



Agriculture Means Business

...editorials

You've no doubt heard that "orange juice isn't just for breakfast anymore." With the changes that agriculture is going through, a new motto for the farmer might soon be "a farmer isn't just a farmer anymore."

A farmer must be a businessman, manager, producer and a good 'ole boy.

The businessman-farmer often buys computers to help him with his farming operation. The computer not only gives vital information about weather, current commodities exchange prices, budgets, break-even prices and cost of production, but it also helps the farmer figure taxes and do financial analysis.

As a manager, the farmer must know about range control practices, common diseases and

their cures, and budgeting time and money.

Production consists of knowing what to plant, when to plant, how to grow, when and how to harvest. Or, in the case of animals, how to care for them and what or where to go if something goes wrong.

Farmers are slowly but surely going broke, and the good 'ole boy image is going down the



tubes with the days of profit. People not involved in agriculture have never considered agri-

culture an industry, not really. Farmers, like everyone else in the job market, want to make a profit. But with rising interest rates, high fuel costs and skyrocketing production costs, it's getting harder and harder for the farmer to make a buck.

Farms are getting larger and fewer, and there are relatively few new-comers. Father Farmer is sending his son to college to major in business or some type of agriculture. But rarely is the son returning to the farm to continue where dad left off.

If Father Farmer doesn't have a son, he might sell out and he and Mama move into the big city, or he hires someone to take over.

Producing more is almost a sin in agriculture now-a-days. The government is urging farmers to set aside land for conservation, rotate crops and use energy more efficiently.

After all, the more the farmer produces, the more there is on the market. And the more there is on the market, the lower the price goes... unless, of course, the harvest isn't successful because of disease or bad weather or insects.

In any other business, if loss follows loss, the entrepreneur gets the heck out. He sells and moves on. If farmers sold out after the first unprofitable year, we would now be eating sawdust, dirt or boiled tree bark.

But farmers can't do that! They have a solemn duty to feed us, regardless of whether they make money or not. After all, we certainly can't be expected to feed ourselves, can we?

Farmers may not be the best businessmen in the world, but they deserve a ... of a lot of credit for facing their many enemies and not throwing in the spade. --kit and val--

By DOYLE GOUGLER

There is an old joke about the quickest way to empty a building full of Aggies. Yelling "fire!" is expedient. But to stampede them to the exits, yell "grammar!"

Grammar is a seven-letter, naughty word to too many students. It conjures up memories of severe old battle-ax English teachers, sentence diagramming, complex rules and other horrors. Or, sadly, maybe the word produces no memories at all.

Every semester when I teach Journalism 350, I sermonize on the beauty and the power and the dignity of precise, simple English. There is real pleasure and satisfaction in honing a sentence to a fine edge and in knowing that the effect is grammatically correct.

Each word, I tell the 80 to 90 students (who are already tuning me out), must do a job in a sentence. If a word does not perform a specific service, cull it.

Continuing my ranting, I tell them that much of their future career success will depend upon their ability to communicate clearly and effectively in writing. And the best way to write exactly what is meant is to use proper grammar, punctuation, spelling

and simple but accurate words. By this time, half the class is asleep and the other half's attention span has spanned out.

Yet there are students who will rise and challenge the need for skill in grammar. Is it not possible, they ask, to communicate quickly and clearly without being a whiz in English?

Yes, it's possible, and it's done with some frequency. But think how much easier a communications job is when the writer is confident and skilled smitthy of words and sentences. And what about the pride of turning out a well-sculptured sentence?

Grammar needn't be scary and complex. There is no need to memorize many rules. Grammar is nothing more than the way words work together in sentences. If the words don't agree among themselves, the sentence seldom says what the writer intends. A writer usually can produce a concise thought if he will pause and analyze the words and how they relate to each other.

All this doesn't mean that everyone should be a language snob, an attitude almost as tiresome as the language slob. Just a little more thought and care in sentence structure and a little more appreciation for simplicity would work wonders.

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