

Farm Management



MARKETING 2000 AND 2001 PRODUCTION

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I see very few crops still in the field. The cows are off pasture. Machinery is put away. Most doors and windows are being kept shut. It is the beginning of a less hectic season. We might even contemplate the past year and plan for the coming year.

Farmers tend to be conservative politically, philosophically, and emotionally. This is natural. Making a living in the face of weather, price, and government uncertainty is risky business. There is no need to seek additional excitement. This has led to an increasing interest in marketing.

The past couple of years have presented significant marketing

challenges. Lack of rain, too much heat, low prices, too much rain, not enough sun, low prices, increasing competition, and low prices are causing growers to consider developing a more substantial plan for actively marketing their production. Using traditional marketing methods has come up short lately.

Producers understand the need to concentrate on marketing. The challenge is developing a flexible marketing plan that uses appropriate tools and controls emotional decisions. Following the market closely, quickly reveals that prices cannot be predicted with total success. We can study the past and the present, and then apply this knowledge to the future, but there are limitations.

Marketing has a vocabulary that is unrelated to our everyday

activities. Sometimes it seems marketing involves doing the exact opposite of what is logical. The available marketing alternatives have distinct advantages and disadvantages that must be understood before a thoughtful plan can be developed. The farm financial situation, attitude toward risk, and level of marketing knowledge are additional factors affecting development of a usable plan.

All costs must be considered when developing a marketing strategy. Interest rates, shrinkage, fees, advisers, transportation, lost opportunity, and cash requirements need to be considered. Marketing can be successful without using the futures markets, but understanding the futures market can be powerful. Local prices are nearly a direct result of what happens at the various boards of trade.

Prices can change from week to week. It is easy to concentrate on a single sale that resulted in a below-average price. Try using a yearly pricing summary. The idea is to follow the value of total or expected production. Cash sales, forward pricing, futures activities, and government payments all contribute to farm revenue.

Many people would like to think there is a secret formula to making marketing decisions, but it does not exist! Successful marketing requires time and patience. The longer and harder you work at it, the better you will become. In an effort to increase farmer's marketing knowledge, the Lehigh Valley Grain Marketing Club is sponsoring a marketing seminar on Jan. 23 near Allentown.

Bob Utterback is the fea-

Safely Store Garden Chemical Products

COLUMBUS, Ohio — As snowy mornings draw closer, gardeners are putting away summer tools. These tools may include garden chemicals and pesticides used to fight insects and weeds during the growing season.

Gardeners are encouraged to take time to evaluate their storage methods to protect their families and pets, said Joanne Kick-Raack, coordinator of the Pesticide Education Program, part of Ohio State University Extension.

"Garden chemicals and pesticides should be stored out of reach of children and pets ideally in a locked cabinet," Kick-Raack said. "Pesticides should be stored in the original container with the original label attached. Storing pesticides in another container, such as an empty soda pop or food bottle, is confusing and could cause an adult or child to ingest the product."

Kick-Raack emphasizes keeping containers in a dry area to

prevent corrosion or possible leakage. Containers should be sealed tightly and stored separately from food, seed, fertilizer and other products.

"Safety should be the first priority when handling and storing pesticides," she said.

The labels on pesticide products also provide information for storage, Kick-Raack said. Some products may need to be stored in a controlled area to avoid freezing or excessive heat. Another safety tip is to avoid stockpiling pesticides.

"Storage needs can be reduced if homeowners buy only the amount of garden chemicals and pesticides they need for the growing season," she said.

For more information about storing and disposing of garden chemicals, contact your county extension office or the Pesticide Education Program at (614) 292-4070.

Utterback is a registered commodity broker and president of Utterback Marketing Services, Inc. in New Richmond, Ind. He provides overall technical and fundamental marketing outlooks and he and his staff implement trades for farms and farm related organizations. You can read his outlooks in Farm Journal magazine and daily marketing comments at <http://www.utterback.com>

Paul Knight will also be giving a presentation. Knight is the Pennsylvania climatologist. He is an instructor of meteorology at Penn State and manages the Weather Communications Group. Knight has been the sen-

ior forecaster for The New York Times since 1986. Paul is also the producer, co-host, and on-camera meteorologist for WPSX-TV's Weather World.

During this seminar, we will be discussing the economic and political environment, federal farm policy, fundamental factors affecting agriculture, developing a marketing plan, trends, volatility, cash flow, emotions, weather, and world agricultural output. Everyone is invited to attend this excellent educational activity.

For additional information, contact John Berry at (610) 391-9840.

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