



## Brockett's Ag Advice

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**Farming—A Troubled Business**  
You've heard it all before so I'm not telling you anything new. Squeezed profit margins, adverse weather, and indifferent political climate, unfair competition from overseas, tight and expensive credit, extremely high capital costs in relation to income, and problem on top of problems, surpluses. In the 25 plus years I have been an extension agent, I've seen this cycle repeated several times. However I don't ever remember a period of time when the outlook has been so rough as it appears to be now. This is what I wrote in 1982. Now in 1983, all I can do is repeat it because 1983 appears more bleak especially for the dairymen than 1982. There a few bright spots for other farmers. The PIK program has increased the price of corn at least on a temporary basis.

**Squeezed Profit Margins**  
This is the worst culprit because

### Ag Showcase Day featured event

FAIR HILL, Md. — Scheduled as the main agricultural event at the 30th annual Cecil County Fair next week is the Ag Showcase Day. Complete with educational sessions and demonstrations, publicity director Al Miller said Ag Showcase Day promises to be an outstanding event. Demonstrations on corn silage harvesting, ag bagging, no-till grain seeding, and authentic conventional tillage plots begin Tuesday at 10 a.m. and run until 3 p.m. "The entire fair board is particularly excited about this day,"

it both causes and is caused by some of the other problems. In addition, it takes a lot of the joy out of farming. Who wants to work for a negative return except a self confirmed masochist?

**Records**  
I've said it before and will continue saying it. Your only salvation is records so you know what it is costing you to produce an item and why. For example: I have worked with several hundred dairymen in the past years. Some are producing milk for less than ten dollars per hundred. Others are eroding their capital base because it is costing them as much as twenty dollars per hundred. A dairymen will not be able to survive in business today unless he can get that cost down too the milk price. Example two: I have been working with some pork producers since changing my area in 1980.

I'm convinced that most pork producers know very little about the financial end of their business.

Miller said. "It is our hope that events such as this not only inform farmers but bring them together."

Other events at the fair, which begins Monday and ends Saturday at Fair Hill, Md., include a demolition derby, tractor pull, battle of the rock 'n roll bands, Oscars' amusements, dairy and livestock shows as well as other activities.

New events, Miller said, are shows by the Johnson Family Circus, a battle of the country and western bands, a go-cart race, and a slave driving contest with local farmers participating.

So far, no pork producers seem to really know how much it was costing them to produce a pound of pork. Very few of them knew their feed conversion figure. Most guessed at the number of pigs weaned per sow per year but get could document or even come close to reconciling that figure with animals sold.

**Analysis**  
Just as important as keeping records is using them. I have worked with DHIA in the past, so the lack of the use of a farm analysis should not surprise me. Any farmer who pays for a farm

analysis or business analysis is entitled to an explanation of that analysis. Every farmer who does not get an analysis should get one regardless of the type of record system being used. There are some analysis packages available if you really want one.

If you have an accountant, county agent, or other farm advisor who has sold you on the value of an analysis, you have an advantage over other farmers. You, at least, have something from which to start. If you do not understand how to use the analysis or it has crazy figures, it is up to you

to contact who ever helped you with your analysis and ask for help in understanding or correcting it. You advisor can not be a mind reader. Perhaps by working together, you and your advisor can (1) learn how to use the results of the analysis to increase profits or reduce losses, (2) learn how to do a better job collecting data that is fed into the analysis, (3) get a more meaningful analysis, and (4) survive in this tremendous business of farming. Remember your farm advisor has as much at stake as you - he or she can only survive if you survive.

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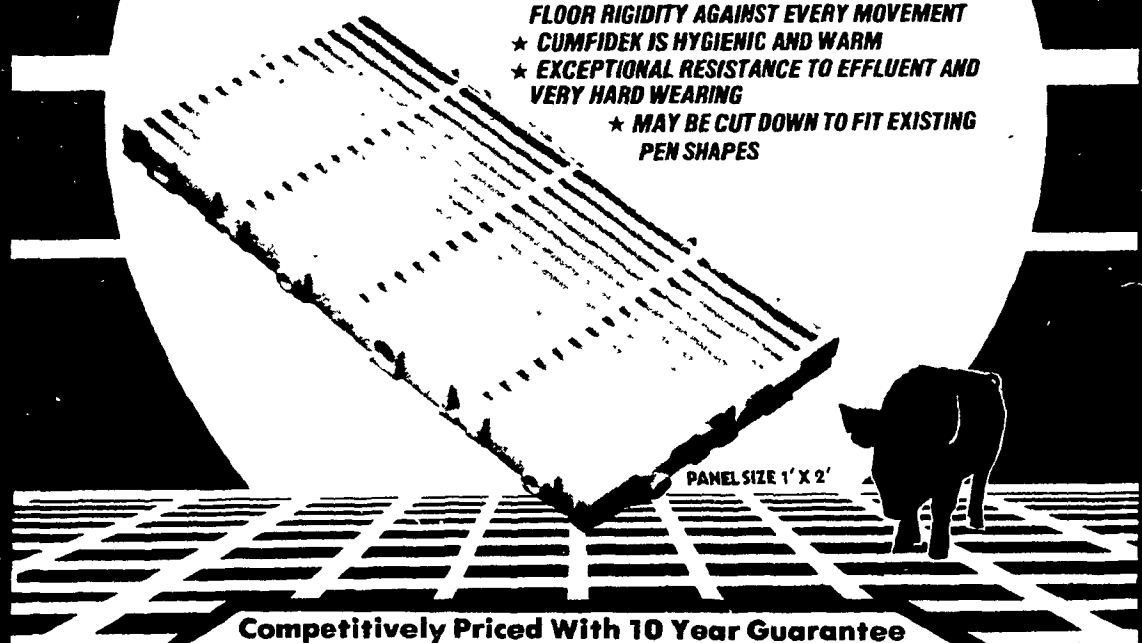


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