

# Farmers Market

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remarks, "I never anticipated it would happen as quickly as it did. . . . The first week we had 12 tenants and the next week we had 32. And now we have over 50 with another 30 waiting. We certainly know we've delivered something the community needed and people enjoy. We have created an awful lot of jobs here, and I think that's what it's all about."

Smith recalled that when he rented space in the Weldon building for his Raycraft business five years ago, he was the only tenant in the building. After investing a substantial sum to renovate his area and realizing the building was structurally sound throughout, he bought the building.

The abundance of unused space was a leading factor that led to the formation of the present market complex. Smith's nostalgic memories of the old market played a part along with the farmers' need for a place to sell produce. Incidentally, traffic from the market will help increase business at his Raycraft store. Smith noted proudly that his Raycraft business is up 50 percent since the market opened.

Vendors and customers are enthusiastic about the market. Harold and Pauline Kessler of Kessler's Orchard Farm Market, Berwick, travel a distance of 70 miles

to bring their produce to the market.

"We're looking for an outlet for apples and peaches," commented Pauline, who noted they've been in the produce business all their lives, having taken over the operation from her father.

Currently the Kesslers are selling bulk food in addition to fresh fruits and vegetables and other things, such as fresh eggs and honey.

"Business has increased quite a lot from the beginning," Pauline continued. "I think it's going to be a good market when it gets going. It's a clean market. I've never been to any as clean. It has a lot of variety."

A few shopkeepers, such as Betty Lomas of Betty's Oak Mill, who sell primarily new and antique oak furniture, thought business was good enough to warrant closing a previous shop and moving to the market.

Sandy Crain and daughter, Collette, Williamsport, visitors to Betty's shop enjoy the place. "I love it," Sandy states. "This is my third week in a row. I love all the antiques."

Tom Styer, a second-generation produce farmer from Muncy, has been in the market since shortly after it opened. He said business is picking up, and noted that the older

customers who remember the former growers' market seem to particularly enjoy the present one.

Kristy Reed, first-time visitor to the market remarked while buying produce from the Styer stand that she was impressed with the market and planned to view the remainder of the shops before leaving.

Harold Bower, a custom butcherer and a beef and grain farmer from Trout Run, opened a butcher shop at the market five weeks ago. "I think it has great potential," he said, but notes he has had trouble predicting the amount and type of meat to stock.

One aspect of the growers' market that customer's really appreciate, according to Hiller and Smith, is personal contact with the people who grow the produce.

"It's different than going to a grocery store and ringing a bell where some assistant to the grocer comes out to get you another piece of packaged meat." Here you can say, "I want a cut from that piece of meat."

Smith says he has gone against all odds in the creation of the market complex. "There's not a soul in the community that thought it had a lick of a chance," affirmed this self-confessed workaholic.

And then, perhaps, he revealed some of the reasons for his success. "I am a person who doesn't give up easily. I am a positive thinker. I have the will and deter-

mination to bring this thing home, and I'm going to do so."

To go from a kid selling goldenrod in the old market house to the owner of a couple businesses and a new market complex is a big step

for Ray Smith. But it is one appreciated by area farmers and small businesses seeking a market for their products, and, judging by customer responses, one appreciated by visitors to the market as well.

## Marketing Alternatives Offer Risks, Opportunities For Farmers

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — Corn producers must educate themselves about marketing alternatives or risk failing to capture the best price for their crop.

"The days of just loading up the truck at harvest and going to market are over," Richard Jelinek, education and marketing manager for the Chicago Board of Trade, said at a marketing seminar during the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) annual Corn Classic meeting.

"When you have information about alternatives, you can make your best decisions," he said. "Producers should educate themselves in all aspects of marketing, not just how to use the futures market."

"There are different levels of risk involved in any marketing strategy. The more a producer

knows about how to use those strategies, the better able he is to determine which level of risk he is willing to take."

Learning to work the numbers is the easy part, Jelinek said. The difficult part is learning to assess the risks and determining how much risk a producer can take.

