

Christmas and agriculture are tied together



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Special to
Pelahatchie News

Having been raised on a farm in rural Rankin County, I can easily say that Christmas is a very important time of the year for those of us involved in agriculture. Most of us are from Christian families, so the reason we celebrate Christmas is no big surprise. As I look back, it seems the whole time I was growing up, Christmas was such a magical time of the year.

The setting that is a stable is something that we can easily refer to since we grew up around farm animals. I can remember as I grew up, both of my grandfathers had stalls in their barns.

We understand that a manger was not a bad place or situation; it could be used as the resting place for a newborn child. According to the dictionary, a manger is a structure used to hold food for farm animals. The word comes from the French language mangier (meaning "to eat"). Mangers are mostly used in raising livestock and generally found in stables and farmhouses.



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We all know the story, the time came for the baby to be born, and Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son, she wrapped him in clothes, and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in an inn.

Inns during that time were nothing like they are today. The occupants slept in rooms together, probably without any heat, except what was produced by their own bodies. Try to imagine all the snoring and other sounds, not to mention the smells, the diseases and the pests the travelers carried with them from all over the Roman Empire.

I just believe the innkeeper did them

a huge favor by placing them in a stable away from the other travelers with the animals. There was hay for bedding, and the warmth of the animals could help take the edge off the cold of a long winter night.

It is so easy to see that all of this had been planned, and it came to set the stage for the story we know today.

After Jesus's birth, a very bright star was seen in the eastern sky. There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby keeping watch of their flocks, and an angel appeared to them. This part of the story confirms to me the apparent im-

portance of these lowly people who, as shepherds, were producing sheep for the sheep's wool. These shepherds were regarded as highly important members of society.

The actual story sounds like they all left their sheep and traveled to see the child. However, anyone that understands sheep will understand that some went, and some stayed with the flocks to guard them from the predators of the night. Just think of the story they had to tell their fellow shepherds when they returned.

During this time, agriculture was the occupation that sustained society, just as it is today. At that time, it required most of the population to do all the work required to produce the food and clothing they needed.

The week he was crucified, Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey, a beast that was used to transport farm products.

Agriculture cannot be removed from this great story, and it has translated into the faith of so many people of the world today.

From the Rankin County Extension Service, "Merry Christmas" and "Happy New Year."

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