



Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

Help a young farmer, junk your baler

I hear it all the time — at meetings, from friends, and frustrated young farmers. It seems to be universally accepted that it is next to impossible for a young couple or person to get started in farming from scratch these days.

I would agree that it's difficult. But impossible? ... Never.

I don't go along with the claims that the only way a young farmer can get started in today's economy is by inheriting a farm or marrying the farmer's son or daughter. Granted, that may be the easiest way, but it's also the most morbid and the worst possible reason for getting married.

With today's high costs, it takes considerably more money to become a tiller of the land. There's little margin for error. But is that so different than when farmers were getting started in the early 1900s? By comparison, the prices paid for farms back then were cheap, and so were the prices paid for farm products, too.

Some statisticians say that it's proportionally tougher to become a farmer in the 1980s, but I contend that where there's a will, there also is a way.

Rather than going into farming feet first, with no other source of income, more farmers are getting their feet wet in this high-risk industry by supporting their mistakes with off-farm incomes.

These "part-time" farmers (which I suspect work twice as hard at two jobs than some full-time farmers do at one) have been the scapegoat for much criticism recently. During the past two years, they've been blamed for everything from a corn and soybean surplus to the oversupply of pigs.

Even the established farmers had to start somewhere — and these "future" farmers must too. They've got to start small — acreage and operation-wise — to keep their heads financially above water. So their overall impact on the farm market is relatively insignificant.

But starting small also carries some risk for these part-time farmers when it comes time to file their annual income tax forms. Unfortunately, the Internal Revenue Service tends to look skeptically at new farmers, preferring to believe the farm is a tax shelter rather than a growing business.

Maybe U.S. Agriculture Secretary John Block could have a talk with the IRS and convince them to give young farmers a break — he might have better luck there than he did with Farmers Home Administration.

If everyone is as concerned about the ability of young people to get started in farming as they say they are, then I suggest that farmers organize a "graveyard" for old farm machinery (perhaps a project for the USDA's small farmer committees). That's where all the antiquated, worn-out implements would be laid to rest.

Then, when young farmers are in need of a helping hand, a visit to the "ag cemetery" will arm them (free of charge) with the parts they need to carry on.

Let's face it, almost everybody who starts farming in the 1980s has little choice but to drive second-hand tractors that probably date back to the early 1950s. The balers they're using to gather their livestock's winter food supply are most like that of the 1940's vintage.

What happens when parts to these "collector items" go bad? Does the young farmer junk the entire machine for lack of one minor part?

Unfortunately, young farmers readily find themselves at the mercy of equipment dealers who would rather sell them a brand, spanking new baler than the parts for older models. In some cases, the machinery manufacturer shares these same sentiments and labels the oldtimers obsolete — discarding the part molds and striking them from their books.

There should be an understood rule that no piece of farm machinery can be stamped "outdated" until the last one bites the dust, or until all the parts are stripped from the graveyard "mechanical corpses."

Want to really welcome a young farmer into agriculture? Then remember the somewhat-revised words Emma Lazarus (the woman who wrote the sonnet engraved on the Statue of Liberty) could have written for young farmers: Give us your "tired" rake, your baler "poor," Send the "wretched refuse" you want no more,

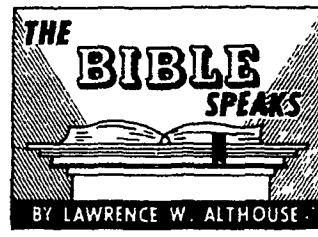
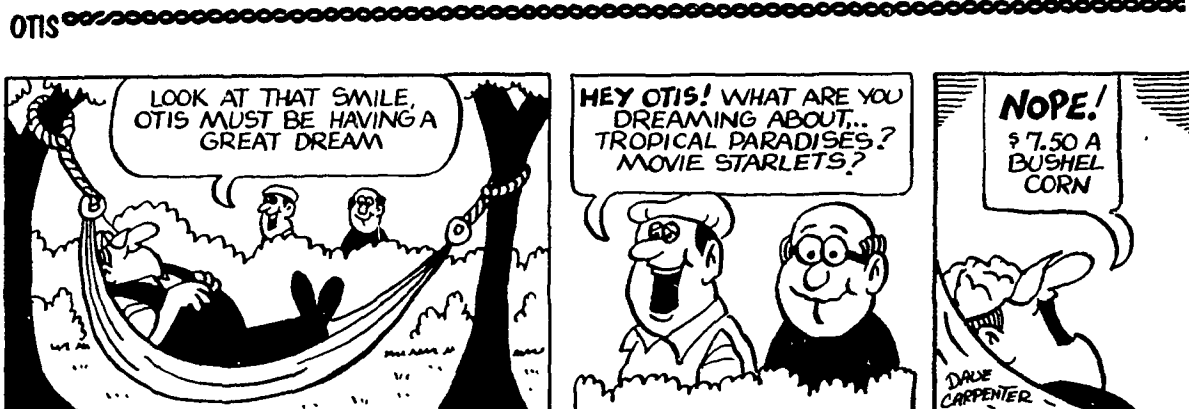
The "homeless" harrow, or "tempest-tost" tedder

We "list our lamps" inside empty barn "doors."

