

FARM MANAGEMENT



What makes a farmer successful?

I think we have all heard and seen and read enough about the drought so in this article I want to address a topic that is always timely. That is "What makes a farmer a "success." Most "successful" farmers that I have worked with over the past ten years have had several of these following ten characteristics in common.

FIRST, the most important one, and one that is often overlooked, is that they do all (or at least the vast majority) farm related tasks in a **TIMELY** manner. This characteristic I will address a little later, but I want to list the other nine characteristics now.

SECOND, they are excellent managers of their resources, that is, their capital (money), livestock, crops, labor, land and buildings, machinery, and personal resources.

THIRD, they run their farm business on business principles. The farm is not run on seat of the pants decisions and intuitive feelings, but founded and run on accurate records. These records are timely kept and provide a solid base to make intelligent decisions from. It is not merely a way of life, but a business with making a profit as its chief goal.

FOURTH, either the farmer, or

his spouse is an excellent record keeper and is interested in and enjoys farm records. (Yes there are people who do enjoy record keeping!)

FIVE, they are very attentive to detail in all phases of their farm business, but don't get preoccupied and bogged down with details.

SIXTH, they often have a tremendous support system of "specialists" or "experts" as a resource to obtain information, including extension agents and specialists, accountants, bankers, veterinarians, legal advisors, feed salesmen, and mechanics among others.

SEVEN, they are often goal setters and may have two, five, and/or ten year goals, and even lifetime goals.

EIGHT, they take time out for personal and family enjoyment and fulfillment regularly, whatever form that may take.

NINTH, they are progressive in

their agricultural field and keep up with new research. Last, but surely not of least importance, is that they have marketing of their commodity as a high priority and always present concern. I'm sure you could think of ten other characteristics but as I think about and analyze the truly "successful" farmers that I have known, these ten seem to stand out. **NOW** for more detailed discussion on the most important of these ten characteristics. Do all farm related tasks in a **TIMELY** manner! I can't over stress the importance of diligence and timeliness. I want to briefly discuss timeliness in the management of your money, your livestock, your crops, and your machinery. Timeliness is critically important in the use of borrowed money and your own equity. For example, now is the time to just tread water and stay afloat financially. It's not the time to borrow additional money for expansion or improvement if your cash flow is already tight. Good managers know where and when to borrow money, that is when the borrowed money will provide the cash flow to repay the loan. They timely use a line of credit to obtain various discounts. They timely and patiently borrow money to keep total debt and debt per animal unit within profitable levels. They pay their bills early and get early order, bulk or quantity discounts. Financially they seek "wants" (desires) last, "needs"

second, and "have to have's" first. They do not just purchase or buy, but they invest dollars wisely to be one step ahead of inflation or recession.

Timeliness should be the first priority when dealing with your livestock enterprise. Breeding stock and their offspring and/or byproduct must be bought, fed, bred, given health care, culled, and marketed in a timely manner. Getting cows and sows bred properly often is the difference between profit and loss. Top hog, beef, and sheep farmers market their animals at the proper weight to get top dollar at the market. Animals should **NEVER** be allowed to run out of feed or water. Getting the veterinarian or doing your own work at the right time is important. Death losses or just losses in production severely lower net income. The successful farmer anticipates health problems and is ready to medicate the animals at the first slight symptom of illness. Since feed is normally the largest expense on most livestock farms the successful farmer knows when to purchase those "good buys" to feed their animals. The excellent manager constantly monitors his animals rate of gain, cost per pound of animal produced, feed efficiency, and total feed bill.

Crops are timely planted, sprayed and harvested by the excellent farmer. The successful farmer also rotates his crops regularly to take

advantage of legumes and reduce soil erosion. Alfalfa fields **MUST** be harvested at the proper time, and the top dairyman makes his alfalfa field his second priority right behind the dairy herd. Corn and soybeans are gotten in early by the top farmers to take advantage of those early spring rains, but they also spread their plantings over a thirty day period or so to reduce their risk from drought or other natural disaster. They timely haul their manure to reduce their purchased fertilizer needs.

