

Adams County livestock hauler Bob Bishop loads steers onto his truck at Don Mason's farm in New Freedom Township. The steers were headed for butchering at Norman J. Shriver, Jr.'s in Emmitsburg, Md.

Doyle Waybright, one of the owners of Mason Dixon Farms Inc. in Gettysburg, said even an operation as large as theirs can't

justify the expense of hauling cattle in their own truck when Bishop will provide the same service at such an affordable price.

"It creates a lot of flexibility for us," Waybright said. "And Bishop does well. He knows how to handle cattle." Bishop charges \$6

per calf, \$7 to \$8 for a feeder steer and \$12 for anything larger. The prices aren't much beyond what Bishop and his father were paid in

the '40s — \$3 per cow and \$1 per calf. But the increase worries Bishop just the same.

ROBERT G. BISHOP & SON



Benn Bishop, left, and Bob Bishop, right, are the father-son team behind Robert G. Bishop & Son, a livestock dealing and trucking firm based out of the family's Gettysburg farm. The Bishops haul livestock from Franklin, Adams and York counties in Pennsylvania and Carroll and Frederick counties in Maryland to weekly auctions in Greencastle, Pa. and Westminster and Hagerstown, Md.

"I hate to charge that much really, for the price they're bringing now," he said, as if the depressed market is somehow his responsibility.

Blue Southern States cap firmly on his head and a flannel shirt and jacket to protect him from the winter weather, Bishop is efficiency in quiet action as he makes his rounds. If folks are around, he's happy to exchange pleasantries. But he's a man on a mission, so there's no time for gossip.

At farm after farm, Bishop hoists calves into the truck with an ease that belies his years. He hesitates only to brush matted manure from their coats and mark them with an orange crayon so he'll be able to note their ownership later.

"The better something looks, the better it sells," he said. Though it's been more than a decade since he was employed by an auction, Bishop spent enough nights and summers working the sales in Carlisle, Chambersburg, and Westminster, Md. to know.

In all that time, Bishop's never been seriously hurt by an animal — though there've been a few close calls. "If I wouldn't have been as quick as I was in my prime I wouldn't be here right now," he said.

Experience has taught him lessons about four-legged beasts that would make Dr. Doolittle jealous. The "contrariest" animal a hauler faces? Good old Porky Pig.

"A hog is something you can't force," Bishop said. "You've got to give him his time and let him decide for himself." When hogs had tails, he said, "you could grab 'em tail-to-ear and throw 'em on." But the practice of docking tails is so commonplace now, those days are long gone.

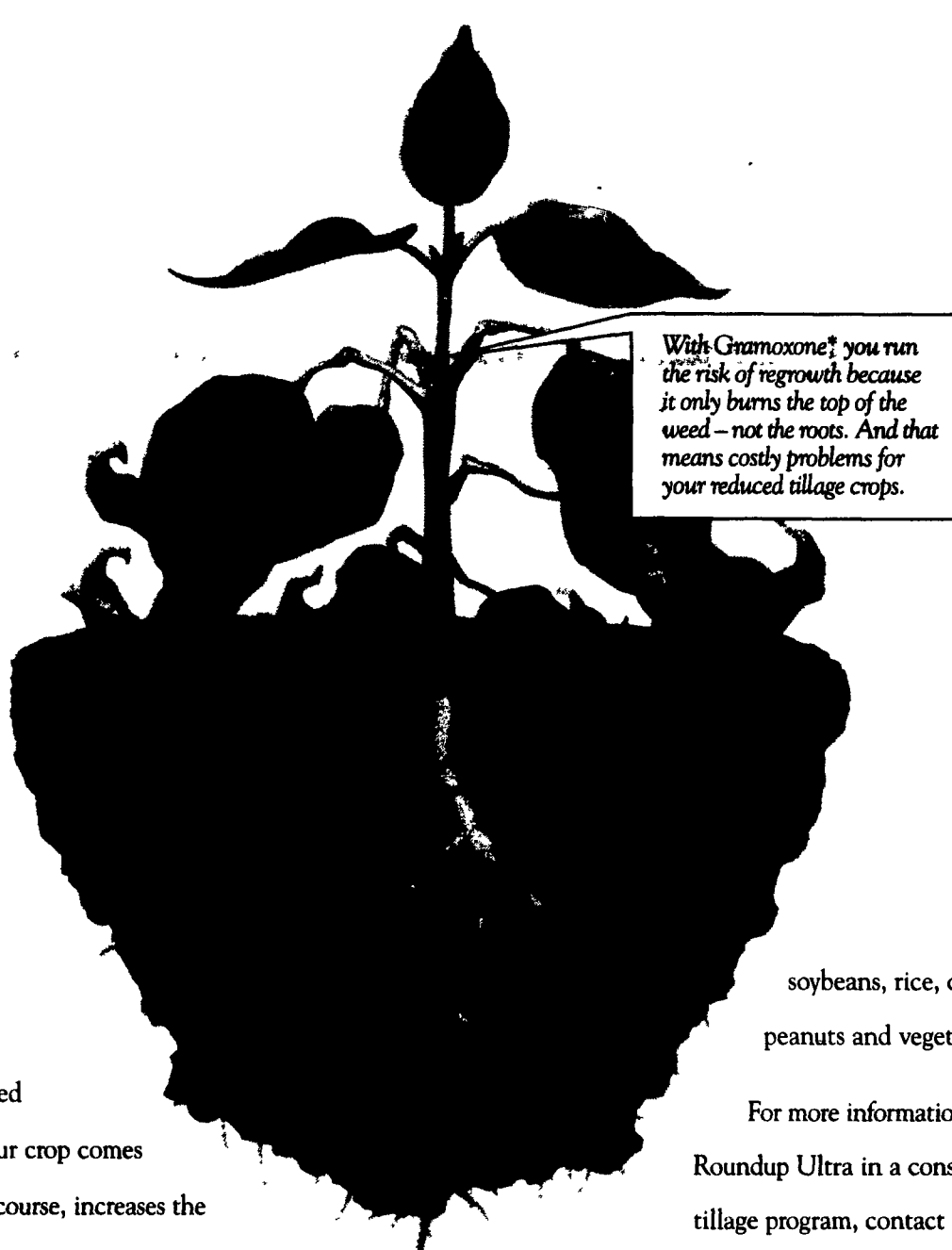
Bishop doesn't believe in using brute force to make an animal do what he wants. And he has little understanding for those who poke and prod a calf or cow until it becomes hysterically frightened.

"You take an old cow, for example. She's wore out. She's old. And she was never hit in her lifetime. But first thing, they're in on her with a cane, beating her like she's a wild animal," he said, shaking his head.

Bishop still runs about 20 bulls of his own, splitting his fortune among the leading dairy and beef breeds, including registered Holstein, Black Angus, and Limousin. He "rents" the animals to other farmers in exchange for their feed and board.

Friends and neighbors also call on Bishop to castrate their animals. He learned the technique from a neighbor many years ago. Though demand for his services has slacked off a bit now, he's performed the operation on as many as 99 pigs in a day and even the odd cat now and then, he said.

Bishop prides himself on never having been kept from a sale by inclement weather — "though several times I shouldn't have ven-



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