

Rethink Rates Before Negotiating Rental Agreements

NEWARK, Del. — The severe drought this year will undoubtedly cause many growers to rethink their production decisions for 1987.

"If you're tilling rented ground, the amount you pay (cash or share) in the coming year is definitely a candidate for analysis," says University of Delaware extension farm management specialist Dr. Don Tilmon.

To help farmers with this analysis, the Delaware Cooperative Extension System now has microcomputers available in all three of its county offices. And computer programs containing Delaware-based budgets for corn, soybeans, small grains and vegetables are available to assist growers in making land rent and other decisions for the next production season.

"Land rental rates, like any other production factor, should be tied to productivity," Tilmon says. "You can only afford to pay high rent for highly productive soils."

He suggests farmers take a close look at the rates they're paying for rented land. "If the rate's too high, try to renegotiate your rental agreement for next year to either a lower rate, a flexible cash lease or a share lease that spreads some of your risk between you and your landlord," he advises. "If all else fails, give up the rented land. It's better to farm smarter than bigger."

Location of rented fields is another consideration for farmers who are trying to reduce costs. "How far do you travel to your most distant field?" the specialist asks. "Closely evaluate rented land that's far away for its profit potential."

How about renting new land? Don't do it if the move will require the purchase of additional capital items or the commitment of additional full-time labor, Tilmon advises.

He suggests farmers use the following residual approach in deciding how much to pay for rented land:

- Calculate your cost of production, excluding rent.
- Calculate returns based on low (pessimistic), expected (average) and good (optimistic) yields times

the expected (contract) price for fall delivery.

• The balance, after subtracting the production cost from the range of revenues possible, is the range of dollar values available for rent.

Tilmon recommends the following publications for farmers who rent land: State of Delaware, "Regulation of Agricultural Leases — Rights and Duties of Agricultural Leases"; Cooperative Extension fact sheet NCR-105, "Crop Share or Crop Share-Cash — Rental Arrangements for Your

Farm"; Cooperative Extension fact sheet NCR-75, "Fixed and Flexible Cash Rental Arrangements for Your Farm"; and Cooperative Extension fact sheet NCR-148, "Irrigation Crop Share and Cash Rental Arrangements for Your Farm."

All four publications are available to Delaware residents by contacting: H. Don Tilmon, Extension Farm Management Specialist, Townsend Hall, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19717-1303 (302-451-2511).

Wintering Beef Cows

By Robert E. Leiby and David L. Dunbar
Lehigh Extension Service

Keeping an eye on the body condition of your beef cows this winter is advisable if you are to have a good conception rate during next summer's breeding season. Studies at the University of Missouri and other places have shown that cows that get too thin have poor conception rates. For example, in a Kansas trial (1981), spring calving cows were scored from one to nine for thinnest to

fattest cows at breeding time. Cows with a body condition of six had a 92 percent settling rate compared to 70 percent for those with a body condition of four. Also, cows with the higher body condition conceived earlier in the 60-day breeding season. Younger cows with low body condition were particularly affected.

Cows that are fleshy going into the winter can lose some body condition and still be in proper flesh to calve, suckle and conceive.

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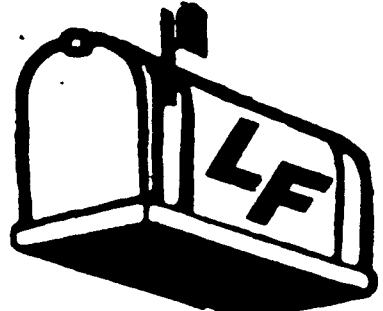
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