Machinery must be purchased, maintained, operated, and replaced in a timely manner. Top managers get excellent used machinery buys at farm auctions or machinery dealerships. Excellent managers overhaul their machinery over winter and the off-season before peak-work season so that the crops get planted on time. Top managers also see the economical timeliness of having custom work done when they can't afford that expensive piece of equipment that they only use for one week a year.

So, all I ask is that you honestly review your management record and see how many of these ten characteristics do you display. I challenge you to improve, especially in the area of timeliness. As you improve, I believe your net farm income will improve, along with your self esteem. May this challenge you to be a "successful" farmer.

AG PROGRESS DAYS AUGUST 16 - 18

SHOW SPECIAL



INCREDIBLE SAVINGS ON THE "KARCHER FARMER" HOT WATER PRESSURE CLEANER ONLY 100 UNITS AVAILABLE FOR FARMERS!

We want this show to be a special event for all Pennsylvania farmers, so we had 100 Special Edition Karcher Farmer pressure washers built at a one-time-only low, low price. Karcher Farmer has all the popular features you need, and we are able to offer it at a remarkable savings of \$700 off the regular price

The Karcher Farmer is a Special Edition production run planned for this show, and once these 100 units have gone we can't make this offer again. It's a top quality Hot/Cold pressure washer that delivers 1000 p.s.i. pressure at an economical 2.4 g.p.m.

See the Karcher Farmer demonstrated at the Karcher Booth on West First Street. And, because we don't want you to miss it, we're offering you a free gift. Just fill in this entry form, give it to a Karcher representative at the booth, and you'll get your free gift and a chance to win a popular Karcher HD555 portable pressure washer valued at over \$595!

Come on over! Join the fun! Get a free gift and a chance to win a valuable prize. And take advantage of truly spectacular savings on our Show Special!

See the world's most complete line of Quality Pressure Washers with output from 1000 to 2500 p.s.i.

Portable Cleaning Power HD 555



HD555 ENTRY FORM

Name _____
 Address _____
 (Code) _____
 Tel () _____
 I own a pressure washer
 Yes No
 (If Yes) Make _____
 Model _____

Give your completed Entry Form to a Karcher Representative at the Karcher Booth on West First Street and choose your **FREE GIFT**. You could win a portable HD555 - a \$595 value.

Choose a Karcher cap or kitbag **FREE**



KARCHER

COMPLIMENTS OF YOUR LOCAL KARCHER DEALER.

Shippensburg Fair Open Beef Show

(Continued from Page E9)

Pair Of Bulls

1 Duane Glessner, 2 George Golden

Get Of Sire

1 Duane Glessner

Cow/Calf

1 DRS Polled Herefords, 2 Michele Hosterman, 3 Duane Glessner, 4,5 George Golden

Best 5 Head

1 DRS Polled Herefords, 2 Duane Glessner, 3 George Golden

CHAROLAIS

Summer Yearling

1 Amy Sherman, 2 Travis Sherman

Jr. Yearling

1 Stanley Reeve, 2 Travis Sherman

LIMOUSIN

Jr. Calves

1 Holly McLaughlin

Summer Yearling

1 Jason Boyer

Jr. Yearling

1 Holly McLaughlin, 2,3 Steve Clapsaddle

Sr. Yearling

1,3 Jason Boyer, 2 Jamie Boyer

Two Year Old

1 Holly McLaughlin

Summer Yearling Bulls

1 Holly McLaughlin

Cow/Calf

1 Holly McLaughlin

SIMMENTAL

Summer Yearling

1,2 Kim Hopple

CHIANINA

Summer Yearling

1,5 Michele Hosterman, 2,3 Movin M, 4 Chad Kauffman

SANTA GERTRUDIS

Jr. Yearling

1 Twin Acres, 2 Chapel Ridge

Two Year Old

1 Toni Clabaugh

Jr. Bull Calves

1 Chapel Ridge

Summer Yearling

1 Chapel Ridge

Jr. Yearling

1,2 Chapel Ridge

Two Year Old

1 Chapel Ridge

Pair of Bulls

1 Chapel Ridge

Cow/Calf

1 Chapel Ridge

Best 5 Head

1 Chapel Ridge

MAINE ANJOU

Summer Yearling

1 Jeff Swank

Jr. Yearling

1 Jeff Swank