

**Editor's Notebook**



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Editor & Publisher

**Introducing "Best of FARM SHOW Video - Volume IV"**

You'll get some great ideas - and have a lot of fun - watching our just-released new video.

"Best of FARM SHOW - Volume IV" - features top-notch inventions and ideas from farmers all over North America. Like our previous three Best of FARM SHOW videos, it shows these innovative machines in action and, in most cases, the farmer who came up with each idea describes it in his own words. It's like seeing the pages of FARM SHOW come to life!



This new 75-minute video includes 25 "first of their kind" machines including the following: pedal powered full-sized tractor; screw-type hay bale ventilator; 5/8-scale semi-truck; fork lift made from swather; combine weed seed collector; silo home; "power bed" for pickups; home-built bale wrapper; and many more.

See page 12 for more details on the new video and an order form. Or call us toll-free at 1-800-834-9665 to order.

**Kentucky Farmers Sell Development Rights**

"If land has an agricultural value of \$1,200 to \$1,500 an acre and a developer offers you two or three times that much, it's very tempting to sell the property," says Billy Ray Smith, state ag commissioner for the state of Kentucky, which has started a new program that buys the development rights away from the current owners of farmland. Once the rights have been sold, the land is off-limits permanently to developers and is limited to farming.

J. Rodman Redd Jr. of Gracey, Kent., is one of six Kentucky farmers ready to sell the rights to their land. They are finalists to share an \$800,000 fund which has been set up for the first year of the program. Some farmers do not like the program but Red says it's what he needs to protect his 160-acre farm. He hopes to use the money to diversify his farm to keep it a viable enterprise. And he likes knowing it will remain as farmland forever.

The idea of buying up development rights is growing fast across the country with programs already active in a number of states.

**"Free Range" Hens Not Always What They Seem**

People who pay extra for "free range" chicken aren't getting what they think they're getting. That's the conclusion of Consumer Reports magazine which sent investigators to a Pennsylvania "free range" operation. They didn't find chick-

ens frolicking happily over a pasture. Instead they found a small flock contained in "a penned, 10 by 30-ft. patch of dirt".

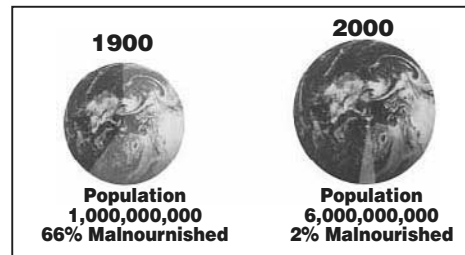
The general manager of the farm conceded that the "free range" concept is a myth. "It's not in the nature of chickens," he is quoted as saying, "that if you give them a 15-acre pasture they're going to gallop and jump and roll." Instead, they stay close to the food and water which are inside the chicken house or whatever shelter is provided.

Consumer Reports also reported that according to the results of microbiological samplings of various brands of broilers, the high-priced "gourmet free-range" brands as a group had the highest levels of salmonella contamination. What's more, they had no advantage in terms of taste or texture.

**Winning The Fight Against Hunger**

If you pay much attention to media reports, it's easy to conclude that the world is getting worse every day. Sometimes you have to step back and look at the big picture to get a true understanding of how much progress we've made.

This simple graphic from a recent issue of Agri-Marketing



magazine makes the point. If you compare where we are today with where we were in 1900, you can tell at a glance that we have truly made outstanding progress in this century. While there's no doubt that we still have people in the world who do not get enough food, things have improved and keep getting better every day.

**Farmer Pokes Fun At Bureaucrats**

Michigan farmer Stephen Tvedten recently got a form letter from the state notifying him that he was in violation of the environmental laws of his state when two "wood debris" dams in a stream running through his property broke, causing flooding at a downstream location. When the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality was informed that the dams were built by beavers, not Tvedten, it dropped the case. Tvedten then wrote the DEQ a tongue-in-cheek letter saying, "I would like to bring to your attention a real environmental quality problem. Bears are actually defecating in our woods. I definitely believe you should be persecuting the defecating bears and leave the dam beavers alone."

**California Ranchers Produce Million Dollar Cattle**

Everyone talks about "added value" but how about this California ranch couple that manages to extract \$1 million of products from each head of cattle they produce.

