

Bank Seminar Focuses On Progress Through Change

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LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)
 — Convinced that the only thing certain about the future is change, Hamilton Bank, during an agricultural seminar, tackled the economical, technological, and emotional issues that change in the '90s entails.

While the seminar focused on the positive aspects of change, Dr. George Conneman, associate dean of Cornell University, said that he is not suggesting that one should adopt every change because not everything works out.

With witty anecdotes, he described how many quotes from people in the past seem ridiculous now that megachanges have taking place in society.

He emphasized the perspective gained by reviewing the trends of agriculture within the past 20 years and the technologies that will shape the future of agriculture.

While change often brings crisis to people, Conneman said that crisis signifies both danger and opportunity that one needs to look at with vision to survive.

"Smart farming works a lot like smart baseball," he said. "Always be ready for a curve; keep your eye on the ball; cover all bases; back up the play, and be a team player," he said.

H. Louis Moore talked about the good and bad points in the economy that sets the stage for change in agriculture.

When you look at both factors, the positive is greater than the negative factors and that will help agriculture as well as the rest of the economy, Moore said.

His analysis of production shows that grain inventories will result in cheap feed for '93. "That's good for users, but bad for those who sell," he said.

For survival in self-help marketing, Moore encouraged farmers to

look for niche marketing.

"It doesn't have to make sense. It's what the consumer perceives of truth," said Moore. To describe how ridiculous a consumer's concept may prove, Moore told of the woman who pays more for brown eggs than white because she thinks they look better in the refrigerator.

"Celebrate change," said Jolene Brown, a professional speaker and farmer from Iowa. She said that the alternative to celebrating change is to have ulcers, live in fear, and be a victim of circumstances.

Brown said that many people in agriculture have the disease of perfectionism and want everything to be done exactly right according plan and often refuse to adjust to change.

According to demographics, she said, that out of 30 people chosen at random, four will emerge as leaders, about 10 will follow the leaders, and the others will complain about life being unfair and be victims of circumstances.

She stressed the need for farmers to listen to the marketplace and adapt to the changes necessary. Victims of circumstances blame the economy, the weather, the consumer... she said. They depend on others such as Extension agents, banks, and the government to fix it.

"We live in the worst of times or the best of times, depending on what you are looking for," she said.

To rekindle self worth, Brown said, "You must separate your self worth from your net worth."

Self worth can be enhanced by drawing on eternal values, caring for health, and taking care of the mind, she said.

While it's scary taking risks, she said that a quote from J. Paul Getty reminds people that not taking risks can result in disaster. Getty said, "In times of rapid change, experience might be the worst enemy."

For the first time at the annual seminar, the audience had the opportunity to ask questions during a panel composed of Moore, Brown, Conneman, and David Kohl, professor at Virginia Tech.

In the discussion, the panel agreed that they believe that the family farm will survive.

"I believe the family can do better than a corporate farm," Conneman said.

Moore said the family farm in the next 25 years will probably be more business oriented, larger, more specialized, but still a family farm.

Panel members also said that dairy farms with 65-head can make it financially in the '90s if they pay attention to details, keep debt moderate, and are modest in spending money.

"Some farmers with 60 head



Speakers at the Hamilton Bank Seminar emphasize the positive points of change. From left, Jolene Brown, David Kohl, Dr. Louis Moore, Darvin Boyd, and Dr. George Conneman.

make more money than those with 125," Moore said. Some with a 17,000 rolling herd average also make more money than those with 20,000 pounds.

"Some farmers suffer with 'bigness on the brain,'" Conneman said.

As with any other business, farmers must adjust to change and not be scared of financial analysis.

Donald Cooper, president of Hamilton Bank, told the 350 persons who attended that economists forecast that the prime rate will likely stay at its current level of six percent for the first half of the year, and may even go lower.

From a mega perspective, Kohl said that most farmers are in better shape financially this year than last. Fifty percent of farms are



Joseph DeTito

debt-free and others have reduced their debt ratio.

While an average family of 3.8 needs \$36,000 to \$40,000 annual income, Kohl said many families are reducing medical insurance because of skyrocketing prices.

He reminded the audience that farming in the second most hazardous occupation "so don't dump insurance."

The seminar was the 12th annual one that Hamilton held for the agricultural community in an effort to better serve the needs of the bank's customers.

"We care and want to continue



Jolene Brown

to be leaders in agriculture," Darvin Boyd, Hamilton agri-finance director said.

Family Spirit Awards At Poultry Progress Day

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)
 — The Poultry Family Spirit Award has been established to recognize Lancaster County families that have owned a poultry business for at least two generations. These businesses may be farms or marketing, feed, poultry supplies, or service businesses.

These multigenerational businesses will be recognized at the

1993 Lancaster County Poultry Progress Day on March 4 at the Lancaster County Farm and Home Center.

Lancaster County is one of this country's top poultry producing areas. This is the result of many poultry operations being in the same family for several generations.

Cattlemen's Meeting Set

MERCER (Mercer Co.) — The annual meeting of the N.W. Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association (NWPCA) will be held at the Mercer County Extension Center, on Monday, March 1.

There will be a braised steak dinner starting at 7 p.m. The cost for members of the NWPCA will be \$2.50 a person. The association is picking up part of the cost for the dinner and one other (spouse, herdsman, friend or family mem-

ber). Cost for non-members will be \$4 a person. (Ivomec is picking up part of the cost of the dinner for all individuals.)

The program for the evening will be presented by Shawn McKee, representative for MSD Ag-Vet Division of Merck & Co., Inc., Grove City. McKee's discussion will deal with "Parasite Control Programs and Products," sponsored by Ivomec.

Hope to see you on the 1st.



David Kohl



Dr. George Conneman



Panel members answer impromptu questions from the audience. From left, Jolene Brown, Dr. Louise Moore, Dr. George Conneman.