

FARMING

by Frank Milenski

When I look back, these things come to mind.

As a kid I always thought I would like to be a farmer.

That was what my Father was; a man that tilled the soil.

When I was young, my family had a dairy.

The power we had was the Honest Horse Power.

We had some hogs around; some to eat, some to sell.

We had some chickens for fresh meat on hoof

And the eggs were a big part of our diet.

When you take a good look at it,

Who has been the boss over all these years?

The horses had to be cared for on time,

Else you would get a nicker from the Big Animal.

The cows had to be milked on time. (Hand of course)

The hog had to be slopped and fed. (Water Too)

The damn chickens always told you when to start the day.

You know the rooster that crowed the loudest;

First one in the boiling pot the next day.

As time went on and you had to choose a job,

Farming was the natural thing to do,

Providing there were those in the family

To help you with machinery-borrow, you know.

In the old days, the Father always tried

To give the son a team, with the harness on their backs.

Back in those days, took years to get, drills and planter,

Plows, harrows, discs and mowers and rakes,

Just the bare necessities to stir the soil,

To plant the crop and get it on its way.

Usually the binder or grain was hired, twine furnished.

Not too many people had the Old Flying Dutchman.

The machine that spread livestock manure.

Instead of hauling it out, put it in small piles,

To be spread by harrows pulled by teams.

This was all done by hand. LABOR

It was said to take a strong back and a weak mind.

All the shoveling, scooping, forking the hay -

By hand, of course.

'Tis no wonder some of the young said,

"That's not for me, off to school I'll go."

Or to the big city and find a high-powered job.

There are those that love nature

And what it can do for humanity.

Decided fresh air and a life of toil,

Was the thing to do for a life occupation.

Along about that time, love had a part to play.

You picked out the beautiful gal of your choice,

So you had a partner, everyone to do their share.

As you all know, soon the family starts to arrive,

The responsibilities start to grow.

You are young, full of life.

The hardships you take in stride.

As time flew on and the machinery improved,
Along came augers instead of scoops,
Loaders to take the heavy work away,
The harvest machinery, combines and all.
But on an irrigated farm,
There are always things to do;
The water to set, change several times a day,
To plant, cultivate the crops
And keep the weeds out.
So most young farmers start out,
On a piece of land someone else owns.
They call themselves renters.
The owner calls them tenants.
As time goes on and they finally get a stake,
They have learned to kiss the bankers behind with grace,
For the money they ain't got to make a farm go.
The big boys say, "Create as cash flow."
It used to be the banker lent money to the man,
Maybe more than they should, only alot on reputation.
That may have been in the old days;
When a man's word was his bond.
Now the costs of farming are "out of this world".
Machinery costs will stagger the mind.
Labor, parts and fuel; insurance,
The Just-Plain-Doing-Business cost
That eat you up to say nothing
Of the cost of money you ain't got.
You go to the Banker for the Farm Credit,
With your hat in your hand,
For the loans that you need.
There is always the interest to pay;
The Extra percent they can wring out of you.
Where it goes, I don't know.
Back years ago the world turned on 6% or less.
Everyone seemed to be able to get along,
With prices like that.
But along comes inflation; costs have risen about 40 times;
Prices over which farmers have no control.
Take them and like it, are the lumps they take.
In the Late Seventies, interest rates of 25% or more.
Now, there ain't that much profit in farming.
So, where do you go to keep your nose clean
And pay what you owe?
Your land was inflated in value.
So the banker could get your paper.
By the Bank Inspectors or cash in the So and So.
So when it finally comes to the end,
The words of Martin Luther King,
Ring in your ears. THANK GOD, IT'S GREAT TO BE FREE,
To drop the yoke you have carried for years.
Now all the years you have been in business,
The people that lived off of you,
The Banker, The County and State,
Our Great Nation we helped to feed,
The food we produced in World War II.

Food will win the war and right peace.
You only need us to keep your bellies full;
At prices where the Farmer does not get his share.
My great hope is, before it's too late,
Somebody wakes up to take a look
Of all the values; land, water and air
Are our greatest blessings.
Let's hope too many Farmers don't have to repeat,
THANK GOD, I AM FREE FROM THE YOKE I CARRIED
MOST OF MY LIFE.

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