



Farm Talk

Jerry Webb

Small family farms may not be very profitable, but there sure are a lot of people who would like to have one.

I'm talking about young men and women who would like to operate their own farming units, perhaps starting as sharecropper or renter and eventually becoming owners. It's part of the great American dream, and even though it's infinitely more difficult to get started than it was a generation or two ago, it's still being done. Often enough to provide encouragement for some would-be farmers.

In the pre-World War II period a young man with a strong back and a good team of mules could get a start. He would become a sharecropper, work hard, build his reputation, save his money, and eventually move on to his own place.

Glenn Hawkins was that kind of a guy. He sharecropped my grandfather's farm in Missouri after the old man got too tired to manage it. That was back in the thirties. Glenn came to the place with a truckful of furniture and a team of horses.

Ten years later he made a down payment on the adjoining farm and retired a few years ago a fairly wealthy man. Not only had he been a successful farmer, but he happened to have purchased a farm on the edge of a small city that eventually became worth at least a million dollars.

Those kind of rags-to-riches opportunities don't come along every day, but they are out there.

For instance, a Clarion County, Pennsylvania farmer I heard about recently is looking for someone to lease his place. He has a heart condition and no obvious heirs to the farm business. So he's willing to lease to the right young family 136 acres that he called the best farm in the county.

It also includes the option to lease an additional 300 acres that belong to a coal company. The place is set up to handle dairy cattle and includes everything but the cattle. And the owner is even willing to defer lease payments for six months to a year to help a young farm family get started.

What more could a potential farmer ask for?

Really, what this fellow is saying is that he wants to step down from his active role and help a young family get started. He wants to keep the land, at least for the time being, and also enjoy some income from it.

The lessor would still need equipment, livestock and operating capital. That's a lot in today's farm economy, but it's not insurmountable, especially to someone who's already in a family farm business and looking to go it

alone. Or to a young family that's been working for someone else for wages and who has the ability and perhaps some savings.

That's just one opportunity of many that must be out there. I know that every farmer approaching retirement age doesn't have an heir apparent to the farming business.

The right young man or woman with potential should be able to find these opportunities.

Like everything else, farm financing is difficult to obtain, but that's not to say that the business of farming has to be handed over to the conglomerates or the Wall Street investors. Family farms can continue if their operators or potential operators are hardworking, trustworthy, and a little creative in their approach to getting started or to hanging in there.

I see stories all the time in the farm press about farmers

who are making it on a few acres. They're diversifying, intensifying, double and triple cropping, combining hogs and strawberries, chickens and fruit trees, and all sorts of strange combinations to get the maximum dollar return from their investment.

The potential farmer who wants to grow corn and soybeans is probably looking at the most difficult way of all to get into farming. He's looking to start at a level that requires an investment and a risk far beyond most young people's abilities.

If the desire to farm is limited only to corn and soybeans, then I would say the young man or woman seeking entry is in for a difficult time. But if that beginner is willing to do some other things like dairy cows, fresh vegetables, pick-your-own fruit trees, hogs, or maybe even sheep, then there is some hope for getting started and some chance of success.

It used to be that almost all farmers diversified. That old saying about all the eggs in one basket applied particularly well to farmers.

Those who weathered the difficult years of the thirties were very reluctant to limit their activities to one or two crops. Instead, they had some of everything. So when beef prices were down, maybe the hogs would cover their loss. Or when wheat was in surplus, corn would pay the bills.

Some farmers stick doggedly to that philosophy, claiming even yet that

diversity has allowed them to grow and prosper.

Other farmers have opted for specialization. On the Delmarva peninsula, that has meant corn and soybeans and lots of acres, with good production and price years more than making up for the bad ones. That's a higher risk business with more capital requirements.

Some farmers who made big expansion moves in the early to mid-seventies know very well the lesson from that kind of optimism. What looked like the beginning of a great agricultural boom triggered expansion and caused record farm machinery sales. But that boom soon turned to bust, and those same farmers found themselves riding those new tractors to

Dove season to open September 1

LANCASTER — Pennsylvania's 1980-81 hunting seasons will get underway on Monday, September 1, when hunters get their first chance at doves, gallinules and two species of rails.

