

## CROPS BOUNTIFUL

## A Time for Being Thankful

By Ferdie J. Deering

**H**arvest festivals are about as old as mankind. In America we date our Thanksgiving celebration from the autumn of 1621, when Gov. William Bradford and the Pilgrims held a 3-day festival to commemorate their first harvest in New England.

What this tiny, struggling colony had garnered for the entire community probably was less food than is available per family today, but their gratitude for these blessings of plenty overflowed in much greater proportion than is evident now.

A special day of Thanks-



giving did not immediately become a regular event, and was not celebrated annually until the Revolution. Thanksgiving took on a truly national character only when President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a national harvest festival for Nov. 26, 1863. It has been an American custom since.

Thus, Thanksgiving has become a time to take stock of our benefits and achievements, counting blessings and expressing gratitude to God for His goodness.

This year, Americans have abundant reasons for being thankful for the excellent crops being harvested and the livestock on hand for our nourishment and enjoyment. We probably eat as much because we like to eat as we do to sustain ourselves.

We have record crops in Oklahoma and in the United States, and we needed them. Although we never went hungry, we dipped close to the bottom of the grain bin last year.

Then the rains came, and we reaped a bigger wheat crop than ever before. Sorghum grain and peanuts now being harvested are turning out record yields. Oklahoma's cotton crop is the best since 1965. Grass for graz-

ing and hay crops have been bountiful.

Nationally, the important corn crop is of record size, and the protein-rich soybeans that are in worldwide demand will amount to 24 per cent more than last year's record output.

Livestock production has been great, in spite of the way bureaucrats fumbled price controls to upset normal marketing. Dairy production is down, but there's plenty of meat and poultry.

We have enough. Let's be thankful for that.

It is a great blessing that we have food to share with the rest of the world.

Even with much of our land idle and a lot of the remainder producing below its potential, we can't eat all that is grown here. We usually export two-thirds of our wheat, half of our soybeans, one-fourth of our feed grains, two-thirds of our rice, and one-third of our cotton.

We can do this because we have been blessed with skills and equipment for farming never before available in thousands of years of agriculture. In many countries even now, three-fourths of the people must spend three-fourths of their time and energy to grow sufficient food for a subsistence diet.

In the United States, one farmer or rancher produces enough food for 51 persons.

In a nation founded on scriptural principles by men who were seeking freedom and opportunity, it is appropriate that the spirit of Thanksgiving prevails on a national scale. It shouldn't require a presidential proclamation to make us grateful for what we have. We have so much!