES HEAVEN TO STOP THEM.

A FARMER IS BOTH FAITH AND FATALIST - HE

MUST HAVE FAITH TO CONTINUALLY MEET THE CHALLENGE OF HIS CAPACITIES AMID AN EVERPRESENT POSSIBILITY THAT AN ACT OF GOD (A LATE SPRING, AN EARLY FROST, HAIL, DROUGHT) CAN BRING HIS BUSINESS TO A STANDSTILL. YOU CAN REDUCE HIS ACREAGE BUT YOU CAN'T RESTRAIN HIS AMBITION.

MIGHT AS WELL PUT UP WITH HIM - HE IS YOUR FRIEND, YOUR COMPETITOR, YOUR CUSTOMER, YOUR SOURCE OF FOOD, FIBER, AND SELF RELIANT YOUNG CITIZEN TO HELP REPLENISH YOUR CITIES. HE IS YOUR COUNTRYMAN - A DENIM-DRESSED, BUSINESS-WISE, FAST-GROWING STATESMAN OF STATURE.

AND WHEN HE COMES IN AT NOON, HAVING SPENT THE ENERGY OF HIS HOPES AND DREAMS, HE CAN BE RECHARGED ANEW WITH THE MAGIC WORDS:

"THE MARKET'S UP."