Dove hunting starts at 12 o'clock noon and concludes at sunset daily, while shooting hours for sora and Virginia rails and gallinules runs from one-half hour before sunrise until sunset.

Hunters will again be able to take twelve doves daily this year, with a maximum possession limit of 24 after the first day of the season. The daily limit on gallinules is fifteen, with no more than 30 in possession after the first day of the season.

Both the daily bag and possession limits at any time on sora and Virginia rails are 25, singly or in the aggregate of the two species. This year there will again be no open season on king and clapper rails in Pennsylvania.

Hunters are not permitted to use shot size larger than BB for taking migratory game birds, under Game Commission regulations.

Washington in an effort to get them paid for.

A farmer need look no further than recent livestock prices to see the advantage of diversified production.

MASTER-MATIC SILO SYSTEM

FICKES SILO COMPANY, INC.
NEWVILLE, PENNA. 17241

Please send information on Fickes Master-Matic Silo System and Silage Master Silos

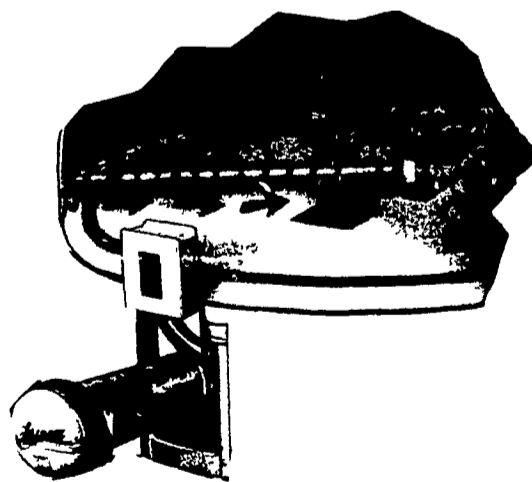
POW-R-SWEEP
auger unloads high moisture grain that won't free flow!
(even ground ear corn)

Laidig bottom unloaders do just that! Unload grain from center to wall all round the base. POW-R-SWEEP auger makes a 360° cycle. Prevents bridging, reduces spoilage and frozen masses. Ruggedly built for low maintenance. Wide choice of model sizes. Adjustable unloading speeds. Dependable parts and service if and when needed.



Easy to install in new or standing sealed silos

Laidig 98's "slashing knives" rip out forage for sure, no-stall unloading



Tough tungsten tipped knives slash thru tangled or frozen forage to move out the volume you set on controls. Floor-track gear drive at outer end of auger means positive, no-stall unloading. Laidig design and ruggedness prevents many breakdowns and repair costs often associated with other bottom unloaders. Insist on a Laidig.



FICKES SILO COMPANY, INC.



P.O. Box 7
Newville, PA 17241
Phone: 717-776-3129



Small in size... big in versatility

International 4125 Skid-Steer Loader is compact and maneuverable, the 4125 can do jobs and get into tight places that used to be reserved for your scoop shovel and pitch fork. Once you get used to having the 4125 Skid-Steer Loader, you'll wonder how you ever got along without it.

- 36" working width
- Turns within its own tracks
- T-bar control levers for speed and steering
- 18 hp gasoline engine
- 1300 lb. tipping load, 78" dump height



Finance plans available

SUPER SPECIAL
1 ONLY - 4125 SKID LOADER
Demo. **\$5000**

Special 1 Used 4120 SKID LOADER 120 hrs. \$2895	RED POWER SHOWDOWN DAYS Thursday, Sept. 4 See Page B-44
---	--

COPE & WEAVER CO.
New Providence, Pa. 17560
717-786-7351

Please Send me information on Fickes Silos
 Please send me literature on Silo-Matic Feeding Systems
 Please send me literature on Bottom Unloader Systems

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
PHONE _____