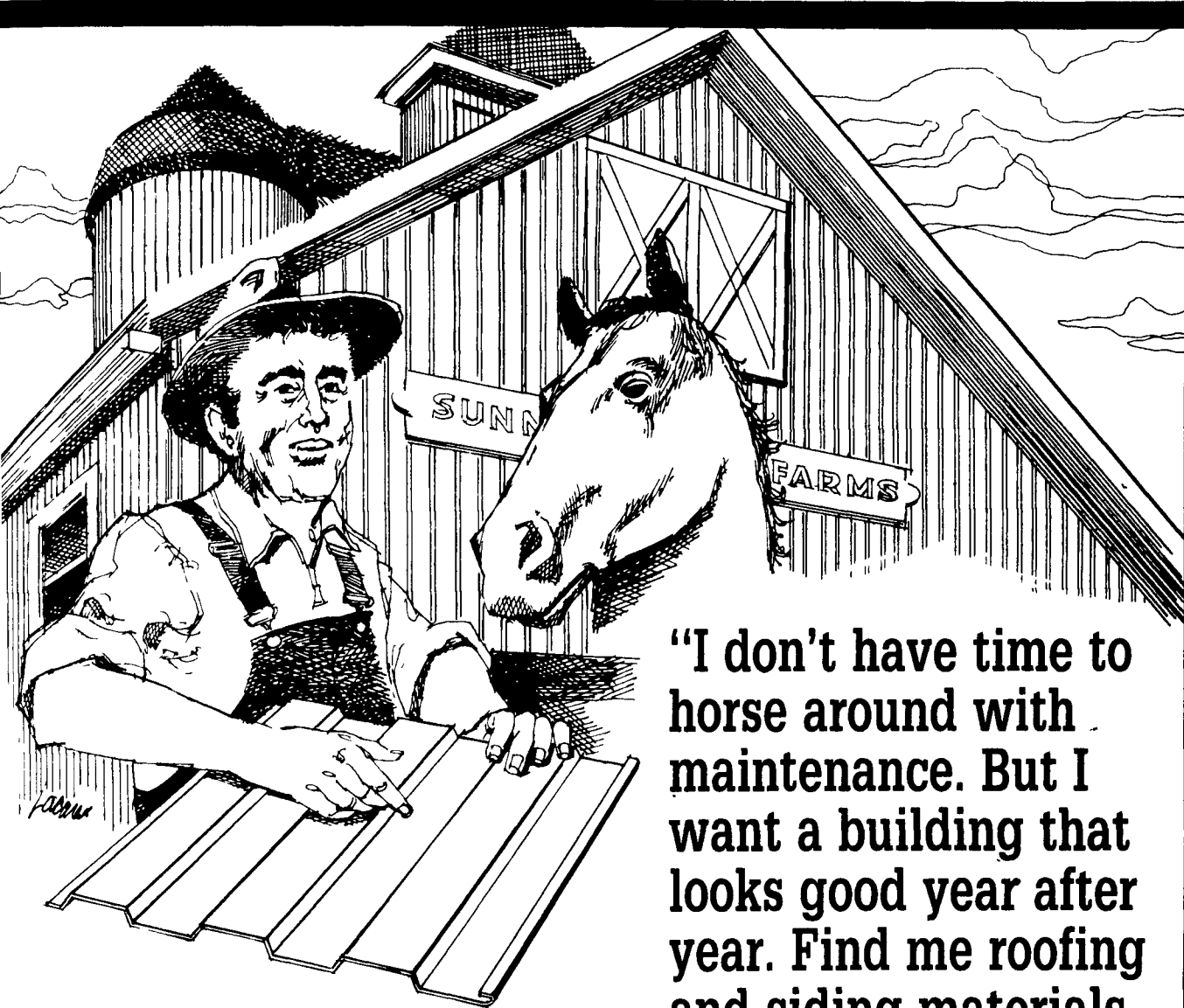
The number of alternatives has increased in the past decade, which has created confusion among some producers," he added. Options trading, available since 1984, offers a vast number of alternatives, each with a different risk level.

"The advantage of using the options market is the unlimited number of positions you can take and the ability to easily adjust your position to assume a different level of risk," he said.

"Education is not a one-shot deal. We could talk for hours about basis and how to use it and for weeks about the options market."

Jelinek advised corn growers to work with brokers and local elevators and to attend as many educational meetings as they could, to keep up with alternatives and strategies.

Answering a question about speculation, he said, "It's okay to speculate, just as long as you realize what you're doing. And make sure your broker knows you are speculating and not hedging, because his recommendations will be different."



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