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MANAGE YOUR POULTRY ENTERPRISE AS A SYSTEM

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Poultry farming — like all other farming enterprises — is becoming increasingly competitive because of global economic pressures that are often beyond our control.

Poultry producers who were very successful one or two decades ago are not as successful if they are following exactly the same practices that they did one or two decades ago. It becomes increas-

ingly important for poultry producers to manage their poultry enterprises using the systems approach.

The systems approach involves understanding each individual component that comprises the system. Management needs to know how that individual component reacts to shifts in any input factors. In addition, management needs to know how any changes in an individual component affects the overall operation of the system. Finally, the overall mission of the system needs to be defined and all the personnel need to be constantly reminded of the system mission.

Generally the mission of a poul-

try enterprise is to maximize the net return. However, my experience is that some poultry producers will erroneously emphasize maximizing production, using factors such as number of eggs per layer per year or daily gain of broilers. Or management may focus upon minimizing other factors such as days to market for broilers or pounds feed per pound of gain.

These factors are indeed very important and influence the economic well-being of any poultry enterprise. However, if one chooses to maximize net return rather than maximizing number of eggs per layer per year, then different management strategies will need to be used.

Detailed records form the cornerstone of any systems management approach. Each poultry producer should be able to document the true costs associated with producing a dozen of eggs and the cost for each component of the egg production system. The components of an egg production system include feed, labor, utilities, depreciation of equipment and facilities, maintenance of equipment and facilities, flock health services, debt service, taxes, insurance,

manure handling, etc. Also, a poultry producer needs to know how a change in one component increased the cost of egg production.

For example, a 10 percent increase in feed costs is going to increase the cost of producing eggs considerably more than a 10 percent increase in utilities cost. But how much more? Detailed records are needed to answer such questions. Having a gut feel is not sufficient.

Another example relates to maintenance of equipment and building facilities. Detailed records will provide information of the true costs associated with the maintenance. This figure then needs to be evaluated when considering hiring an experienced contractor to handle your maintenance requirements. Also, the val-

ue of the services that the poultry producer or his employees will be providing if they are not spending time with maintenance must be evaluated.

Operating a poultry enterprise today involves the management of a complex system. Detailed records provide the information needed by the manager to more fully understand the system and then to manage the system in an efficient manner.

Several weeks ago I was visiting a farmer who indicated that he was too busy doing farm work to have any time for keeping records. My response to him was "trying to manage a complex system without records is like trying to fish without a hook on your line. Your poultry operation won't be very successful and you won't have many fish to eat."

Lakeview Simmentals To Host Field Day

WOODSTOCK, Va. — Lakeview Simmentals will host the Virginia Simmental Association's annual Field Day on Saturday, August 8, at the farm in Woodstock.

"We are expecting a very large crowd of both purebred and commercial cattlemen to be with us for field day," said Wilson Eastep, Lakeview Simmentals. "As an added attraction, we are inviting a

number of farm and cattle related businesses to set up displays of their business products.

There will be a small fee of \$50 per display to help sponsor a Simmental Dinner.

The field day will have contests with winners to be announced in the later part of the evening.

Registration deadline is August 1 by phone (703)459-4900 or (800)541-7496.

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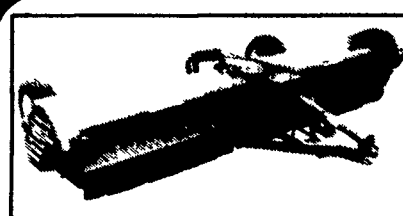
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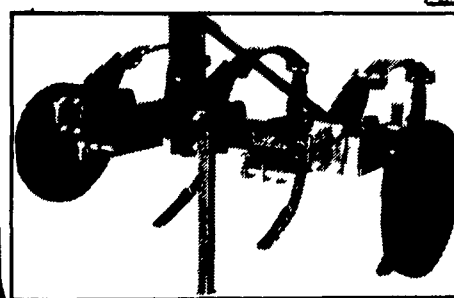
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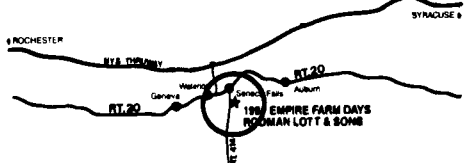
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