

"Farming Is Better Than Ever"

"Today there is a better future in farming than there ever was. You can't be a pessimist and expect to succeed." Those words of advice come from Dan Hogeland, who owns and operates a 230-acre crop and vegetable farm near Newmantown, Lebanon County.

Dan, a three-time recipient of state awards for having the highest yields of potatoes per acre, has most of his land in corn, but 100 acres are devoted entirely to raising cucumbers, carrots, pumpkins, and potatoes. He also grows some barley and wheat as cover crops. This year he harvested nearly 700 tons of carrots from 33 acres, and 15 acres of potatoes yielded 729 bushels per acre.

Asked whether he has any special fertilizer requirements for his vegetables, Dan says "No," commenting that he uses about 70 tons per year on the 230 acres. It is broadcast, plowed under, applied in the row, and top-dressed, depending on particular conditions and needs. "As with anything else," he says, "you have to know what you're doing." Dan lists mineral deficiencies, plant diseases, insects, and the weather as some of his major management problems. Irrigation is a must, he says.

When it's time to bring the vegetables out of the field, efficiency and speed are of prime importance. Dan admits to having had some problems with men and machinery. "You can't afford to have your equipment break down when there are ten men on the payroll, and you can't afford to have the picking crew

spend their time at the local bar while the crops rot in the fields," cautions Dan.

He explained that he quit raising tomatoes because of unreliable help. Nevertheless, many human hands are needed on a vegetable farm. Only the carrots are harvested by machine. Every year the same crew of migrant workers comes up from Florida. Although Dan has a potato harvester, he prefers to have the picking and sorting done by hand. "The harvester bruises them too much", he explained. Concerned about having good quality vegetables, Hogeland also limits the use of his two 5-ton self-unloading bin wagons. He says that carrots can take the mechanization, but his other crops can't.

Except for carrots, which are contracted to Campbell's Soup Company, Hogeland's vegetables are sold on the open market. Cucumbers, for example, are washed, graded and treated with hot wax before shipment to the produce center in Philadelphia. There they are picked up by brokers who send them to Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas, and even overseas to units of our armed forces.

Dan has been active in farming all his life, but has been in Lebanon County for only six years. His former Bucks County farm now has houses and stores sprouting on it, rather than vegetables. Born and raised near Lewistown, Montana, Dan can make some good comparisons between farmlands. He has high praise for the productivity of soils in southeastern Pennsylvania,

and believes that those who seek new farmlands further west are kidding themselves. "The West offers a slower way of life," he comments, "but not better farming potential. Also, you don't have the markets."

The Hogelands' farm has a history dating back to the days of William Penn. Dan says the place had been owned by the Kalbach family for 165 years before he purchased it 6 years ago. The thick-walled stone house dates

back to the early 19th century and has been appropriately and attractively restored by the Hogeland family. A particular eye-catcher is the huge, original fireplace in the kitchen.

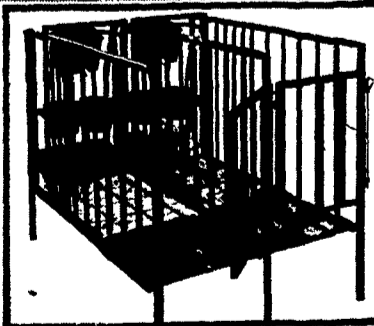
Dan and his wife, the former Millicent Kay, have four children. Danny the oldest, is a 1973 graduate of Eastern Lebanon County High School. He was vice-president of his FFA chapter last year and has also served as chaplain. He is

currently vice-president of the E.L.CO. 4-H chapter. Like his Dad, Danny sees a bright future for those who go into farming. Jerry, 15, and twins Bill and Bob, age 9, are also active in 4-H and on their father's farm.

The family is thankful for the opportunities that have come their way, and Dan believes strongly that the most efficient and most productive business on Earth is the American family farm.



Lebanon County vegetable grower Dan Hogeland, thinks "farming is better than ever". He's shown here recently sorting part of his current potato crop.



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