

Workshop Proves Farm Accounting Can Be Computerized

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LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)
 — For less than \$50, a farmer can use a personal computer to automate business accounting. One program can be customized to suit "your particular wishes and your particular needs on your farm business or organization," said Dr. Larry C. Jenkins, professor of agricultural economics at Penn State. Jenkins spoke to about 20 farmers and farm operators, veterinarians, accountants, office managers,

and consultants at the first part of a two week workshop, "Farm Records Made Easy Using Low-Cost Software and IBM-Compatible Computers," on Thursday morning at the Farm and Home Center.

Jenkins said that using computer software can be likened to a filing cabinet with folders to store information. A computer can be used to keep careful and complete records of all types of farm business, from accounting for profits and loss to inventory checks to business

investments.

Jenkins demonstrated a farm version of the Quicken Version 7.0 software for DOS, available from Intuit, from Menlo Park, Calif. That is one of several programs available for farm accounting. Another program, used for business records by Mable Hershey, Hershey Brothers, is called One Write Plus, which can accomplish similar tasks and is easy to use, according to Hershey.

At the start of the workshop, Jenkins told those who signed up

for the free course (the only requirement was that they purchase the software) that they were the "most varied group we've had to date."

What the program requires is a sense of knowing how to properly enter the transactions and keeping in mind the detail and "organization, organization, organization" necessary to reap the benefits of the program, according to the ag economist.

Using this computer software,

farm managers can call up reports to give them precise records of income and expenses on the farm. Those reports can be extremely helpful at tax time.

The types of IBM-compatible computers in use at the workshop included various Intel 386- and 486-based laptops and desktop systems.

The workshop continues next Thursday morning and afternoon at the Farm and Home Center.

Providence Acres

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wanted to use it, it would be different, but I doubt that we ever will. You really have to be on top of your cows to be sure that they're giving that extra milk, and then you've got to feed them extra, so I think it has to be an individual thing for a farmer and his animals.

"It's a lot of hard work," said Henry about farming. "We work as a team and everybody has their responsibilities. That's how we move ahead. We talk things out and that's how we plan. This is the second year now that we have this farm the way we wanted it. Because every year we had something like, we'd say, this year that hedge row comes out, and every year we'd plan that. I figured by the time I'm 60, I wanted this place all set so if Shawn does go, hey, at least the farm is the way we wanted it."

For the Abmas, the attention to detail and the desire to be tidy has

paid off in more ways than one. This year their farm was named a Dairy of Distinction.

"We were really happy that we got that," said Dorothy. "This is the third time we applied. When they first started, we applied two years in a row and we didn't get it."

"It doesn't take much to pick up behind you, because if you don't, you're going to trip over it anyway," said Henry.

Shawn, who graduated from Penn State in 1990, works on the family farm when he is able to be home.

Henry and Dorothy's other son, Kevin, and his wife Alice live in nearby Towanda with their three children. Their daughter, Holly, and her husband, Grant Boles, live in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Besides their work on the farm, the family also is active in the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, where they serve on an advisory council

and are state and national Holstein Association members. They are also members of the East Troy Baptist Church where Henry is a deacon and Dorothy is the secretary of Sunday School.

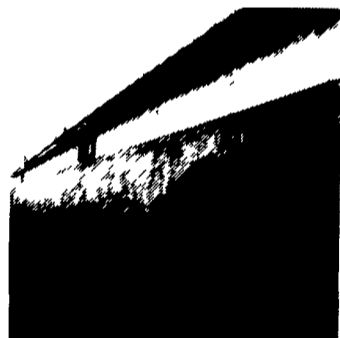
"Really, when you think of it, we came from nothing, of knowing that much about dairy, and to have a herd average like what we have, we just thank God for it," said Dorothy. "It's by God's grace that we're here and what we have is because we've prayed for wisdom, or we would never have it. It was quite trying the first couple of years. I think we took one day at a time. That first year it took us forever, but, you know, we got into a system."

Added Henry, "I give (God) the glory because we couldn't have done it on our own. We trusted him and he just opened the doors. And it just fell in line. It was really beautiful how it worked."



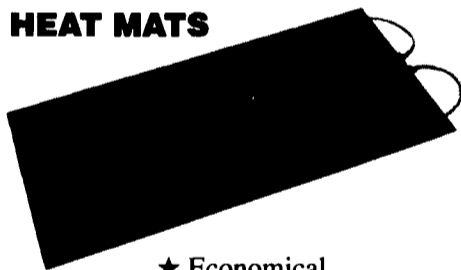
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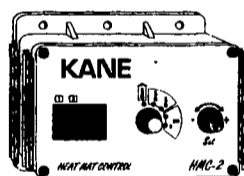
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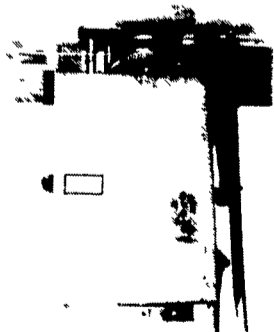


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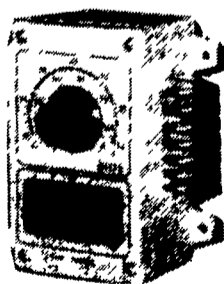
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