

# Use records to make 1985 crop decisions

NEWARK, Del. — Nothing beats a good set of farm records. Farmers who want to make the 1985 cropping season more profitable can make important progress toward that goal by reviewing their records and doing some serious planning this winter, says University of Delaware extension agricultural agent Derby Walker.

"You have more time now to think about your operation than you will when things get busy next spring," he says. "Waiting until then to make plans can lead to mistakes in judgment."

Sound decisions in any business are based on good records. And farming is a costly business. Good managers keep records of the cropping history of specific fields—soil test results, fertilizer use, liming and pest control practices, varieties grown, plant populations and yields.

"With all this information," says Walker, "producers can compare yields from year to year and see whether they're making any progress. If there's a problem in a field and yields are going down, find out why. Sometimes the condition was beyond your control, but there may be other problems which could be corrected without spending a dime."

Crop rotation, variety selection and better equipment adjustment are three inexpensive ways to improve an operation. Sometimes

planting rates need to be adjusted.

Knowing the history of a field can lead to profitable decisions at planting time. For example, a number of Delaware farmers have identified cyst nematodes or fusarium wilt in their soybeans. Simply by changing varieties, some of these producers have been able to greatly increase yields. "Doing this didn't cost any more," the county agent says, "but it put additional dollars in their pocket because they were able to harvest a full crop, whereas before they were lucky to harvest half a crop."

Knowing the specific weed problems in a field makes it possible to select the most effective herbicide program for that field. Sometimes a very specialized program is needed because of a unique weed infestation. Bur-cucumber, giant ragweed, Canada thistle, johnsongrass, shatter cane, triazine resistant pigweed, Bermuda grass and cocklebur are some of the plants which require special treatment.

"For these weeds you need a control program that will prevent their spread to the rest of the land you farm," Walker says. "Otherwise the cost of your whole operation could go up. It's better to spend a few extra bucks on one field when a new weed appears than to try to control the weed

after it has spread."

While reviewing production records this winter, the agent suggests farmers also take time to develop marketing strategies for 1985.

"You may want to forward price part of your crop," he says. "Watch market trends closely because there will probably be some opportunities to make a little extra money just through marketing. You can't control the

market yourself, but you can choose when to sell—hopefully at a time when the price you receive covers your production costs and returns a profit as well."

"If you're getting less than average price for your grain, you definitely want to look at your marketing program because you're getting too many bottom dollars and not enough top ones," he says.

Farming is a business, and

businesses must be run on second decisions, not emotions, Walker says. By taking the time to review records, farmers can improve their opportunities for increased income. "If you want help evaluating your farm operation," he concludes, "those of us in the extension service will be glad to go over it with you. The more records you have, the easier it will be to answer your questions about specific cropping programs."

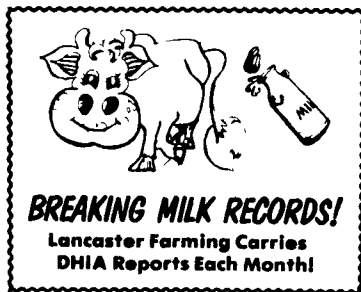
## Mt. Joy shares API profits

MOUNT JOY — The 100 members of the Mount Joy Farmers Cooperative Association will share a 2½ cent per hundredweight cash distribution, according to J. Ivan Hanson, assistant secretary of the Mt. Joy Co-op.

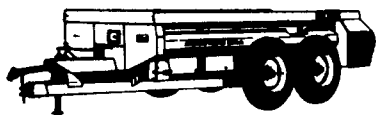
This represents Mt. Joy's share of the operating profit from the 1983-84 fiscal year of Atlantic Processing, Inc. The Mt. Joy Co-op is a member of API.

Atlantic Processing is a federation of milk cooperatives that processes and markets milk and milk products primarily in southeastern Pennsylvania.

For more information about Mount Joy Farmers Cooperative Association contact J. Ivan Hanson, Box 291, R2, Palmyra, Pa. 17078.

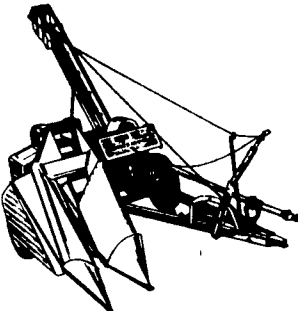


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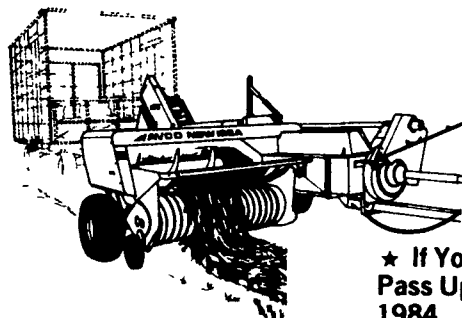
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