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Cost Cutters For the Farmer Can Mean Profit or Loss

by W T. McAllister
Farm Management Specialist
University of Delaware

Most farmers are feeling the effects of higher costs of production with no increase in prices for their products. The only immediate answer to this dilemma is to improve farm management skills.

Here are some cost cutting techniques that will help farmers meet these demands:

FERTILIZER PAYS DIVIDENDS
Put your commercial fertilizer investment where it will do the most good. The initial application of fertilizer gives the biggest return per dollar.

With limited cash, lower rates of application over more acres pays better than higher rates over fewer acres.

When cash is limited, use fertilizer first on the high value crops. Look for other places to cut costs before you cut fertilizer investment.

FARMSTEAD PLANNING
The next major technological breakthrough in agriculture will probably be centered around the farmstead.

Although this is the primary center of farm work, it is usually poorly designed and lacks planning for efficient operation. An example of this is a comparison between a well arranged loose housing system and conventional stall barns.

The loose housing reduced travel 30 percent and time spent per cow seven percent.

INCENTIVE PAYMENT FOR FARM HANDS
The way a hired man does his work affects the profits made by the farmer. However, the hired man's earnings aren't necessarily related to the work he does or the profits of the farm.

Many farmers are considering some type of incentive payment which would reward the hired man for better performance and at the same

time increase the farmers profits

LOWER TAXES
Pay wages to children for work actually performed on the farm.

If the child is under 19 or over 19 and normally enrolled in college, he can earn \$600 or more and still be claimed an exemption if the farmer contributes one half of the child's support.

When replacing machinery or equipment, consider trading versus outright sale and new purchase. The latter may offer favorable depreciation reductions.

Records of farm expenses should be complete and carefully kept throughout the year. Five dollars of expenses not recorded means a tax payment of about \$100. Ask your county agent about Electronic Farm Accounts.

Complete records should be kept of all income with special notes on income from gifts, inheritance, sale of bonds and farm loans. Revenue agents consider any deposits as earned income unless there is evidence to the contrary.

INCREASING DEDUCTIONS
Every farm business has certain expenditures which classify as "operating" expenses under tax laws yet actually have benefits extending for more than a single year.

These expenditures should be planned for high income years. They include repairs to buildings, such as partial roofing and painting; minor overhauls on machinery, purchase of small tools, new tires, etc.

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