

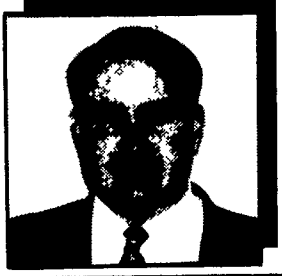
Agriculture Insights

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THE LANCASTER CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

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A, Neighborly Thing To Do

One thing that continues to grow year after year for farmers everywhere is their number of neighbors, and for city dwellers, the mystique of country living is often coupled with a genuine lack of understanding for modern agricultural practices. Whoever said, "ignorance is bliss" never has been in a township meeting for an agriculture operation expansion near an urban or suburban area.

Sometimes, the traditional agriculture response is "we were here first." Although this statement is often true, the reality is that farmers have more and more neighbors who do not have agricultural backgrounds, and they are willing to question farming practices. One of the newest skills farmers must start to develop is relating to their non-farm neighbors.

Take the first step by thinking of a public relations strategy for your farm. For example, you know when the manure is going on the fields, but your neighbors do not. A simple phone call from you the night before can eliminate almost every complaint.

Another increasingly popular strategy is to invite your neighbors onto your farm for a tour or spring picnic. This gives your neighbors a chance to see the farm, and you have an opportunity to answer questions. A short tour is a public relations investment that can have tremendous benefits. However, always remind your guests about farm safety. Keep them away from machinery and

dangerous areas, while they are enjoying their tour. If you have concerns about liability, consult your farm insurance agent.

Luke Brubaker, who farms 800 acres in Lancaster County, developed a public relations strategy for his farm and is pleased with the results. Brubaker keeps an open line of communications with his neighbors and listens to their concerns.

For example, after speaking to his neighbors, Brubaker now does some of his work, such as spreading manure, at night. He also fenced in a creek on his property, allowing neighbors to fish close to their homes.

"As farmers, one of our biggest jobs is keeping our neighbors happy. This can be difficult at times, but it's definitely worth the extra work," Brubaker said.

Improving relationships with your neighbors is a wonderful New Year's resolution, and as people understand a farming operation they may become more tolerant. A small note or gesture from you can go a long way. Getting to know your neighbors may be your best investment for 1998.

1998 Farm Business Management School Scheduled

Today's successful farmers realize the key to their survival involves smart decision-making. The Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Industry invites you to join us for our fifth annual Farm Financial Management School to be held on Thursday, January 29, 1998, at the Country Table Restaurant located in Mount Joy, PA. This annual program is an intensive all-day seminar on employee-related topics designed for owners of today's complex farming operations.

The goal is to provide in-depth training on human resource management, succession and estate planning, family farm management, and other related topics of interest to this important segment of the agricultural community. The limited class size and the chance for managers to bring their own personal situations and questions makes this a great opportunity to find answers to agriculture's tough business questions. Participants in the school each receive a detailed notebook of reference and study materials provided by the instructors for their use in further analyzing their own business situation.

Two dynamic and nationally recognized instructors have been secured based on their experience and ability to work "ground level" with intensive agriculture operations. **Bernie Erven** is a professor of Agriculture Economics at Ohio State University and **Gary Heim**, an attorney, whose clientele primarily lies within the agriculture community.

We will also feature a panel of farmers moderated by Dennis Ginder, farm management specialist for Lancaster and Chester County Penn State Cooperative Extension. The panel will also focus on human resource experiences as well as any other financial topic which interests the group.

The deadline for registration is January 16, 1998 and will be limited to a "first come-first served" basis. Registration fee is \$100 per person and includes all meals and materials. Production agriculture Lancaster Chamber members receive a 25% discount and anyone joining the chamber will also receive the reduced rate. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Jim Shirk at 397-3531 or contact your local ag lender.

Feel free to send your comments and ideas by email to **HYPERLINK** <mailto:jshirk@lcci.com> or call Jim Shirk at the Chamber at **HYPERLINK** [him at \(717\) 397-3531](tel:7173973531).

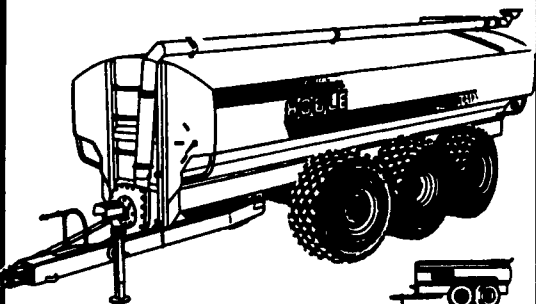
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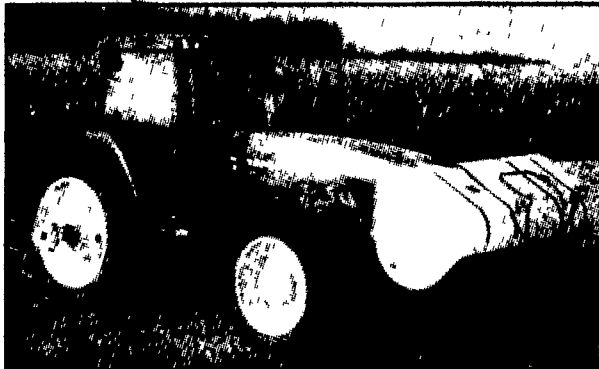
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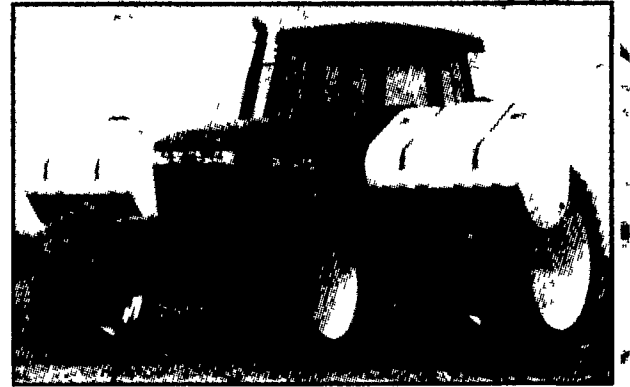
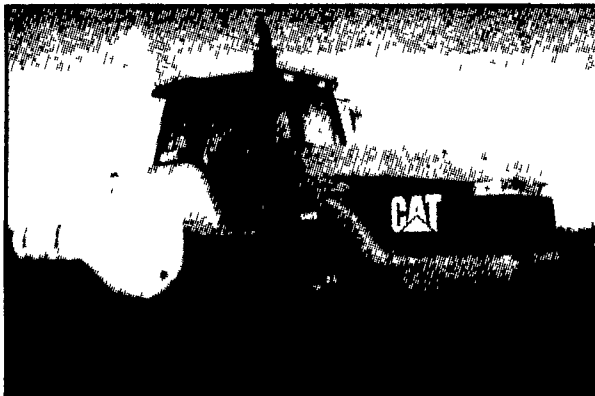
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