



Books and magazines of interest to Lancaster Farming readers

**ANDY ANDREWS**  
Editor

**TRADITIONAL AMERICAN FARMING TECHNIQUES**, by Frank D. Gardner. The Lyons Press, 2002, 1088 pp., \$29.95. ISBN 1-58574-412-3

I'll admit, **TRADITIONAL AMERICAN FARMING TECHNIQUES** is a *big book*. A lot of the older material came by way of the first edition of this book, published in 1916 by L.T. Myers as **SUCCESSFUL FARMING**. The first Lyons printing is 2001, but this has a "Foreword to the 2002 Edition," so I'm assuming that's where the editor leaves us.

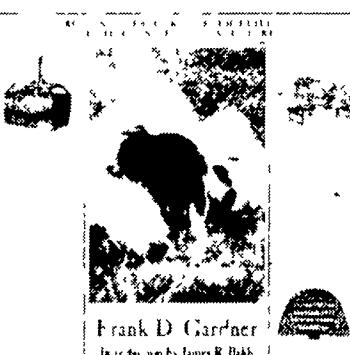
And what a place to go!

No, I didn't read this cover to cover. I haven't read the Bible cover to cover either. But what's nice, you can go to any page in this farming book, almost randomly, and read about farming practices from what the author Gardner refers to as the "golden age of American agriculture," which began sometime after the start of World War I and lasted until shortly after World War II, when "industrial agriculture arrived," according to the Foreword written by James R. Babb, from Searsport, Maine.

The book "makes a popular appeal to all men engaged in farming," Gardner writes in his Preface. Gardner credits the "Pennsylvania State College" for helpful suggestions.

The contents range from soil classification and crop adaptation to lime and soil amendments. The book covers soil water, its functions and control, and general soil management methods. Farm crops are covered, including various grains (buckwheat, rice, flax, emmer, kaffir corn, and sunflower).

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Meadow and pasture grasses, including the benefits of clovers, are detailed. Also, annual legumes, even peanuts are here.

**TRADITIONAL AMERICAN FARMING TECHNIQUES** covers everything grown under the sun, including cane sugar, cotton, tobacco, many vegetables and fruits, including pome and stone fruits, the farm woodlot, and others. Animal husbandry — livestock and dairy farming is also included here. There are lots of items on dairy farming.

This book looks at engines, motors, and tractors on the farm, farm sanitation, drainage and irrigation, cropping and feeding systems, and even marketing and cooperation! How about that, farm marketing in 1916! (And we thought direct marketing was a new concept.) Home economics and ag education are part and parcel to the book, too.

This book could be labeled "esoterica" or "nostalgic" by a few. I loved the "soil fertility barrel" and the information about how to prevent erosion. Page 101 has an interesting caption that is a predecessor to the manure scrapers of today.

## National Farmers Union Members Adopt Policy Resolutions At Convention

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Resolutions outlining the direction of the National Farmers Union (NFU) were passed by member delegates at organization's 101st Anniversary Convention, Feb. 28-March 3, at the Coast Anaheim Hotel.

The delegates passed a special order of business urging the administration to undertake a plan of action to address the "social and economic crisis" in rural America. The resolution outlined numerous areas in which the administration failed to constructively address poor rural economic conditions, including the 2002 Farm Bill, natural disaster aid, agricultural trade negotiations, and the president's economic stimulus package.

"The National Farmers Union urges the president of the United States and the secretary of agriculture to make family farmers and ranchers and rural communities a priority in the development and implementation of federal policies," the resolution said.

A second resolution reinforced the organization's support of the country-of-origin food labeling law and insisted the USDA implement the new law in a "timely and farmer-friendly manner that is fully consistent with the intent of Congress." The resolution said USDA has been

Back in 1915, it was interesting to note that Pennsylvania grew 1.5 million acres of corn (page 179). There were 914,118 acres of red clover grown in Pennsylvania in 1910 (page 250).

Page 647 noted that for a good dairy herd, "exercise is beneficial to the health of the cows." And back then, the "bull is half the herd."

Old implement lovers will adore the illustrations and photos of old farm tools.

And I especially enjoyed page 913, with markets, marketing, and cooperation, when the "Farm Bulletin Board" brought business. Putting out "good quality" in "an attractive form" rings as true today as in 1916.

This book belongs on a good farm historian's shelf.

"slow" in implementing the proper regulations for voluntary and mandatory country-of-origin labeling.

