

## Investors sought for \$5 million cat ranch in Lancaster County

**Editor's Note:** Highly unreliable informants in Lancaster County provided this exclusive agribusiness information to the editor of Lancaster Farming.

**NINELIVES** — A group of businessmen and farmers are reportedly looking for investment opportunities near this northern Lancaster County community. A letter describes the business adventure as "a real sleeper in making a lot of money with very little investment." The text follows:

"A group of us are considering investing in a large cat ranch near Ninelives, Lancaster County, Pa. It is our purpose to start rather small, with about one million cats. Each cat averages about twelve kittens each year; skins can be sold for about 30 cents for the white ones and up to 50 cents for the black. This will give us 12 million cat skins per year to sell at an average price of around 42 cents, making our revenues about \$5 million.

This really averages out to \$20,000 per day — excluding Sundays and holidays.

A good cat man can skin about 50 cats per day at a wage of \$15.00 a day. It will take only 663 men to operate the ranch, so the net profit would be over \$10,000 per day.

Now, the cats would be fed on rats exclusively. Rats multiply four times as fast as cats. We would start a rat ranch adjacent to our cat farm. If we start with a million rats, we would have four rats per day for each cat. The rats will be fed on the carcasses of the cats that we skin.

This will give each rat a quarter of a cat. You can see by this that this business is a clean operation — self supporting and really automatic throughout. The cats will eat the rats and the rats will eat the cats and we will get the skins.

Let me know if you are interested; as you can imagine, I am rather particular who I want to get in on this, and want the fewest investors possible.

Eventually it is my hope to cross the cats with snakes, for they will skin themselves twice a year. This will save labor costs of skinning as well as give us two skins for one cat."

The signature at the bottom of the letter could not be read.

More reliable sources of information in Lancaster County assure us the whole story is a hoax.

## Life on the farm

The envelope I was fingering never contained good news, and this one, I knew, was worse than any ever received before. Just seeing it made me feel weak and I wished all this was only a dream.

But it wasn't. Printed in big, red, bold letters near the top of the message were the words: "SECOND WARNING."

What followed was a brief description as to why the warning was issued, and what the next course of action would be for the Baltimore City Health Department, (BCHD).

The next morning, shortly after the milking was done and the barn was being swept up, a light green Dodge pulled up around the barn. On the side of the door were the initials "B.C.H.D."

Watching the man step from the vehicle out of the corner of one eye, I prayed weakly and silently and pushed the broom to the center of the barn and out towards where the silos were. I continued my sweeping there, pushing the broom in short, brisk spurts and thinking only about the possible consequences of this visit by the health department inspector.

Feeling disgusted, discouraged and weak for the rest of the day, I worked carefully and slowly, all the while clinging to a little bit of hope for favorable results.

Forty-eight hours later, Tom Moore, fieldman for Maryland Cooperative Milk Producers, turned his light-blue Volkswagen on to the gravel driveway leading around to the barn. The sound of tires on loose stones alerted me and suddenly that weak, deflated feeling was with me again.

The news was good and bad, and in this case the bad prevailed. Samples of milk taken out of the bulk tank two days earlier by the BCHD official showed that the leucocyte count was high for the third consecutive time. The penalty for that was a three day suspension from the milk market.

A high leucocyte count is usually associated with udder inflammation and infection — mastitis — which troubles every dairyman in the country in varying degrees from time to time. In this case the problem had lingered for months at tolerable levels and suddenly spread to epidemic proportions.

According to a report published several months ago in the Holstein-Friesian World, at least 50 per cent of the nation's dairy cows become infected with mastitis, and of those that do, the National Mastitis Council says three out of four will be infected for 75 per cent of their milking lives.

The Council figures that the disease costs the dairyman \$160 per cow per year. That's a figure which is hard to comprehend because much of mastitis goes unnoticed. But when it strikes hard, and the results force the health department to take serious action — a three day suspension — the costs add up rapidly and in a way which isn't at all hard to comprehend.

At today's prices, the value of the milk lost during that episode of Life on the farm adds up to over \$800. That's only the value of the actual milk produced, not counting the lost potential in milk production and the added medical expenses encountered to fight mastitis.

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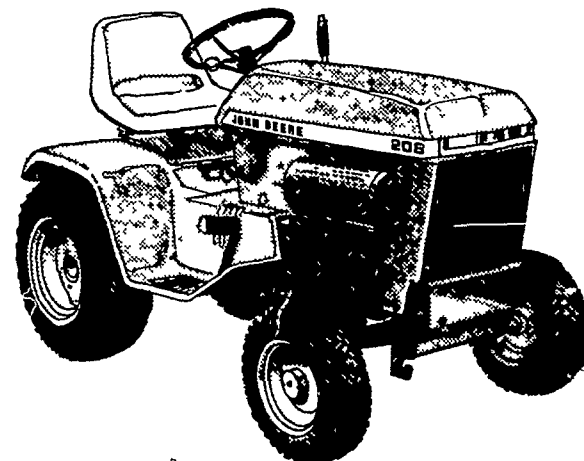
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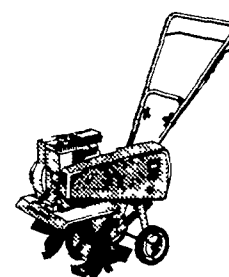
In the recent hog carcass contest sponsored by the Lancaster County Swine Producers Association, Cliff Charles produced the champion & 3rd place carcass hog. Dale Nolt produced the reserve champion carcass hog.

We Salute these young Swine producers in their accomplishments and their excellent management program of breeding & feeding quality hogs.



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