



Brockett's Ag Advice

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Farming: A Two-Part Business

Have you ever said or thought "No one works any harder or puts any more time in working than I do"? Do you pride yourself on working from before sunrise to well after sunset seven days a week? In either of these cases you may actually be physically working hard but mentally sloughing off. Some farmers work hard physically so they never have to think or work their brain very hard. Others get so caught up in hard physical labor that they simply forget to use their thinking ability. Most farmers who fail to spend time thinking and planning make more mistakes than they can afford to make and stay in business.

No one can ever say that farming is for the lazy person. To be a farmer requires a lot of long difficult hours of physical labor. But hard physical labor is only part of the business of being a successful farmer. More important than sheer brute force or physical labor is the ability and willingness to apply brain power to the situation. Successful farmers of today and tomorrow will find themselves putting more time and effort in the use of their brain power than of their backs.

Let us explore some actual happenings in the past few years. Farmer A and his wife were aggressive young farmers who were willing to work 20 hours a day to make things work. They had two children who were too young to

work. Mrs. Farmer A was willing to milk cows, drive a tractor, and do all of the other things some people felt all good farm wives should do. Their unflagging enthusiasm and determination caused them to start on their way to success. Then Farmer A thought he could see a way to speed up their drive to success so he started to haul animals to market on market day. This brought in a few extra bucks that looked good. So they expanded both the dairy and the trucking. This meant Mrs. Farmer A did most of the evening milking by herself about two or three days per week. When both of them were milking, they ran six units to get done faster. Mrs. Farmer A still wanted to get done "in time" when she milked alone, so she also used 6 units. The somatic cell count started to climb. The Farmer A family was a bit concerned, but a neighbor said they did not need to worry because the reason for the increase was the fault of the weather. So they quit worrying about that and used the time to work a little harder. Farmer A was now away as much as four evenings a week.

After about six months, the herd suffered a massive outbreak of

mastitis. They had to dump the milk from nearly half of the herd. They were no longer able to pay their contracted debt payments. Farmer A decided that he needed a bigger truck so he could haul more per load. He also decided that he would have to haul cattle to shows as well as to sales. That often took him away for the morning milking as well as the evening milking. To help his wife, they hired a school boy. When it came time to put out crops, Farmer A worked even harder. Mrs. Farmer A also worked harder because they did not have enough money to pay the boy so they let him go.

Since the milk check was so often reduced from what it should have been, due to a chronic mastitis problem, there was not enough money to buy herbicide for the corn fields. Farmer A said that would be no problem because his father had used cultivators years ago and had produced rather respectable corn. Most of you now know the probable end. The Farmer A family went out of business.

Farmer B started about the same time as Farmer A. The difference is that Mr. and Mrs. Farmer B started off with the idea

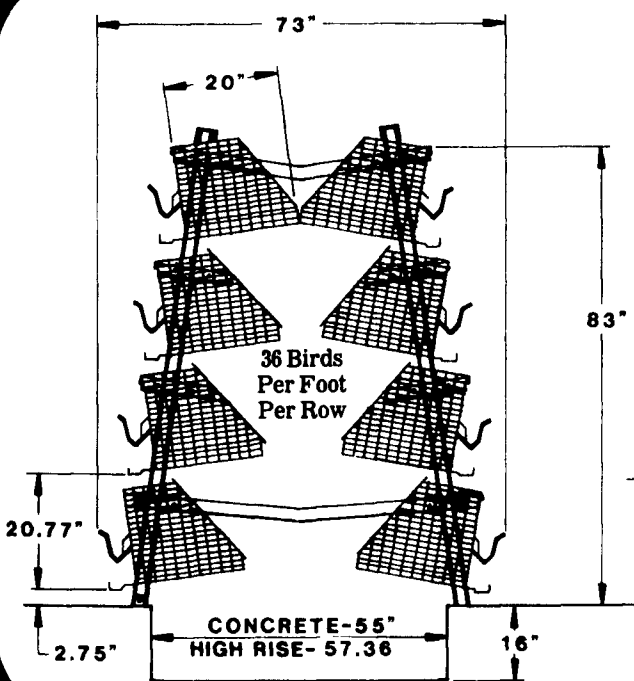
that they would not work 20 hours per day. A schedule was planned so work got done. Both Mr. and Mrs. Farmer B felt that good records were vital to the success of their operation so records of all kinds were kept. They also realized that records alone would not do the job. Those records would have to be analyzed to get as much value out of them as possible. Attention was paid to increases in somatic cell count. No outside business activities interfered with the farm operation. Result is that Farmer B is not only still in business, but is a relatively profitable operator. Success in farming is possible if the members of a farm family want to be successful badly enough to make the necessary sacrifices one of which is to make use of brains instead of brawn.

One lesson that young farmers must learn early in the game is that farming is a two-part business, and that a farmer who is lazy in one of those parts will not be successful. One part is the traditional physical labor side. The other part is the thinking or brain labor side. In most cases, it is a whole lot easier to work hard physically than to work hard mentally. This is why it is important for a farmer who really wants to succeed to force himself or herself to do the mental work, even if it means backing off a bit on the physical work. Some successful farmers schedule the time to do their records, study their analysis, develop and review their plans, and just plain think. So if you find that you do not have time to think, why not put planning on a schedule just like you do for mowing hay?

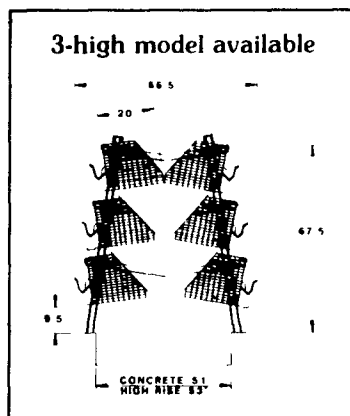
Real cheese needs just enough heat to melt and blend with the other ingredients. Too much heat will make it hard and rubbery. When topping a casserole, shredded cheese should be added when the dish comes out of the oven or microwave. The heat of the food will melt the cheese.

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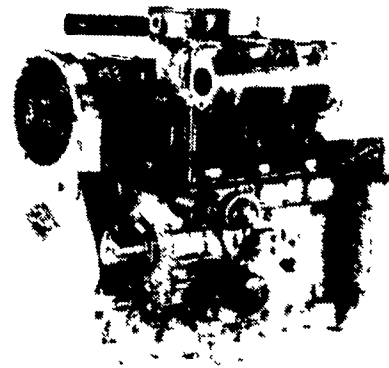
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