

Farming with river at door

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scathed. No structural damage resulted to building, just another layer of the gummy mud. Herd Production did drop, simply because of the relocation again.

A localized flood in '79 again backed water in behind the island, which Young estimates has lengthened by about a third of a mile since his childhood. Silting from the river piles up on the island's end, creating this slow growth that may add to the water directed across the farmland.

That high water crested at 25 feet, partially inundating the feed room, but creating no major damage to property.

Rains and ice

This past February brought another recurrence of the watery nightmare, with heavy rains and wintry ice mixing to a treacherous combination.

At 2 a.m., heeding warnings of the rapidly rising river, Youngs herded cattle through the parlor for a hasty milking, then onto trucks for the short ride to the upper floor of the "safety" barn.

Fighting back against this almost insurmountable enemy, Youngs had recently refloored the entire second floor of the barn, insurance against whenever the cattle had to make the move.

Young pulled the milker off the last cow through the parlor as water was lapping knee high around them in the barn. They stayed, high and dry this time, for two days before the waters receded enough to allow return of the herd.

In a routine honed by weary repetition, once again they mucked out stalls, rebedded with sawdust from a friend's stockpile, and hauled feed in to the bunks, until the feed room motors were aired

and repaired from the seven feet or so of backup that flooded through.

Calves die

Calves were held on trailers sent by friends and neighbors, until pens could be cleaned and rebedded. But the winter lingered cold and extremely damp for many weeks, and several calves contracted ailments that refused to respond to antibiotics. State lab specialists finally isolated the stubborn viral cause, but not until over a dozen young purebred replacements had died.

Understandably, long periods of rain cause considerable uneasiness around the Youngs' households.

"They talk a lot about stress and tension on the farm", Ned Young observes. "Living with this increasingly frequent flooding just adds that much more."

While thoughts of moving out surface periodically, the brutal economic fact is that flood-plain farms are not often visited by real estate agents bearing attractive sales contracts.

"We're sort of married to it," sighs the owner. "If we didn't have dairy cattle, it wouldn't be quite as much a problem."

No one has come up with any concrete suggestions on what might be done to lessen flooding conditions. Dredging the river could help, figures Young, but the scope of the job would be formidable. Elongation of that island, combined with the river's bend just upstream, seems to shoot increasing volumes of water and current over the bottom ground and buildings.

Dikes constructed to protect South Williamsport stop a mile above the farm, and the railroad bed that rims the back of the fields effectively holds in waters as they

spill over the river's banks.

Upriver for miles, housing developments, shopping mall parking lots, industrial parks, interstates all cover soil that once helped soak up "hundred year storms," creating more runoff than in decades past.

Problem lingers on

And, the problems back on the farm linger, long after the sun shines and the mud crusts over.

Crops, especially alfalfa, are difficult to reestablish for a few years following inundation. While the seeds germinate and show growth, when the stand reaches a height of four to five inches, seedlings wilt and die. Other farmers who've been flooded tell Young of similar experiences, but even the specialists haven't come up with any definite reasons.

While he speculates that it might have something to do with possible oils and chemicals in the oozing mud left behind by the high waters, not even soil samples have furnished a concrete clue.

Generally, fields must even be subsoiled before planting any crop, since the ground packs so hard following flooding conditions.

Still, with the optimism inherent in farmers, Ned Young faces these "twenty year floods," - since that's only how often they're expected to happen - with a smile, expressing thanks that they've never suffered any loss of life or even a major injury.

In this midst of the financial frustration and property devastation, the mountains of mud and mess that have been moved off this land, the Ned Young's still count their blessings - and plot more ways to meet Mother Nature on her own ground.

Whelan gets MAMMA post

TOWSON, Md. — James T. Whelan, of Baltimore, has resumed the responsibilities of merchandising director for the Advertising and Promotion Agency of the Middle Atlantic Milk Marketing Area (MAMMA).

Whelan previously served as merchandising director for MAMMA from June 1981 to January 1983. Prior to returning to his position at MAMMA, he was assistant service manager and salesman for Bud Schmidt Buick. He also worked as sales manager for Cornco/Mid Atlantic Concession Supply Co., Inc., where he built a wholesale and distributor network for popcorn packaged goods.

A Mass Communications graduate of Towson State University, Whelan worked for seven years as a disc jockey for radio station WPOC in Baltimore.

MAMMA is the agency responsible for non-brand advertising of milk and dairy products in the Mid Atlantic marketing area.

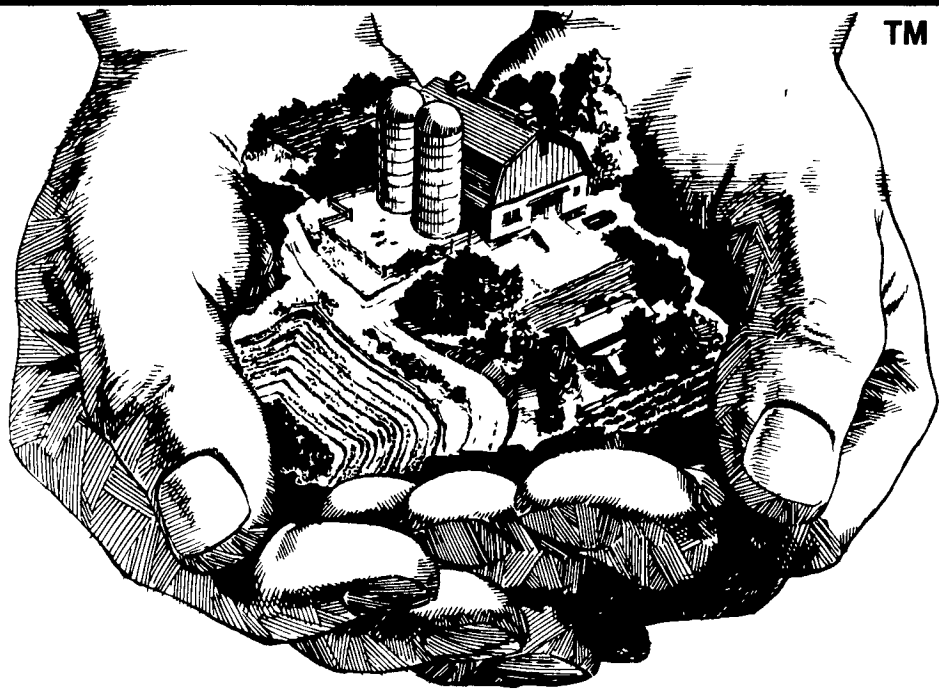


James Whelan

In his new position he will be responsible for in-store and food service dairy promotions and will be involved in dairy department training seminars and special events promotions.

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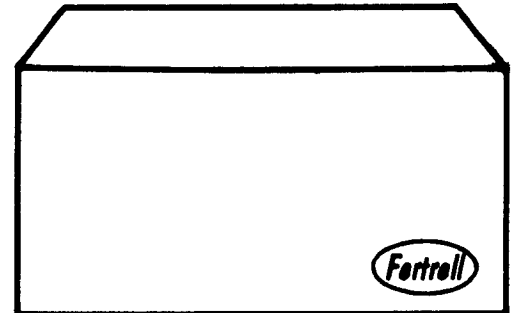
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