

**OUR READERS WRITE,
AND OTHER OPINIONS**

(Continued from Page A10)

timers work. Many a time I've wondered how come I'm doing all this manual labor when my full-time farmer neighbor is riding around in his air-conditioned, heated, AM-FM radio'ed, year-old tractor. It even has ash trays; and I reckon when they get full, he'll trade. Not that I haven't looked for a full-time farm opportunity (dairy, pigs, poultry, etc.) but the numbers just don't seem to add up. Recently I looked at a \$250,000 poultry operation with an old home where the ceiling plaster had fallen and is falling. Roughly I figured after mortgage payments I would be working seven days a week for about \$20 a day. How can a fellow

ever afford an air-conditioned tractor on that kind of income?

In closing, I would like to point out that so many times articles on over-night success, big-time farmers end with the statement like "when Fred was 21, he took over the family farm." Well, when I was 21, I was saving for a down payment on any kind of little farm I could afford. And when I was 21 I could not understand why most professional football players retired before they were 36.

Now I'm 36. The farm is paid for, and I understand why most professional football players retire before they are 36.

D.J. Francis
Westminster, Md.

The research question

Jerry Webb's column (Ag research gets bad press, Farm Talk, Aug. 14 issue) misses the point on research. Two questions should be asked in terms of research, school lunch programs, or whatever government program is being proposed: "At whose expense?" and "Who decides?"

We should all remember that the money for these research projects come from the tax payers. The cotton farmer doesn't want the same research projects as the beef farmer. The beef farmer doesn't want identical research projects as the dairy farmer or the mushroom farmer. City people would like research projects quite different than those projects set up for agriculture. Yet the city residents must pay for agricultural research.

Don't say that the city residents gain by agricultural research. Who decides whether the tax payer's

money (labor) is spent for safer cars, subsidizing transportation (with the interstate highway system or waterways subsidy) or for agricultural research.

If government must subsidize research, let it follow the idea suggested by James F. Hudson in a Nov. 1980 article in INC. magazine.

Hudson said, "...Instead of bestowing grants for study and research, the government should post prizes. Prizes for finishing, not for thinking about finishing. Prizes for getting something to work — for building it, testing it, breaking it, swearing at it, and fixing it till it runs.

"...Prizes for successful technology would go straight into the pockets of the inventors and investors, appealing shamelessly to their prurient desire to get rich. Government would withdraw most of its funding for R&D (Research & Development). If the prize for actual completion of a project

were fat enough, industry would put up the R&D money. And it would be a lot more selective about selecting the ideas that are most likely to work (that is, the ideas that are worthwhile) because if the idea didn't work, industry would take the loss.

"...How different government R&D is from commercial research. In commercial work there is a single test of performance — does the result sell? If it does, the R&D effort wins its prize: the profits. In government research, the only test of performance is the ability to get grants.

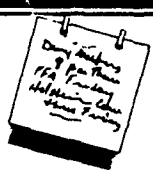
"Once you're funded to study, you get the same amount of money whether you solve the problem or not. You have to meet rigid program requirements, surrendering the freewheeling laboratory latitude to test things on instinct. But above all, you fear a breakthrough more than a failure. If you make a breakthrough, there's no need for further study, so your grants stop."

There are only three legitimate functions of a limited government, such as we started out with in 1776: a police force to protect our individual property; national defense; and a system of justice. R&D (with the possible exception of national defense) cannot be counted among the three legitimate functions of government.

The tax payers must take the lead in educating the bureaucrats, the politicians, the communications media, that it is fruits of their labor that are paying for these boondoggling projects. The tax payers must stand up, fight back, and let the bureaucrats and the politicians know that enough is enough. The taxpayers are paying the bills — they should make the choices.

T. Martoni
Exton

Farm Calendar



Saturday, Aug. 28

Fourth Performance Tested Ram Lamb and International Ewe Sale, 12:30 p.m., Meat Animal Evaluation Center, State College.
Maryland State Fair, Timonium Fairgrounds, continues through Monday.
Forestry Safety Field Day, McKean County Fairgrounds, Smethport.

Sunday, Aug. 29

York County Sheep & Wool Producers picnic, York County Fiddler's Grounds, 1 p.m.

Monday, Aug. 30

Indiana Country Fair, continues through Saturday.
Wattsburg Fair, Erie County, continues through Saturday.
Mon Valley 4-H District Show, Washington, 4 p.m.

Tuesday, Aug. 31

Allentown Fair, Fairgrounds, continues through Monday.
Greene-Dreher-Sterling Fair, Newfoundland, continues through Monday.
Sullivan County Fair, Forksville, continues through Saturday.

McKean County Crops Field Day, Althouse farm, Fort Allegheny.

National Association of Animal Breeders 36th annual convention, Lancaster Host Farm, begins at noon and continues until noon Friday.

Wednesday, Sept. 1

Lancaster County Conservation District, 7:30 p.m., Farm & Home Center.

Big Knob Grange Fair, Beaver County, continues through Saturday.

Elizabethtown Fair, continues through Monday.
Great Stoneboro Fair, Mercer County, continues through Monday.

Thursday, Sept. 2

Pasture-Livestock Field Day, noon, Southwestern Field Research Lab, near Rector.

New Jersey State Agriculture Fair, Hunterdon County Fairgrounds, continues through Sept. 12.

Friday, Sept. 3

Central 4-H District Dairy Show, 9 a.m., Beaver Springs.

Saturday, Sept. 4

Juniata County Fair, Fort Royal, continues through next Saturday.

Southwest District 4-H Dairy Show, 9 a.m., Dayton.

Northwest 4-H District Dairy Show, 9 a.m., Meadville.

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