The Farmers Union members passed another resolution supporting actions to restrict the importation of milk protein concentrate (MPC). According to NFU President Dave Frederickson, imported MPC has created a significant loophole in U.S. dairy trade policy and has distorted the U.S. milk market. NFU wants to prevent MPC from being used in standardized cheeses and seeks to make imported MPC and other dairy blends subject to tariff rate quotas.

Another resolution supported the establishment of a renewable fuels standard introduced by Senators Tom Daschle, D-S.D., and Richard Lugar, R-Ind. The members also supported the "Biofuels Energy Independence Act" recently introduced by U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur, D-Ohio. The resolution also supported reimbursement of the transportation trust fund for reductions from renewable fuels incentive programs.

The family farmers and ranchers also passed a special order of business to address international trade negotiations and the affects they have on state and local governments, farmers, and local businesses.

The general opinion of trade panelists at the convention was that trade negotiators place a low priority on agriculture. When negotiators do address agriculture, they concluded that they are more likely to represent the interests of the industry rather than individual producers.

U.S. trade negotiators need to represent farmers and ranchers, according to the panelists. They vowed to continue pressuring the Bush Administration and Congress to remind trade negotiators of whose interests they actually represent.

A group of political experts and agricultural leaders were asked to address the question: "What's next for farm policy?" Congressional control, trade talks, and subsidy support were three issues that emerged as determining the future of farm policy, according to the panelists.

The Farm policy panel included Jim Wiesemeyer, vice president for farm and trade policy with Sparks Companies; Jerry Hagstrom, agriculture writer for National Journal's Congress Daily, DTN, and Ag-Week; Jonathon Lehman, agricultural adviser for Sen. Tom Daschle, D-S.D.; and Paul Carver, legislative aide to U.S. Representative David Obey, D-Wis. The panel was moderated by NFU Vice President of Government Relations Tom Buis.

One farmer asked the panel what farmers should do to improve their economic status and get better farm policies. In response, Wiesemeyer said, "Look to energy such as biodiesel in domestic programs."

Hagstrom said, "Keep going to Washington and work with others."

Carver said, "Fight milk protein concentrates, trade threats from Australians and others, support supply management" and grazing initiatives.

Lehman said that it was important to "broaden the coalition" to include rural health, education, and other interests to work together for a better rural America.

Keynote speaker at the convention was Bill Gates Sr., who gave his formula for success: "Get up early, work hard all day, and have a stupendously successful son."

Gates' formula for estate taxes was reform, not repeal. He explained: "Repealing the estate tax on the largest estates would endanger family farms in the United States. Without an estate tax, giant corporate farms will simply get larger and larger at the expense of family farms. Rather than repealing the estate tax, we should reform and simplify the estate tax to enable family farmers to better survive the growing pressures from big agribusiness."

Three long-time supporters of Farmers Union were honored at the convention with Meritorious Service awards: Sen. Paul Wellstone, Minnesota, posthumously; former Sen. George McGovern, South Dakota; and former NFU president, Leland Swenson.

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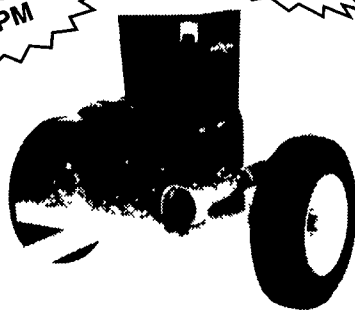
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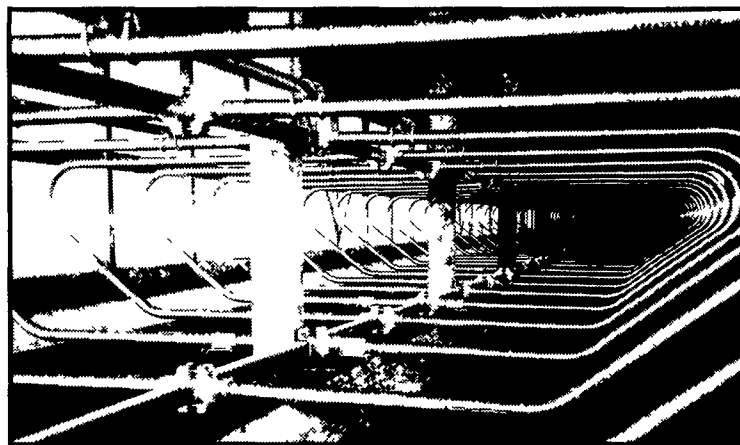
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