

Farm Talk

By
Jerry Webb

Hunting good for farmers?

Farmers are the world's most generous and accommodating hosts when it comes to hunters. A trip through our countryside during good hunting days reveals the magnitude of this generosity.

Hardly a country road is spared the hazard of an out-of-state or city hunter's car parked dangerously on the shoulder. And a pause in the country to enjoy the quiet beauty is often punctuated with the sound of gunfire.

Game is killed, dogs are exercised, hunters commune with nature, and farmers pray their livestock will be spared and perhaps a few rabbits or quail will be left for their own hunting.

This brings up an interesting question. Why do farmers so willingly, or at least unprotestingly, turn over their fields, ponds, woods and marshes to arms-bearing strangers who are there to kill? Maybe farmers feel a little guilty about having all that land and so little time to hunt. Or maybe they feel sorry for their city cousins who spend most of their lives indoors and who may never own a piece of ground larger than a cemetery plot.

Perhaps farmers tire of fussing with hunters over property rights and submit to their ravage rather than resist. But it is the farmers' land and those who hunt it without permission are trespassing.

Some farmers who have heard of the income differential that exists between farm and city workers have turned their "game refuges" into significant income equalizers. They charge hunters for the right to hunt. And if the hunting is good

on their land, they make money. City hunters who have more on their land, they make money. City hunters who have more money than time want to go where the game is and they're usually willing to pay for the opportunity.

Even though a lot of farmers are posting their land these days, not many are charging hunters. Some post to provide legal protection in case a hunter gets on the property and shoots a cow or gets in the way of a mean bull. A lot of posted ground can still be hunted with permission—something that should be received even if land isn't marked. After all, what hunter would welcome a carload of farmers onto his suburban lot to poke through his shrubs and flowers in search of live animals.

But the hunter who drives up the farm house, leaves his gun in the car until permission to hunt is granted, usually gets a warm reception.

One way to assure continued good feelings between farmer and hunter is through a few simple ground rules—no shooting close to building, fires, etc. These should be explained when the hunter comes to the door. He should also be told to check out when he leaves, if this is desirable. Most farmers want to know who is wandering around their property with guns and they want to know when they've gone.

Here's a final thought on hunting rights. Farmers could gain a very strong and vocal ally by working with hunters on some of their mutual problems. Farmers own most of the land where hunters

ITHACA, NY — Questions about the rules, regulations, and implications of the national dairy herd buyout program are answered in a packet of reports developed by agricultural economists at Cornell University and five other land-grant institutions.

The packet contains 10 reports on the herd buyout program of the 1985 farm bill, which was signed

into law in December 1985. It is being distributed to county offices of Cornell Cooperative Extension in New York State and to extension staff at land-grant universities in every state except Alaska and Hawaii.

"We're providing information to extension office personnel, who will work directly with farmers to help them think this through," says Andrew M. Novakovic, an agricultural economist in the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell.

The packet was prepared by members of the National Dairy Herd Buyout Extension Program Committee, which was formed in November 1985 by a group of agricultural economists from six land-grant universities — Cornell, Michigan State University, North Carolina State University, Ohio State University, Texas A&M University, and the University of Wisconsin.

Reports contained in the packet

hunt. This provides a good reason for hunters to understand farm problems and want to do something about them. In case anyone doubts the collective power of hunters, consider what the National Rifle Association has done to proposed gun laws over the years. NRA is a powerful organization that includes a lot of the people who hunt here. The basis for friendship and cooperation is there. It's up to farmers and their organizations to call on the hunters for help.

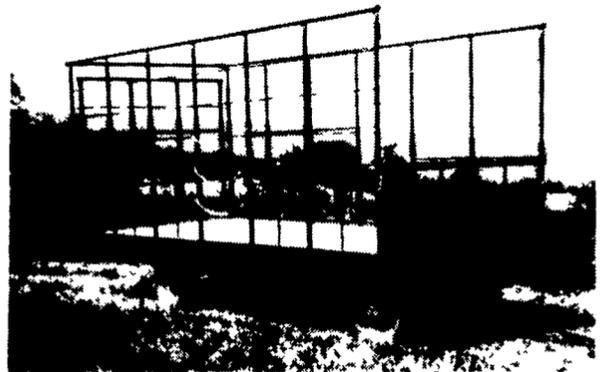
cover most aspects of the buyout program, and will be valuable to farmers interested in participating in it, Novakovic says.

The reports explain the rules on the buyout, tax implications, factors to consider before enrolling in the program, and bidding strategies, among other topics. Also available is a videotape designed to assist farmers in making decisions on whether to participate in the program.

New York dairy farmers interested in obtaining the packet are urged to contact county offices of Cornell Cooperative Extension. The packet is free.



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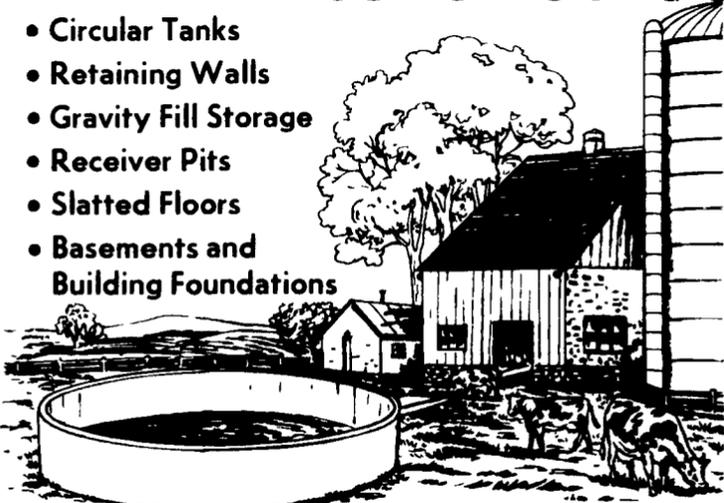
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