

# Farm Talk

Jerry Webb

Successful Farming magazine recently surveyed a group of farmers that it classifies as "young tigers" to see how they feel about farming.

Farmers in this category were rated as outstanding young farmers through awards they had received or through recommendations of extension agents. They were between 25 and 35 years old, and they were considered to have reputations as leaders in agriculture.

Results in the survey show that the young tigers share problems with farmers in general. They are extremely proud they are farmers and they consider themselves among the best. They consider farming to be a tremendous challenge that requires great amounts of planning and hard work, and yet most of them still consider themselves to be exceedingly independent.

Looking over the survey questions and responses, I got the feeling that most of these up and coming young farmers still see a bright future in agriculture, despite some current problems. They actually thrive on the challenges and diversities of agriculture.

While most said they feel uncomfortable when making decisions, they seem to be saying that when decision time comes, they're up to it. Among other things, this group of farmers plan to expand farming activities significantly in the next 10 years, will use more farm chemicals, more computer technology, and more specialized agricultural advisors and consultants.

When it comes to farm management, the young tigers may have a slightly different attitude than some of their older counterparts. Most said they never expand a farm enterprise without first estimating through regular accounting techniques the costs and returns of that activity.

Three-fourths of them think borrowing money is one of the keys to success,

and two-thirds believe that farm wives will become more important in the decision making and management process over the next ten years.

Where do these young tigers get their information? Three-fourths agreed that it is highly important to attend farm organization meetings, extension service classes, and other organized efforts.

The like field days, machinery demonstrations, and management seminars, and they find talking over their farming practices with other farmers to be most helpful. Almost all of them agreed that national and international news is important to their own farming operation, but they don't seem to rely too heavily on farm product information supplied by salesmen or others who have something to gain in the process.

This group of young farmers, as business oriented as they may be, still believe in community involvement. Two-thirds said local community service organizations, such as Jaycees and Lions, are extremely important to them. They also feel a need for involvement in church, school, charities, and other local community groups. Most of them still think it's important to participate in farm organizations.

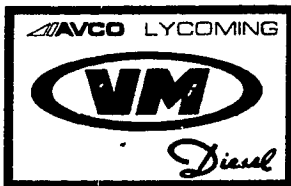
Successful Farming,

through its survey, is simply pointing out the attitudes of a group of young farmers who are up and coming leaders in their communities. They don't have all the answers—perhaps they don't even have the best answers.

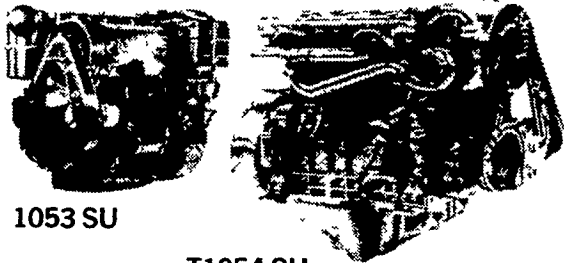
But this is an age group that is going to be more important in the years ahead, and their thoughts and philosophies may become more widespread during the next decade. I'm not sure you can ask the youngest farmer in the community how he's going to farm and then expect other farmers, who are probably wiser and more experienced, to follow suit. But when you ask enough of these young tigers you do see some trends—for instance, the one about the wife's participation in management decision.

Had you asked that question to young farmers 30 years ago, you would have gotten a completely different answer. Maybe if you asked older farmers now, you would get a different response. But those young farmers, who are considered by many to be outstanding in farming in their communities, are talking with their spouses about the future of the farm business.

To me that is a significant change in the direction of agriculture in the future.



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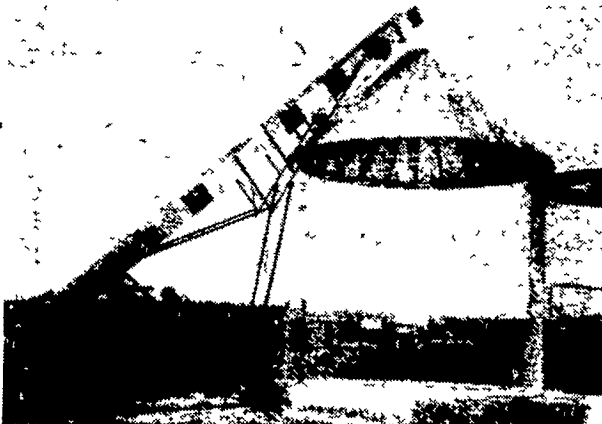
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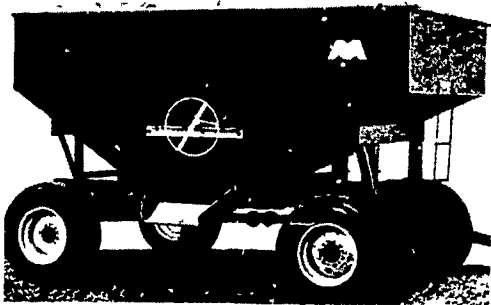


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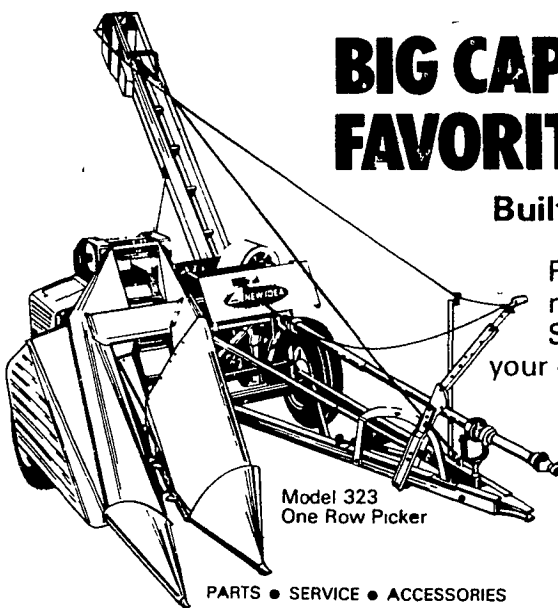


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