

What Does A Retiree Do After The Cows Are Gone?

KENNETH L. ZIMMERMAN
As told to

Shirley Zimmerman

FREDERICK, Md. —What do you do when the cows are gone?

First you count your blessings — you still have good health, your family, your land and buildings, and farm equipment. You still need an income so you turn to what you know best and look to what still makes you happy. I decided to concentrate on being able to continue growing field corn and alfalfa hay—those crops I had been growing for years to feed my dairy cows.

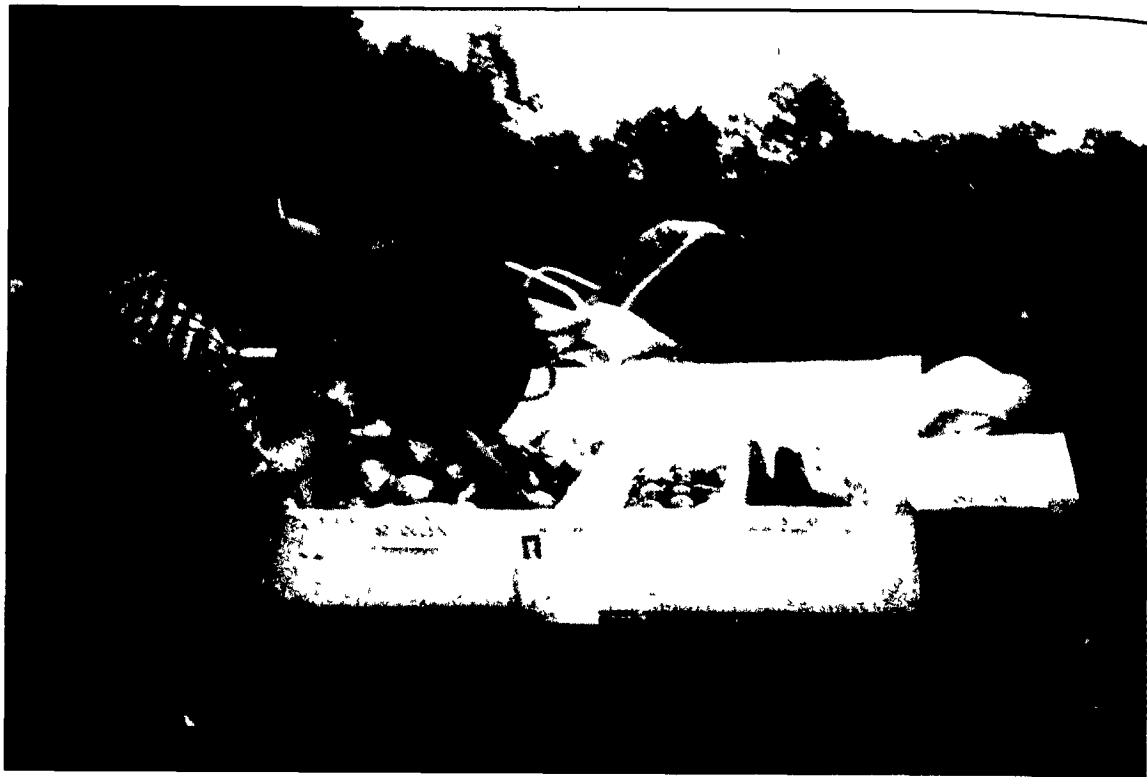
Looking ahead and considering those bills, which would be most likely to drain whatever my income would be, I foresaw health insurance as the biggest everyday expense and the real estate taxes on the farm and my home as the largest one time expense. So, I decided to try something new and different.

I planned to plant sweet corn on about four acres of land with the thought of being able to market it best if it were planted and sold early. Early corn in my area would be “jumping the gun” on competitors. We are told when trying new ventures such as roadside selling that we should not “invest more than you are afraid to lose.” So I made a makeshift counter to fit on the back of our farm pickup and found a somewhat desirable spot along the highway on the farm. We made signs announcing “coming soon” to put up one week before and permanent

signs for close by and one at a busy intersection one mile from our home

We started selling our first sweet corn on July 9. That day and everyday but one thereafter until our corn was gone, I took the tractor and a small cart into the field and started picking around 6:30 a.m. I usually filled that cart by around 9:00 a.m., came into the house and showered and pulled the pickup to its selling “spot.” My corn selling day began about 10:00 a.m. and ended about 4-6:00 p.m. My goal was to sell all I had picked and then pull away for the day. As an extra special little “treat” my wife made a giveaway flyer with “Zimmandale Farm Recipes” using items sold—corn, tomatoes and potatoes

