

Grainviews

Grainews and Cattleman's Corner letters to the editor.

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Prairie farmer

Landowners ignored

In response to Andy Sirski's article, "Your complete guide to renting land" (Grainews, April 1) maybe he should write another article called "Your complete guide to owning land and renting it to others."

His figures are very good for someone who is renting land, but not too realistic for the landowner. He may have \$500 or more per acre invested. He may also have been a renter at one time, so he probably understands renters. Most renters and Andy Sirski show little understanding or concern for the landowner, who is an integral link in the whole chain of farming.

Anyway, back to the \$500 at 10% interest (low) comes to \$50 return if invested. Land taxes are probably \$4 to \$6 per acre. This calls for a \$55-per-acre return to the landowner. Otherwise, he, along with our provincial and federal governments, is subsidizing the renter (which Sirski failed to take into account in his rental figures).

Maybe we need a Landowners Association to help us realize a little better return on our hard-earned investment.

It would be nice if you would carry articles that are a little more objective. For instance, not everyone is anti-union. Can't you just see a disgruntled renter going to work for the low wages that would be rampant if we did not have unions. We complain about unions loud and long, but when we quit farming, we all look for union jobs.

As I have renters and many relatives in Manitoba, please do not publish my name.

Lonesome Landowner
Sardis, B.C.
Andy Sirski says he'll write an article for landlords. — Ed.

Romanov sheep oversold

I read the article entitled "A 600% lamb crop is a reality" written by Lyle and Dolores Bowles of Maple Creek, Sask. (Grainews, April 15).

I usually use articles like these, written by breeders in farm magazines, on their experience with the Romanov in a package I send to people interested in that breed. I can't use the article of the Bowles because it contains many incorrect statements and allegations which I think your readers should be aware of.

Many times it came to my attention that some breeders are exaggerating the potential and the attributes of the Romanov and by doing that, are misleading fellow breeders and damaging the reputation of the breed. An example of that is a breeder in the U.S. who claimed his line of Romanov is larger and heavier than Suffolks. I had to write an article entitled "Romanov Facts and Myths" which was published

in the Shepherd in June, 1990, just to correct allegations claimed by over-zealous breeders. I feel I have to write this letter which I hope you will kindly publish to correct information written in that article.

• Romanov have the natural ability to breed any month of the year is not true. Romanov ewes have a long breeding season but, like other breeds, they also have a period of anestrus during the summer, and matings during the late summer result in no more than 50 per cent conception.

• In many ewes, no anestrus period can be detected at all. This statement may be true in some ewes, but definitely not in many. Also, this fact is not unique of Romanov ewes: It applies to many other breeds with long breeding seasons.

• The ewe 60X and the crossbreds, 600% lamb crop is a reality. It is not right to generalize on the basis of one purebred or few crossbred ewes. If that ewe gave birth to 5 and 5 lambs, which is possible, would the title of the article have been "1000% lamb crop...?"

The authors did not say how many crossbred ewes gave them the 2166 and 335 lambing percentage. Assuming no lamb mortality at all, this gives an average of three lambs per ewe, twice a year, not 3.3 lambs as printed (unless this is a printing error).

I agree that under certain circumstances some ewes can give even more than six lambs per year born. That does not mean six weaned and that doesn't imply the flock or the breed average is that high.

• Most Romanov ewes can raise four lambs. Not true. Some mature ewes with exceptionally high milk yield can, but these are few and it is not recommended that the four lambs be left with the ewe, even if she has good milk.

• Romanov market lambs produce superior carcasses. Superior is an over-estimate. The carcasses are acceptable, yes, but when compared to meat-type breeds, they are decisively inferior. It is true Romanov store more fat in the body cavity, but they have less than desirable fat cover which can penalize them in the grading. They also have higher shoulder to leg and bone to lean ratios. I am surprised that Romanov lamb grade continually A1 and A2 in Saskatchewan. The graders must be Romanov fans.

• Romanov debuted at the Experimental Station in Lethbridge. It is not true. The sheep were in quarantine for six months, then at the Lennoxville Research Station in Quebec for 5 1/2 years before Romanov ewes were transferred to Lethbridge.

What the Lethbridge sheep specialist provided as comments regarding the Romanov at the end of the article are correct and, in many instances, contradicted what the Bowles wrote. Standing out among the

about what one believes in is acceptable and appreciated, but going overboard in doing so and writing false and exaggerated claims may be misleading to prospective buyers. Also, it does not serve the breed.

M.H. Fahmy
Geneticist
Agriculture Canada
Lennoxville, Quebec

Another sheep producer took issue with the article on Page 9 in the May 13 issue. An excellent article on the subject appears on page 40 of this issue. — Ed.

Chicken info

I cannot say enough about the quality newspaper you people produce, from off-farm investments to markets, and good ideas to the best in farm humor. We cut out the best of the funnies and they get pinned on our fridge by magnets until the next issue. They go from the fridge into a scrapbook I have added to for several years. Many guests have stopped to read the funnies on the fridge.

I am considering going into chickens and remembered reading an article on the subject this summer. Thanks to your Grainews Index, I found it. It is called "You can't win with chickens," June issue, page 67.

Would it be possible to have this article sent to us? I sure would appreciate it.

Don Lee
Holland, Man.

Sent. Also we're sending "The fine art of butchering chickens" from the November 1988 issue. It was great. — Ed.

Canada's problems

If the money's all gone, there will be no need for a New Constitution. Our teeter-totter economy is already on the rocks; we are in the midst of a recession. Yet Joe (Who?) Clark can pledge millions to help the richest section of our world cover its scars from the recent Gulf War.

We have never before witnessed such pompous indifference to reality. This must indeed be an act of a true statesman. No matter that Canadians are sleeping in the streets, a large portion living below the poverty line. Perhaps it is important just to lead the way into further indebtedness.

Our national debt has almost reached the point of no return, yet it is costing ridiculous sums to find out something our governing body is fully aware of: Our supposed democracy is not in balance. Politicians have reached the conclusion that representation by population is almost as obsolete as the saber-toothed tiger.

In 1867 the BNA Act made its appearance but after a century we still have that famous piece of paper controlling us. With 60 per cent of Canada's population in Quebec and Ontario, how can you expect the