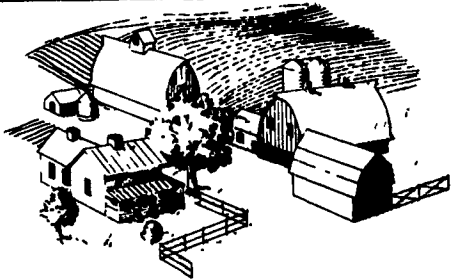


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MANAGEMENT

SELECTING A FARMING ALTERNATIVE

Duane L. Stevenson, Jr.
Farm Management
Northampton, Lehigh
Schuylkill, And
Part Of
Berks Counties

This is Part II on the topic of selecting a farming alternative. The first article in the series dealt mainly with personal and family considerations. This article will deal primarily with identifying alternatives.

Identifying Alternatives

You may have already decided

on an enterprise and may be eager to move on to the market potential, production, profitability, and financial feasibility segments of this column. First read this article prior to making a rash decision.

Resource Inventory. Your resource base needs to be evaluated before settling on a specific enterprise. The purpose of conducting a resource inventory is to show the limitations as well as the opportunities presented by your current situation.

As a general rule, the route to success avoids enterprises which require resources that are lacking, and takes advantage of resources that are underutilized. Also an accurate inventory will assist you in completing market and production evaluations.

A complete farm inventory

includes inventories on: (1) physical resources, (2) marketing resources, (3) management and labor resources, (4) by-product resources, and (5) financial resources. One should prepare a map showing the layout of buildings, woodlots, fields, water resources, soil types, and other resources.

If you have completed a farm inventory in the past, all you need to do is update the inventory. If this is your first resource inventory, much time will be involved in completing this task and accuracy is very important. You may have to take soil samples, measure fields, and visit your local Soil Conservation Office, ASCS, and other offices to complete reliable inventory information.

The next step in identifying alternatives is to list several possible new enterprises by mixing and matching identified resources with potential markets. If your ideas are not flowing, try one of the following suggestions:

- Look over the resource inventory information that you have compiled. Mark in red: underutilized physical, labor, and management resources; all potential markets; and all potential uses for by-products.

- Summarize inventory information and show to farm and non-farm friends for their feedback. Some people that you may want to involve may include cooperative extension agents and specialists, lenders, co-workers, and others for additional input.

- Talk to current buyers. Do they have any unfulfilled demands?

- Ask your farm and nonfarm neighbors what kinds of services they currently use and which they would like to see available.

- Read agricultural magazines, food magazines, and trade jour-

nals, and become a regular reader of the daily newspaper. These are ways to determine what people are buying and why.

- Talk to other farmers. Ask them about what other farmers are doing that you could do.

- If you travel, keep your eyes and ears open for new ideas that you can take home.

Remember, a good idea doesn't have to be a new idea; it just has to fit your needs, work on your land, pay the bills, and generate a profit. I will discuss the marketing aspect of an enterprise in a future article.

Schuylkill To Hold Spring Consignment Auction

SUMMIT STATION (SCHUYLKILL CO.)— Schuylkill County Fair will hold its annual spring consignment auction on April 3, at the Schuylkill Fair Grounds, Summit Station, starting at 9 a.m.

Items to be auctioned include lawn equipment, tools, antiques, nursery stock, household goods, and new building supplies.

Starting at 6 p.m. more than 200 Farm Toy and Winross trucks, Ertel Banks, and matchbox toys will be auctioned.

During the day, a Chinese Auction benefitting the 4-H Exchange Club will also be conducted.

Plenty of good food made by the Fair Association will be sold. Flea market tables are available.

The Fair committee is looking for quality consignment articles to benefit the fair. Consignments will be accepted on Thursday, April 1, and Fri, April 2, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information, call Curt Luckenbill (717) 739-4554.



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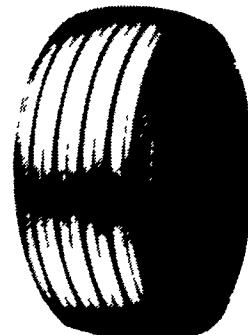
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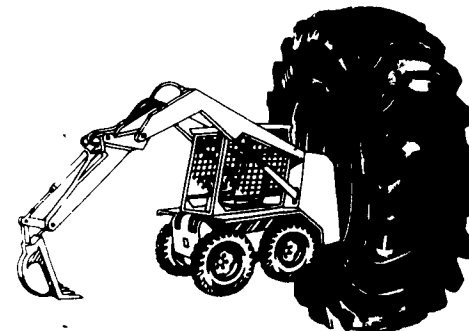


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