

Farmers have generally earned a reputation as trusting souls.

They share tools and equipment, help one another out with supplies, trade field work and machinery parts, and think nothing of sealing business agreements with a promise and a handshake.

Farmers will stop to help one another when a flat tire leaves one stranded, heifers take to the hills or a combine catches fire. Few things more personify the rural good-neighbor policy groups which materialize almost out of nowhere and turn out to help a fellow farm who has been hit by disaster from wind, flood, fire or serious health problems.

Still, there has always been

that small element of human nature which is willing to take advantage of the inherent trust of rural folks and turn it to their criminal advantage.

Sadly, rural crime is alive and well, as evidenced by a recent incident which happened to fellow dairy farmers here in southern York County. They sought to share their latest brush with crime in an effort to possibly thwart a repeat performance somewhere else in the area.

Two strangers stopped at Ed Johnson's son's home near the family dairy and crops farm late one recent evening, inquiring if they could have permission to hunt pigeons. Wild pigeon flocks tend to congregate and roost in

most farm buildings in these parts of the country if they can gain any access, especially anywhere that has feed grain commodities, which offer plentiful eating. They mess up buildings, eat feed, litter hay supplies with droppings, and can carry disease and pest organisms, which can be harmful to domestic livestock, as well as to people.

So, especially if flocks have grown excessively large for a farmstead, wild pigeons become fair game for hunters, who can do a farmer, as well as neighbors and the general consuming public, a service by helping to reduce the source of potential livestock and human disease problems.

The family's son granted permission to the hunters, casually observing that it appeared the pigeon hunters were driving a battered pickup truck with a wooden crate on the bed.

Next morning, the Johnson's discovered that their two best heifer baby calves were missing from their pens in the calf-raising barn. The two calves happened to be ET's, embryo-transfer offspring, from some of the family's best polled registered Holstein bloodlines in their dairy

herd. The pair of calves had been removed from a unit containing about a dozen; these two were the most valuable from the entire group, with none of the others disturbed.

Coincidental that they got the best? Maybe.

The eartags reportedly held no particular information that would identify the calves as being any more special or valuable than their pen mates. Inherently, suspicious person that I am, I find it hard to believe that thieves would just be lucky enough to grab the two best. If they have that good an eye for cattle, we should sign them up for dairy official judging training.

Family members immediately contacted the police and traveled to an area livestock auction to see if the missing calves might by chance turn up there. And in their visiting with other farmers, they spoke with a fellow producer who had lost a supply of bagged feed some months earlier, after granting pigeon hunting permission to a pair of strangers.

Coincidental? Maybe. (Makes perfect sense to me that someone who steals calves might also steal

feed.)

My heart has a rock-hard spot in it toward cattle thieves since some 20 years ago, when our daughter's first beloved 4-H heifer was stolen, along with some less precious ones. We, too, never found a trace of them. But no one had asked permission to be on the property before Lassie vanished; they just sneaked in and stoled our heifers from an adjoining pasture not visible from our home.

"Maybe we can help alert someone, somewhere, so that this doesn't happen to them," say the Johnsons.

Cattle prices are beginning to nudge up a bit, so this kind of disgusting stuff might well be on the increase. Do your part to help take a bite out of rural crime: be suspicious, be questioning, be cautious, be alert, be wary of anyone you don't know asking to do anything on your property or if they appear to be "casing" the neighborhood.

If it doesn't "feel right" to have someone you don't really know on your property, just say "NO."

And write down their license number.

Gardeners To Celebrate Seasonal Bounty

PHILADELPHIA — Thousands of gardeners, families, and visitors from the Philadelphia area will celebrate a cornucopia of home-grown bounty as competitors vie for ribbons at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Harvest Show, September 16 and 17, at the Horticultural Center in Fairmount Park.

"Harvest 2000...and Beyond," with its competitions, activities and displays will celebrate futuristic gardening themes and ideas in a festive weekend of family fun. Prize winning fruits, vegetables, herbs, flowers, pressed plant materials, floral designs, baked goods, and preserved projects all set the stage for this

"Country Fair" of successful summer growing. Visitors can attend a variety of educational exhibits and hear guest speakers who will offer free lectures and demonstrations. Youth activities will include scarecrow making, pumpkin painting along with competition categories that include succulents, vegetables,

sunflowers, dish gardens, terrariums, annuals, perennials, container gardens and preserved products. Plus, a mini-village with seasonal gift tools, clothes, furniture, orchids, bonsai, soaps, and gardening supplies will be open with more than 30 marketplace shops.

Special events this year will include a "vegetables-on-wheels" race, a performing rocket skater, and a traveling magician. The "Great Pumpkin Pie Contest" will take place on Saturday afternoon, and beekeeper Robert Harvey will don his massive "bee-beard" and demonstrate hive maintenance techniques. Mike McGrath, host of WHYY's "You

Bet Your Garden" will broadcast live from the show on Saturday at 11 a.m. while answering questions from the Show audience.

The Philadelphia Harvest Show will be held Saturday, September 16, and Sunday, September 17 at the Horticulture Center on Horticulture Drive in Fairmount Park, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. Admission is \$6 for adults and \$2 for children. Individual gardeners, community growers, groups and clubs are all invited to enter.

For information about submitting entries call the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society at (215) 988-8800.

Lowfat Milk May Reduce Obesity Risk

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The American Dairy Association & Dairy Council Mid East has great news for dairy farmers and dieters alike. According to a study published in the Feder-

ation of American Societies for Experimental Biology journal, Americans can still consume dairy products such as lowfat milk, yogurt, and cheese and continue to lose weight.

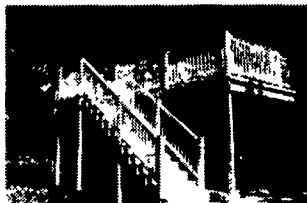
After controlling calories, physical activity and other factors, body fat was remarkably lower in people who consumed dairy products in the study.

"Mistakenly, people cut out milk, yogurt and cheese when trying to control weight gain or loss," says Ann Marie Krauthem, registered dietitian, director of nutrition communications for ADADC Mid East.

"Dietitians have known for some time that lowfat dairy foods may help reduce the risk of osteoporosis, high blood pressure, and possibly even colon cancer.

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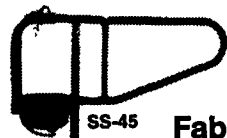
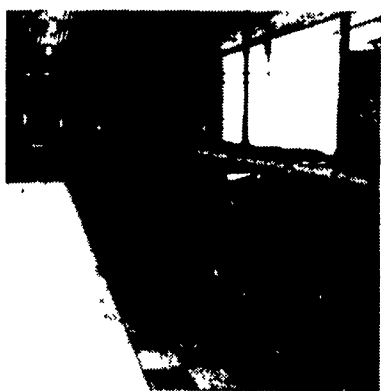
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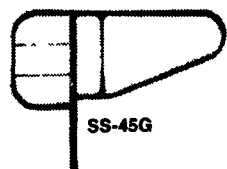
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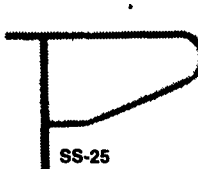
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