



Brockett's Ag Advice

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Production is a factor

For years we in Extension have been guilty of praising, promoting, and rewarding production levels. I am using the word guilty with reservation because high production levels are a necessary factor in bottom line profits. However high production without good cost control can be just as unprofitable as low production. Of what value is a 17,000 pound herd average if it costs \$15 per hundred to produce milk selling for \$13. Or how can a 150-bushel corn yield be profitable if the cost per bushel is \$3 with a \$2.50 corn market price.

Constantly asking the government for increasing price supports is not a solution.

I believe that we (including farmers) should be more aware of costs and returns. If DHIA used standardized feed costs based on forage test analysis and market prices, the return above feed cost would be a far more indicative figure as a measure of profit. If actual returns per acre were the criteria for winning a corn or alfalfa contest.

Production - Profits

High production per unit is a factor in the profitability of a farm.

It would not take very many farm analyses to convince any one of this. The real question is how high should it be to reach the maximum profit level using available resources under your management? This will vary from one farm to another due to a number of environmental factors as well as to the farmers ability to make sound decisions.

For dairy operations a very critical factor in economical production levels is forage quality. This effects the total ration feed conversion into milk. For hog operations the genetic level of the animal plus the ability of the farmer to feed enough without wasting feed is a deciding factor. For crop programs, knowledge of soils, well documented records, soil tests, and a continual

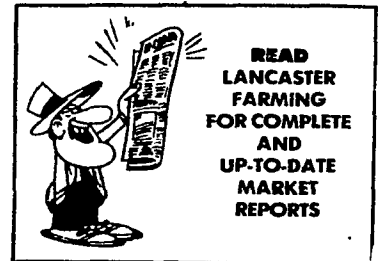
monitoring of crop needs (pest problems, mineral deficiencies, etc) is essential.

The most important tool of all is a complete set of good records that are used. A farm manager must decide (1) what is the most economical production level for my operation, (2) what are my costs and returns at that level of production and (3) what management tools do I have available to do the best possible job.

Survive to Prosper

Perhaps the connotation of the Journal's question "are there too many farmers" is right. Perhaps a lot of farmers will be going out of business before things turn around. Will you survive to prosper or go out of business to survive? To some extent it is your choice. The

decisions you make in the next three years will help you move in one direction or the other. Remember love of farm life and willingness to work hard are rather minor considerations in the success of a modern farm business.



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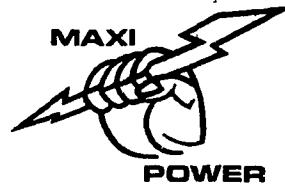


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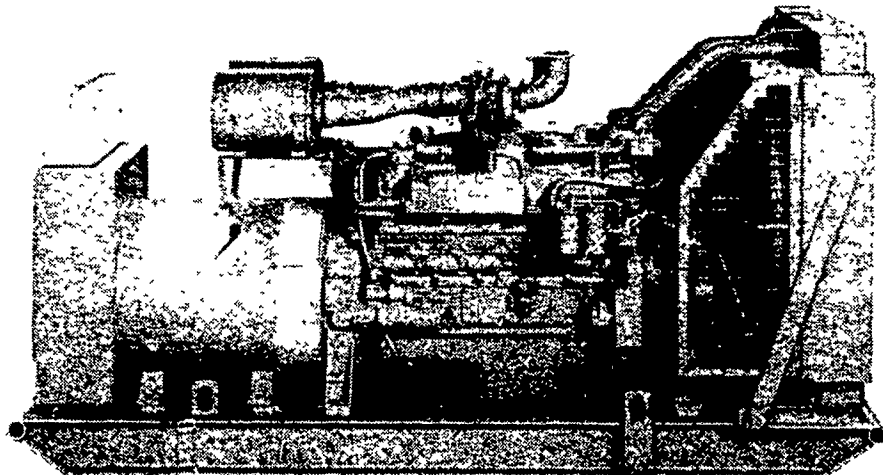


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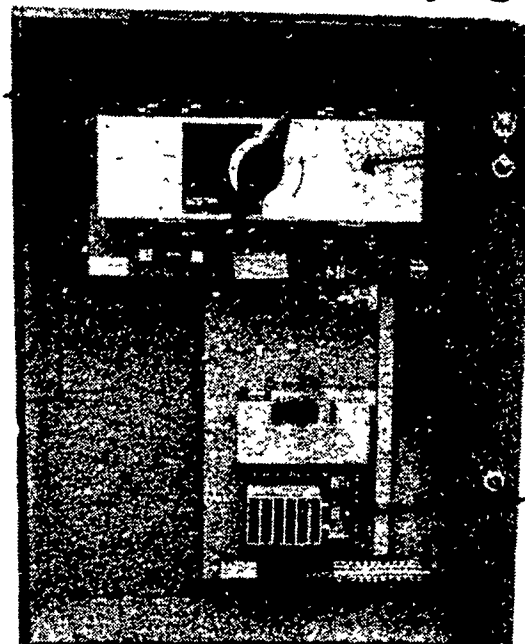
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