

Six Steps To Establish Control Of Farm Business

The Basics Of Management

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Step 5. Keeping Score

The most important bit of information to a football coach on the sideline is the score. He also must know such details as the yardage to the next down, and the up-to-the-minute fitness status of each player in the squad. Coaching a game requires a lot of organization and the occasional "time out" to do it effectively.

In the farming business there is no scoreboard to give an immediate readout of the score. Farm managers must maintain their own scoreboard, and they have to be their own linesmen, routinely checking on day-to-day progress. They have to keep the stats about the herd health and the growth of the crops. Unlike football, there are no time outs! The clock keeps running, the crops continue to mature, the animals produce and reproduce, and the bills seem to reproduce too! To stay on top of all these little details without taking a "time out" is what management is all about. The alternative is the strategy which is observed on too many farms - "drop back and punt".

Each business must record its financial dealings for income tax purposes. Completed tax returns however tell very little about the financial health of an operation. To maintain control of the business, the careful farm manager will want to maintain more than minimum financial records. As a first step, it might be helpful to divide income and expenses into two categories - crops and livestock. When this is mastered it may be possible to further subdivide these major categories. For example, livestock may be divided into milk cows and growing stock. This can help to reveal how each enterprise is performing.

To do the detailed farm planning and analysis as discussed earlier

in this series, additional records will be needed. These might include:

- Inventories carefully taken at the end of each financial year.
- Field records of soil fertility, treatments, crop and yield history.
- Production records for animals: DHIA, breeding/reproduction, health, weight gain, sales by head and weight of each class of stock.
- Feed usage by different classes of livestock, or regular checks of feed consumption and feed conversion on representative groups.
- Cost of production of crops and

livestock.

- Machinery and equipment maintenance records.

- Regular comparison of cash records and cash-flow projections to avoid surprises.

Routine management should also include field scouting for weeds, insects, and diseases. Record the findings for each field. Check livestock for heat and health; promptly record observations and actions taken. Schedule machinery maintenance inspections and program overhauls during slack periods. To

ensure that the most important things get accomplished, prepare a job priority list for each week and update it daily.

The exact format of the records is not critical. What is important is that the information be retrievable and that it be used. Some managers prefer to spread everything possible out on wall charts where information can be seen at a glance. Others use commercially available recording systems, while some prefer to use the computer brianpower to store and sort information.

The only reason for collecting and maintaining any information about the farm business is to provide an accurate picture for making decisions. If we make decisions on the basis of our fancies, emotions, and poor memories, we have no need for these management tools. But quarterbacks don't wear blindfolds, and coaches always keep the game roster close at hand.

In our wrapup next time, we'll look at analyzing results and setting new goals.

(Continued Next Week)

Pittsburgh To Host County Fair Convention

PITTSBURGH - Meetings, social functions seminars, a trade show and showcase performances are all slated for the 75th Annual Convention of the Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs to be held at the Pittsburgh Marriott at Greentree, Pa.

Convention registration, which is expected to exceed 800, will commence on Wednesday, Jan. 21, at 8 a.m. and the convention will end on Friday evening, Jan. 23, with a banquet to celebrate the diamond anniversary of the association. Meeting with the Fair Association will be the Pennsylvania Showmens Association, the support industries for 104 county agricultural fairs in Pennsylvania.

Opening at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, and continuing for the entire three days will be the Trade Show. Approximately 40 vendors will be showing their wares.

The keynote address for the convention will be presented by Don Warner, president of Warners Mayflower Moving, Red Lion, Pa., Wilmington, Del., and Chicago, Illinois. Warner's topic will be, "Be Optimistic".

Round table discussion groups,

seminars, and business meetings will also be held. The Seminar on "Improving Agricultural Exhibits at Your Fair" will be presented by the New York State Fair Association.

Discussion groups will be held on computers, promotion, marketing, surveying, choosing judges, and conducting a queen contest, to name a few.

Maryland Pesticides Conference Scheduled Next Week

COLLEGE PARK, Md. - The thirty-third Maryland Agricultural Pesticides Conference is making its annual run at two locations during January east and west of the Chesapeake Bay.

This year's first meeting was held Jan. 13 at the Sheraton Inn south of Frederick. An Eastern Shore version is scheduled next week on Thursday, Jan. 22, in the Danang room of the Wicomico Youth and Civic Center at Salisbury.

The day-long educational program includes presentations on regulatory update for pesticides, spray drift control and weather assessment, herbicide action, groundwater protection, and

choosing and laundering protective clothing.

Registration confirmation at the Salisbury meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m., with the program running from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., according to Amy E. Brown, Extension pesticide coordinator for the entomology department at the University of Maryland in College Park.

To register, call Nancy Breisch at College Park before noon on weekdays to see if space is still available. Her office telephone is (301) 454-7358.

The pesticides conference is intended for county Extension agents as well as agricultural

size from a small three-day event which had attendance of 8,000, to the larger fairs, which run for nine days and draw 550,000 people. The primary purpose of the association is to improve the fair industry and allied fields. From a nucleus of a half dozen fairs in 1912, the association has grown to now represent every agriculture fair in the state.

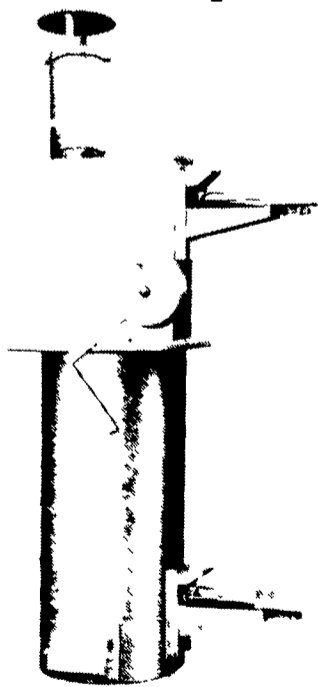
custom pesticide applicators, dealers, distributors and sales representatives. In addition, plant protection workers from the Maryland Department of Agriculture will be on hand. Other interested persons - especially farmers - are welcome.

The event is a qualifying meeting for state recertification in Category 1 for Maryland commercial applicators. In addition, the Delaware Department of Agriculture will accept attendance at the meetings as four hours of training toward recertification in agricultural plant pest control for Delaware operators.

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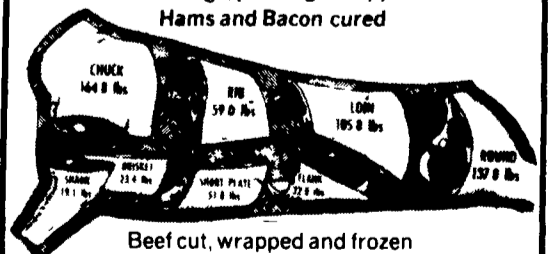
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