Farm Calendar

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| Saturday, Aug. 14
South Central Pa. Black & White Championship Show, 10 a.m., Carlisle Fairgrounds. | Saturday
Howard County Fair, Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, Md., continues through Saturday. | Royaltown, Dauphin County, continues through Saturday.
Montour DeLong Community Fair, Washingtonville, continues through Saturday. |
| Sunday, Aug. 15
Manor Young Farmer, FFA Picnic, 4 p.m., Lampeter Fairgrounds. | Huntingdon County Fair, continues through Saturday. | Sewickley Twp. Community Fair, West Newton, Westmoreland County, continues through Saturday. |
| N.J. Polled Hereford Assn. Field Day, 1 p.m., Dunwalke Farm, Far Hill, N.J. | Washington County Fair, continues through Saturday. | Tuesday, Aug. 17
Montgomery County Holstein Show, 4-H Center, Lansdale. |
| McKean County Fair, Smethport, continues through Saturday. | McKean County Fair, continues through Friday. | Cochran Community Fair, |
| Franklin County Fair, Chambersburg, continues through Saturday. | Middletown Community Fair, | |

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A CHURCH IN THEIR HOUSE

August 15, 1982

Background Scripture: Acts 18; Romans 16:3-5a; 1 Corinthians 16:19.

Devotional Reading: Galatians 6:1-10.

I've never had either a Priscilla or Acquila in any congregation I've ever served. Nevertheless, I feel as though I know these two people very well, for I have had many parishioners who were their spiritual successors.

These have been people who have been largely unsung, yet very, very vital to the life of the congregation. They have been the kind of people that no church can long survive without. They may not be the most wealthy or well-known, but they are the kind whose contribution to the life of the church goes considerably above the beyond what may be regarded as "par for the course."

He Stayed With Them

If Friscilla and Acquila had been totally unable ever to teach one word of the gospel, their contribution to the church at Corinth would be no less vital. Although they had already known the pangs of persecution in Italy, from whence they had recently fled as Jews, when Paul arrived in Corinth, they opened their home to Paul and hosted him in it throughout his ministry in Corinth.

"And he went to see them," the writer of Acts says, "and because

he was of the same trade he stayed with them, and they worked, for by trade they were tentmakers." Priscilla and Acquila may not have been able to contribute much money to the Corinthians church, but bravely and unselfishly they put their home at his disposal so that Paul could pursue the gospel in this city that needed it so badly.

By contrast, today we are often reluctant to let the ministry of the gospel impinge upon our private lives. We go to church for our religious observance, but we are not anxious to open our homes for the Church. We don't want it to interfere with the routines of our lives.

Left In Ephesus

When, at last, Paul determined that the time had come to move on from Corinth and return to Asia Minor, despite their well-established tent-making enterprise in Corinth, they gave up everything to go along with Paul. It is a surprise, then, that we learn in Acts 18:19 that "they came to Ephesus, and he left them there." They stayed on in Ephesus while Paul moved on. Here were two people who were willing to take great risks for the sake of the gospel. Whatever they had, they were willing to invest it in the work of the Lord.

Paul later writes of them, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life..." Yet, in a way, equally as impressive was their willingness to risk controversy in helping Apollo to grow further and deeper in his Christian commitment. Instead of being condemning him because his gospel was somewhat incomplete, they invested their own time in efforts in helping him perfect his own ministry. No wonder Paul and all the Gentile churches were so grateful for these two people.

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent
Phone 717-394-6851



To Plan For Fall Wheat Seeding

The time is fast approaching for our wheat growers to be making plans for their fall seeding. Some of the local wheat may not be satisfactory due to the wheat scab found in many fields this year. If you use local wheat, be sure you know the source and have it cleaned and treated for disease. Also, if you had a scab problem this year, do not plant seed in the same field this fall; the fungus can remain in the soil.

Certified seed would be the best route to take if you experienced any problem with scab or powdery mildew this year. The extra cost for certified seed is well worth it to help insure a good crop next summer.

Plan your seed needs now so you are ready to plant when the conditions are right.

To Check Silo Size

How much silage or high moisture corn must you feed each day to keep ahead of spoilage in the silo? The amount will vary considerably from cold days to hot days. Can your herd consume this much feed? The answer to these questions depends on the diameter of the silo, how well the feed was processed and packed when it was ensiled, herd size, feeding program, season of the year and type of storage structure, according to our Dairy Agent, Glenn Shirk.

If you are ensiling high moisture ground shelled corn in an upright conventional silo, you'll need to remove at least 2 inches of grain a day in warmer weather to keep

ahead of spoilage. For a 14-foot silo, that is 1400 pounds or more of corn per day — 24 pounds per cow in a 60-cow herd. If you're ensiling whole shelled corn or ground ear corn, the material does not pack as tightly, and up to 4 inches may have been removed daily. Four inches of this material in a 14-foot silo is 2,456 pounds — 41 pounds per cow in a 60-cow herd!

In the latter situation, a 10-foot silo would require 21 pounds of corn be fed. If a limited oxygen storage unit is used, sizing is less critical. Feeding 2 inches of corn per day year-round would require a silo 61 feet tall; 4 inches per day requires a total of 122 feet of silo height.

To Stay In Touch With Creditors

Maintaining a close relationship with your creditors and telling them about your financial status won't likely erase your debts, but will ease your creditors' mind. Creditors get concerned when someone owes a sizeable bill and they never see him. By staying close to your creditors, you may be able to write another payment plan. Some bankers will renegotiate the payment schedule and add a year or two, thus cutting down the monthly or annual payments.

You may also need to visit about refinancing. In most cases you will be paying a higher rate of interest and it won't do you that much good, but it still deserves a look. Sometimes by refinancing through another source you can often obtain a lower rate of interest. It's