The first three to four days were the biggest. No one else in the area had sweet corn so “word of mouth” really got around. One lady told me she saw a friend at K-Mart who told her about the corn. She left there and headed for our small stand (approximately 5-6 miles away). Many customers returned and passed the word on to their family, friends and neighbors. One decision that was difficult was what price to charge. We called and asked the price at a couple of stores. Although their corn was not local, we still decided to undersell them. We wanted to move it and yet be within a reasonable price range. Several days later we lowered it \$1. They say you must put all aside to concentrate completely on



Kenneth Zimmerman sells sweet corn from the back of his pickup truck. Although he made enough money to cover his taxes with a bit leftover, Zimmerman decided his battle with weather and predators isn't a profitable-enough venture.

your roadside adventure. Well, I recall that I had not even seen the back buildings on the farm for a couple of weeks. I would call that unusual.

As we were making plans I thought it would be a good idea to also sell tomatoes and plant a couple rows of red potatoes. All went pretty good with one exception. The tomatoes did not ripen enough to sell along with the corn. There were a few to start the day but they soon disap-

peared. Many customers only wanted tomatoes. Now that I've finished selling corn, the tomatoes are nice and ripe.

When it was all over and as I look back, I'm glad I did it and I reached my goal of being able to pay our real estate taxes. We even had \$200 over. My biggest disappointment, and I might add the reason I'm not going to do it again next year, is the battle with Mother Nature in the cornfield. When I went to the

field to pick a couple of mornings, I would pull one ear and have to skip the next 7-8 ears. The raccoons had had a feast during the night. If there were two ears on one stalk, the 'coons ate the more mature ear. Another time I shared my corn with the birds. They just flew down and picked the ends of the biggest best ears. That was really frustration.

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Creativity Blossoms At Lebanon County Flower Show



Helen Woods grew this stunning houseplant from a pineapple that she purchased at a supermarket. The plant grows a pineapple that is sweet to eat.

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff
LEBANON (Lebanon Co.) —

At the Lebanon Valley Mall recently, more than 429 entries showcased the beauty and originality that flowers and plants inspire.

Sponsored by the Lebanon County Flower Club, the show was opened to non-club members who wanted to compete for awards.

One of the most fascinating foliage house plants was a Bromeliad Pineapple entered by Helen Woods.

“I grew it from pineapple leaves,” Helen said of the spiky plant from which a pineapple is emerging.

According to Helen anyone can grow the eye-catching plant. Purchase a pineapple from the

supermarket. Make sure the leaves are tightly attached and not trimmed in the center.

Cut off the leaves leaving one-half inch of the pineapple top intact. Set in air to dry for three days.

Prepare a mixture of potting soil and sand in a flowerpot. Put pineapple top in soil mixture with cut side down. Place in a sunny spot and water.

Helen said that it takes about 18 months to grow a mature pineapple that can be eaten.

“It's a very sweet and delicious,” Helen said of the flavor.

The pineapple plant that Helen had on display was about 14 months old.

Competition in the flower arrangement category revealed a



Some of the most fascinating arrangements incorporate unusual materials such as this harvest basket with garden corn and wildflowers and the basket overflowing with colorful hot peppers, cucumbers, wildflowers, and weeds.

prolific assortment of designs and blooms. Some designs appeared simple to achieve, but flower judges examine designs differently than those with untrained eyes.

Some blooms were so perfect they looked like silk flowers. But the most fascinating arrangements often incorporated unusual materials such as harvest baskets overflowing with colorful hot peppers, cucumbers, garden corn, wildflowers, weeds, and twisted corkscrew.

Keiko Smith from Annville won Best of Show, Tri Color, and creativity awards. Keiko studied design in many different places and under many teachers. Her distinct designs have a Japanese flavor. Long, slender leaves are often knotted or slit and folded to complete a design.

“You can always tell her designs,” said Alma Schmaltzer, flower club member.

Another top winner was Mary Heffelfinger who received the

Grand Sweepstakes, Petite, Award of Merit, and Award of Distinction.

Alma said that new members are welcome to the monthly meetings the club holds. All meetings are held in Freeman Hall at Cornwall Manor on the second floor. The next meeting will be held on Oct. 13. A plant sale will begin at noon and a session on “Hands on Arranging,” will begin at 1 p.m. For more information, call Alma Schmaltzer at (717) 949-2116.

HOMESTEAD NOTES

