



Brockett's Ag Advice

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Anyone using feed for livestock is going to shudder at the feed price-milk or meat price ratio this winter. It will probably be the poorest relationship we have seen since 1973-74. The tendency will be to "economize". I put that in quotes because sometimes economizing is a more genteel way of saying "starving".

Let's look at some ideas of true economizing.

1. Practice a stringent culling program. For dairymen that would include cows with a long dry period, a history of mastitis, breeding problems, health or physical problems as well as low production. A predicted 305 day

production level under 15,000 for a cow over 4 years of age and under 13,000 for heifers would be low production.

2. Use DHIA for management purposes not as a brag stat. Let someone else top the DHIA list for the next 3 years. How many dollars does being top dog make you? (Now quit lying to yourself - be realistic).

3. Use forage testing and a good feeding program as a guide not an absolute. My suggestion for dairymen: feed cows a forage ration that would give them at least 2 pounds of hay equivalent per 100 pounds of body weight (a good forage test tells you the hay

Fish dust patty

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slow, and only after six months does any measurable flavor loss occur.

Studies of granulated fish muscle using chemical and sensory procedures showed no serious flavor problem, even under poor recovery conditions. To monitor flavor and texture changes during storage, a fish patty test product was battered, breaded, and deep fried. Results showed GFM, whole muscle, and minced fish patties falling in the middle of the acceptable flavor range, with whole fillet patties at the top.

Fish patties made from 70 percent granulated fish muscle and 30 percent whole muscle were tested by a trained sensory panel at Penn State and found acceptable for both flavor and texture.

Granulated fish muscle has good storage capabilities, MacNeil reported. In fact, while the texture of minced fish declines during storage, the texture of GFM does not. Evidence suggests a "firming up" of GFM while in storage. However, its fine structure will limit its uses to fish products such as patties, sticks and sauces.

equivalent of all forages). Then feed cows in the first 90 to 120 days of lactation as much grain as they will handle. After that put them on a much more restricted ration (1 to 5 for cows and 1 to 4 for heifers). After 200 days cut this even further. Of course you will have to offer some extra forage as you reduce gain. **WARNING:** make sure protein and mineral levels are kept in balance with energy.

4. Analyze your farm business looking for soft spots that could be improved. Many times these soft spots could be improved at no cost except to a person's pride. This is

no time to worry about pride - remember that pride goes before a fall. We will lose a lot of farmers in the next few years. Many of them will fail because of a misplaced pride - "no one can tell me how to farm because I have been farming all my life".

Keep the best records you have ever kept in your life. However don't wait until these records are complete to do a business analysis. Do that with 1983 records whether they are good or bad. Your analysis can help you see where to improve records as well as your management.

6. Get soil tests for every field. If

available cash is not enough to fully lime and fertilize each field, set some priorities. Put the full amount on new seedings and your best corn fields. Keep some old hay stands for one more year using lime and possibly nitrogen on them. One important point is to keep nutrients in balance even if at a reduced rate.

7. Set up a spending budget based on what you will need. Then try to use it.

Set up a family spending budget based on what you will need. Then stick to it. Difficult? Yes but this is a matter of survival in the farming business. Can you do it?

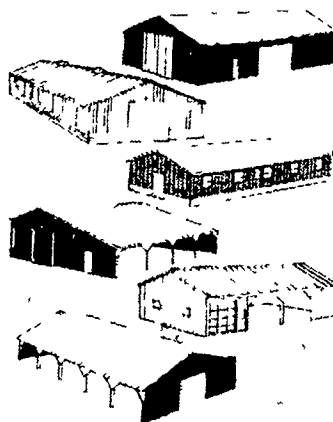
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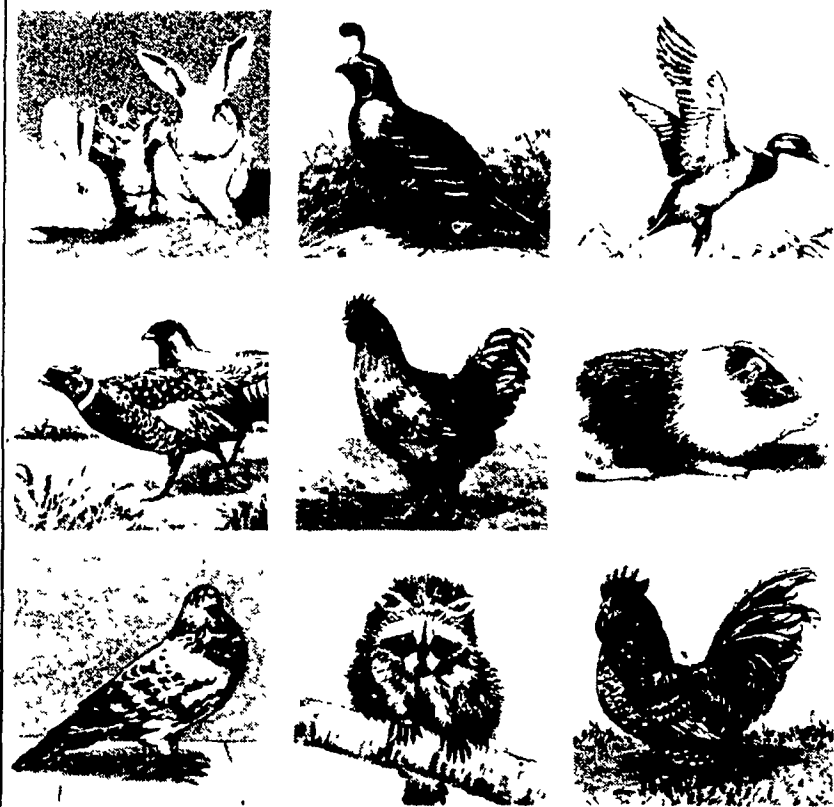
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