

# Neighbors Save Day for Farmer

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Thirty-one men and seven women had been there for all or part of the day. By 6 p.m., some of them were still there, finishing up the planting of about 80 acres of corn.

Under the leadership of men like Deacon Luke Boll and Elias' brother Jacob, word of the community day of work was sent out over the countryside. Elias's two brothers, John and Aaron, also were on hand to help direct the operation, which at some times included five or more tractors in a single field. With that kind of massive attack, it didn't take long to plow and plant a field.

Elias and Marian had listed the many people who had come.

Along with his brothers, Elias' father Clayton, of course, was there.

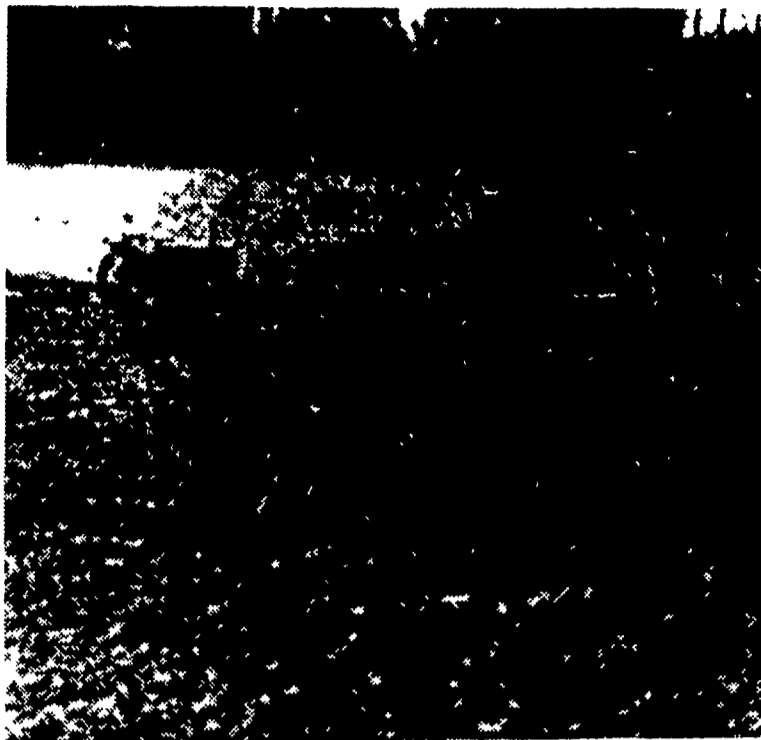
There was Amos Hess and his two sons, Paul and David.

Laverne and Caleb Hess, brothers, and their Uncle Ben Hess.

And Earl Swartzentruber, Ben Shank, Sam Metzler, Clarence Lee Hess, Claude Walters, Mahlon Shenk, Warren Railing, Maik Risser, Ben Wengele, and Deacon Boll.

The Metzler brothers, Abe, Harry and Daniel, were all there. The Bests, Joe Best and his sons, Robert, Rodney and John.

The McKelvey brothers, Bob



Two of the many tractors used May 8 on the Elias Groff farm are shown cultivating a field.

and Joe, along with the Stokes, Dan and his son Harold.

Lester Wiker helped, too. His five-year-old daughter, Nancy, was seriously injured by an automobile that weekend when she ran onto the road following her older sister. Nancy is in a cast from her waist to her hip at

Lancaster Osteopathic Hospital and will probably be there four to six weeks, Elias reported.

Seven women, all wives of men previously mentioned, also were there to prepare a real farmers meal. They were Joyce Hess, Ethel Metzler, Arlene Metzler, Pearl Best, Elsie Hess, Elsie Swartzentruber and Ruth Groff.

The women also helped Marian plant a small garden.

Besides the corn, Elias has about four acres of rye grain and eight of barley, as well as about 30 acres of clover, alfalfa and pasture. He has 14 steers, after just selling 21, and 21 hogs.

He's planning 10 to 12 acres of squash.

But his greatest love, tomatoes, will be a big disappointment this year. Last year, he had 22 acres of tomatoes. This year, he was hoping for about one-fifth that many, despite his illness.

But the word from a sorrowful Elias this week was that there would be six acres of tomatoes but they will be located on his brother Jacob's farm, too far away for a bed-ridden Elias to look after. It seems, Elias said, that "strong opposition" rose to having the tomatoes "where I can see."

During the past several years, Elias has had farm hands from Puerto Rico to help look after the tomatoes. He developed a close relationship with them and even went to Puerto Rico to see them. He's going to miss them this year, he said.

It's going to be long summer for Elias, but not nearly so long as it might have been without his friends and neighbors. And when he finally gets well, because of them, he can go out and take up farming as though nothing ever happened.



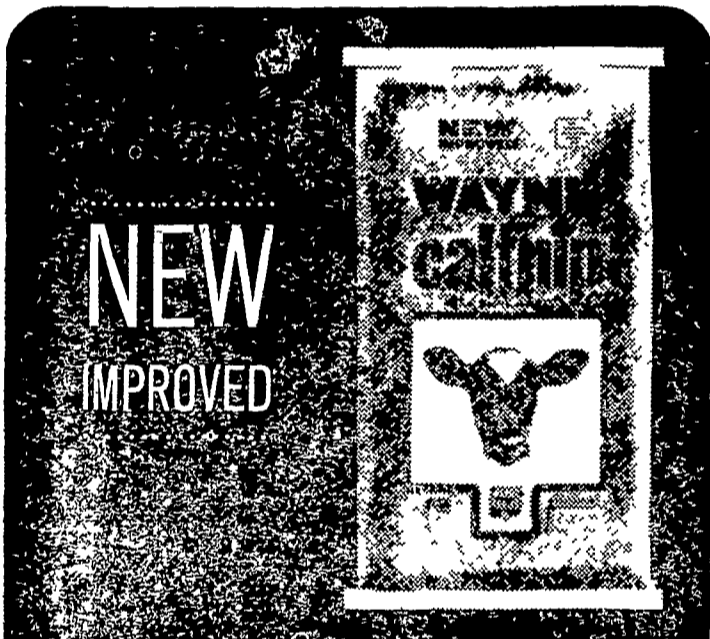
Elias' brother Jacob poses in front of his tractor. Jacob, described by neighbors as "very close" to Elias, helped organize the work May 8.



The Groff family, Elias and Marian, and the children, from left, Steven, six, Myron, three, and Evonne, two.



Elias Groff, with the cane he didn't know he'd need so soon and a smile — now that the anxiety about his fields has been relieved through the generosity of his neighbors.



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