

# Farm Talk

by  
**Jerry Webb**

There is a frankness in rural America these days that is allowing farmers and their families to come forward and talk about their problems and concerns. Traditionally farmers have

been considered salt of the earth types who dealt with all sorts of adversities and never batted an eye. They grew our food, kept our country side pretty and managed to get along somehow. In fact,

most of us think of a farm as an ideal place to live and raise a family. Given a choice an awful lot of American people would like to at least live on a farm.

Lately some farmers and their families are starting to talk a little bit about some problems. Through the pages of farm magazines and in farm meetings they are expressing their concerns about their way of life and their future. And some are even admitting that being a farmer or part of a farm family is not all sunshine, fresh air and bright tomorrows. There are those nagging little concerns like how to pay the mortgage, and where to get operating capitol for next year's production. Some farmers are starting to complain about father-son partnerships and other family business arrangements, about the stress created within the family from long hard hours of work and economic uncertainties. Some farm families are even talking about divorces, father-son breakups, depression and coping with the uncertainty of farm life.

Add another topic to the list that farmers are willing to talk about. Finding a mate. Perhaps we just assume that all farmers have spouses. That they live in neat white houses at the end of tree lined lanes where little children

play in the sunshine and young livestock romp in grassy fields. But now some young farmers and some not so young, both male and female, are saying that farming at times can be an isolated occupation with little or no chance for social contact and a certain amount of desperation involved in the pairing up process.

Farmers are saying that the very nature of their work makes them less than ideal suitors and maybe not even particularly good catches. Their hours can be quite long and uncertain, so it's hard for them to plan a date and then get there on time. Often farm emergencies preempt everything else. They don't get a regular pay check and so at times may be hard pressed for cash and certainly there are times when the adversities of farming make them less than ideal companions.

The physical location of farms puts most single farmers at a disadvantage. Often they are great distances from population centers and so come in contact with very few possible mates. The city dweller who wants to meet someone has a hundred choices. But what about the farmer? Is he apt to find someone in a singles bar who's willing to go back to the farm and share his life milking cows, bailing hay, and harvesting

soybeans?

Here in the urbanized East the problem is not that bad. Almost any farmer is within an hour's drive of a fairly good sized town. But that's not necessarily true in some of the wide open spaces where farmers and ranchers ply their trade.

I recall many of the young farmers back when I was in college who courted the students from a nearby girls' college. Some of them wooed and won those fair maidens in the atmosphere of a university town only to later face the harsh reality of going back to the farm. I've often wondered how some of those match-ups worked out.

The farm boy who marries the neighbor's daughter right out of high school doesn't face this dilemma. But what about the fellow who gets through college and waits a few years until he is established before seeking a mate. Let's say he goes to town and finds the girl of his dreams. She is beautiful, educated, loves him dearly but isn't about to give up a career in her chosen profession to move to Cactus Flat, South Dakota or some other out of the way rural location where there are no job opportunities. There are also plenty of farm wise folks who just

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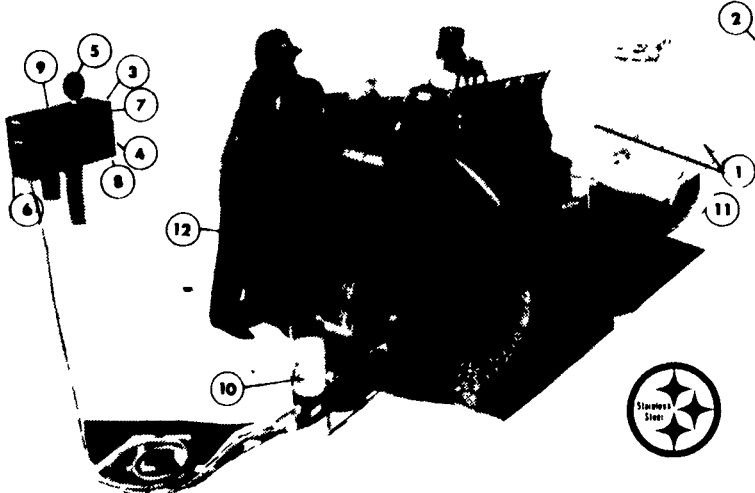
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44	3	3-1	305	18,243	3 8	697
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197	3	7-2	305	17,573	3 8	666
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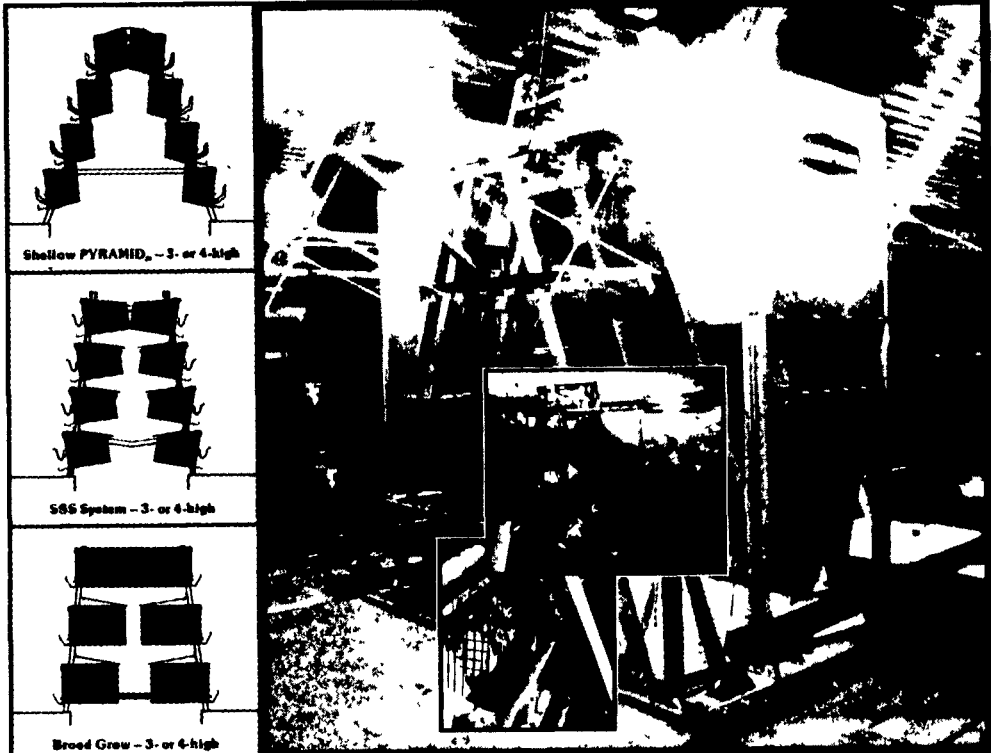
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