

Brockett's Ag Advice
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You Can Succeed

Most farmers in Pennsylvania can survive and even succeed as farmers in the next decade. I am quite optimistic that most family operated farms can be viable businesses in the future. If I was anything less than optimistic, I would not be leaving Extension and more closely hooking my star to the family farm of the future.

Farming will change in technical know how, in size, in required skills, and in methods of operation. But, these changes have been occurring every year since the beginning of time. In the 30 years I have been in Extension, I have seen some tremendous changes.

If someone had projected the changes that have occurred in these 30 years in 1956 when I started Extension, most people would have laughed. Consider for example the advent of atrazine in the late 50's. Or what about forage testing and feeding programs. Or calculators so cheap that practically every school child has one. Then we came to personal computers that cost about the same today as a good calculator did 20 years ago.

Today no one would buy a tractor without hydraulic or power steering. Farmers who buy a tractor without a cab are often pitied by their neighbors as being poor or demented. Not many of you cut hay by hand anymore. In fact most modern farmers probably don't even know how to use a hoe, or a scythe, or hand hay rake. Yet it was not many years ago that

they were all part of a farmer's regularly used tools.

Recordkeeping A Must

One of the ongoing changes in the operation of farms in the past 100 years has been the growing need for good records. I have a record book kept by my great-great grandfather in the 1800's. It was nothing more than a daily diary with the things that were done, the amount they received for sold products, who worked for them, the cost of supplies, and the weather.

Today's records are not that much different in context. They are just bigger and more complex. DHIA was brought into being over 50 years ago because a few forward thinking dairymen and college professors thought that dairymen needed a better handle on what was happening in the dairy herd. Those of you who had fathers or grandfathers who were "on test" 30 or more years ago should look at their records. The information they received from their DHI records was considerably less than the available information we have today. Yet there are those of us who want even more from today's DHI records, because, we know it is available and we feel we need it to make better management decisions.

As farm sizes have grown, records and analysis of those records have become more important for a farm manager. The diary idea is probably no longer adequate.

Penn State Offers Grain Crops Course

Pennsylvania farmers will find Grain Crops, a Penn State correspondence course and an accompanying 1985 Agronomy Guide, helpful in selecting grain varieties.

The course includes information on uses and importance of the most common cereals or grains, including corn, wheat, oats, barley,

soybeans, and rye. Methods of seeding, harvesting, storage, and marketing are given.

To learn more about grain crops send \$14, including Agronomy Guide and handling, to GRAIN CROPS, Dept. 5000, University Park, PA 16802. Make check payable to Penn State.

Family Farm Still Needed

Yet the one constant we have seen throughout the hundreds of years of change in the family farm has been the need in our society for those farms. The majority of people in this country want the family farm to continue to be a viable part of our society and economy. They have agreed to farm bills that the news media has often said were too expensive. The average person on the street feels positive about farmers and farm-

ing, especially family operated farms. They want you to succeed.

And you can succeed if you want to. No one said it would be easy. And this brings us to the final and possibly most critical change that has occurred in the farming business. The change from a primarily physically oriented business to a balanced physically and mentally oriented business. Today's farmers must be as willing to work hard mentally as their forefathers were to work hard physically.



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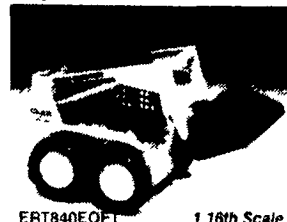
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