As reported recently by Eric Grant in BEEF TODAY, the most lucrative product sold by Jim and Mary Richert of Macdowel, Calif., is collagen, which is used for cosmetic surgery and skin grafts. Since 1990, they've been selling beef collagen to a drug company - Collagen & Cohesion Company - that requires "source-verified" cattle in order to eliminate the risk of spreading animal disease to humans.

The Richerts' ranch was ideal because the cow herd had been closed for 15 years. Except for bulls, no new cows had been introduced. Also, the ranch is in an isolated location far from other cattle. In addition, the herd had been cared for by the same veterinarian since the 1960's, which meant herd health records were complete and comprehensive.

The Rickerts sell four main products from their beef cattle: **Collagen** - It's taken from hides for injecting under the skin in surgery. The retail value of the collagen taken from a single hide can reach \$1 million. The Rickerts get only a fraction of that but they note that it still pays far better than just raising beef. **Blood** - The drug company collects blood from the animals to produce a surgical adhesive that glues

together organs that can't be sutured, such as a liver or spleen. **Bones** - Bones from the Rickerts' cattle are turned into surgical products such as plates, pins and screws and used in place of similar stainless steel devices. The company working on this new idea says the devices are still in the experimental phase. **Beef** - Because the ranch's primary purpose is to supply pharmaceutical companies, the beef is actually just a by-product of the operation. However, even in this area the Rickerts stand out from the crowd. Carcasses are "dry-aged" for two to three weeks and then sold through a local grocer or direct off the ranch. The Rickerts say demand for the dry-aged beef has been tremendous, probably helped by the fact that it's known the cattle from their ranch receive more tender-loving care than probably any other beef cattle in the country. They even claim their tender meat has enticed some vegetarians back to eating meat.

All processing of the cattle is done by hand on the ranch. Meticulous records must be kept of every stage of the animals' lives and water and soil on the ranch must be tested regularly to check for contaminants. The record keeping is demanding but the Rickerts say the extra work is worth it.

**Dog "De-Skunking" Recipes**

Getting skunk smell off contaminated dogs is a challenge most rural folks face at one time or another.

A couple years ago FARM SHOW reported on a chemical engineer who had analyzed the components of skunk smells and then came up with a special mixture that reportedly works much better than the traditional tomato or lemon juice method. For anyone who missed it, here's the recipe again: 1 quart of hydrogen peroxide, 1/4-cup of baking soda, and 1 teaspoon of any liquid soap known for its grease-cutting ability.

We recently heard about another de-skunking method in a hunting column in FARMWEEK, an Indiana weekly farm paper. The column quoted a hunter who says he always carries a supply of Messengale's feminine product in his glove compartment in the herbal essence scent. He swears by it and applies it full strength to his dog without rinsing. If the dog still smells when he gets home, he simply gives it a second application. The process is a lot cleaner and simpler than using tomato or lemon juice and works as well or better, he says.

The only problem the hunter reported is that the pharmacist doesn't believe him when he tells him he's buying the product for his dog.

**"Agriculture commodities are the only thing sold** in this entire country without a price tag. We can't solve the problems of agriculture when wheat sells for \$3.50 a bushel. An acre of 35-bu. wheat has a gross value to the farmer of \$122.50 while that same acre retails for as much as \$3,800 after it's processed. Right there lies the whole problem facing America's largest industry. Although we consume nearly 75 percent of our total production within our own country, farmers don't get their fair share of the American food dollar. A few years ago, when wheat briefly went to \$6 a bushel, food processors said it would have no effect on retail prices and it didn't. They were more concerned with rises in the cost of paper, which they use for packaging. Somehow, we must tie farm prices to the cost of production. Never before in history has American agriculture been so far out of balance with the rest of the economy." *Excerpts from a letter by John Braaten, Felton, Minn., to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman*

**Top 8 Things You Don't Want To Hear During Surgery**

- "Better save that. We'll need it for the autopsy."
- "Accept this sacrifice, O Great Lord of Darkness."
- "Wait a minute. If this is his spleen, then what's that?"
- "Uh, has anyone ever survived 500 milliliters of this stuff before?"
- "And now we remove the subject's brain and place it in the body of the ape."
- "OK, now take a picture from this angle. This is truly a freak of nature."
- "This patient has already had some kids, am I correct?"
- "Bo! Bo! Come back with that! Bad dog!"

(New York Times News Service)