

Saturday is just another day



My Generation
By HOLLY SPANGLER

As a kid, I can remember working for days on end every summer. Literally, the weeks just rolled together, especially when we'd bale straw for a week, then launch right into baling hay, and it just kept going and going. Tuesday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday — it didn't matter. We worked.

I kept a similar pace in college, with various activities or chores on Saturday (I know, what was I thinking?). And in fact, it wasn't until John and I had been married a couple of years that it even occurred to me: How does the rest of the world do Saturdays?

What's it like when your husband stays home on Saturday — when his Monday-through-Friday job doesn't extend into Saturday? Do those couples spend time together? Do they do family things? Work on projects together? Run errands together?

I really can't imagine what it would be like. Saturday is just another day in the work week around here. Very occasionally, John will come home midafternoon on a Saturday in the winter — or, even more rarely, he'll do a few chores and then come home for the day. That hap-

pened earlier this year; he found himself with extra time on a Saturday and launched into a basement organization project. This completely threw me for a loop; I had my own plans, you know, and they didn't involve the basement.

Creatures of habit

That's where the routine comes in. As a part-timer for this magazine, I spend two days a week working. The rest of the week is spent with the kids, the house, the yard, helping John as needed, making sure the three of them get to connect (during busy seasons) and donating time for all sorts of volunteer activities. That's our routine. I simply was not prepared to have him home for a spontaneous Saturday of reorganizing.

But it was nice. And was it a glimpse into a "normal" (nonfarm) family's world? Perhaps.

Says a friend who's spent her life in the Chicago suburbs, the pace is more frenzied there, and there's more competition in trying to keep up with the Joneses. People work indoors all week; the weekends are a chance for suburbanites to spend time outdoors — to go places, do yard work, get things done.

Sales of lawn and garden equipment bear that out. Take a look around your local Home Depot or Lowes; the garden section is huge. Even farm stores are

expanding those areas of their business. The lawn and garden industry as a whole grows by about 5% annually.

Farmer in us all

My Chicago friend also theorizes that there's a natural farmer in everyone, as folks in her neck of the woods spend their weekends doing yard work and gardening. Tending the land around them, so to speak.

This would make sense, and explains John's disconnect to yard work.

Generally, John's connection to the mower involves fixing something I've broken (this is not a specific confession) and sharpening the blades (again, not a confession; I didn't hit anything. Or if I did, I didn't see it). He's getting his farming fix on a much bigger scale. Besides, who needs a riding mower when you've got a 200-horse tractor?

We're fortunate to do our outdoor work — even if it is our livelihood — all week long. As farmers, we spend a lot

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of overtime working with those big tractors.

Nine to 5, five days a week, it isn't. But that's not all bad.

Perhaps those folks who have 9-to-5/ five-day-a-week jobs wish they had the type of job that excited them enough to want to work outside of "normal" hours.

We do what we do — whenever we have to — because we love it. And from a lot of perspectives, a six-day-a-week farming fix is a pretty sweet deal.

■ Like to comment? E-mail hspangl@farmprogress.com.

Letters

industry's hackles," May issue, Page 3). It is merely a device to obscure from the public as to just how much is being plundered from their wallets.

Corporations do not pay taxes; only people do. Corporate taxes are a cost of doing business and must be incorporated into the price of whatever product is being produced and sold. The corporation simply becomes a conduit to siphon off funds from the population and deliver such to the rapacious hands of the politicians, and then we stupidly laud these politicians for the wonderful benefits they bring to our communities.

Far better it would be if the tax money were left in the hands of the individuals who earned it. In spite of human flaws, they are certain to utilize the fruits of their own labors more effectively and judiciously than any politicians.

Phil Clark
Carthage

Meters out of calibration?

In the United States, 100% of the pumps at every station, every scale (large or small) used in commerce, every truck that has a meter for the sale of gasoline, diesel fuel, heating oil, kerosene and butane (LP gas), are checked at least once a year for accuracy. This is good for both seller and buyer.

Natural gas, water and electric meters are placed at our farms, homes and businesses and are there for years upon years, and are never checked for accuracy. It seems to me these meters would get out of calibration, too.

I was a petroleum distributor in the Evansville, Ind., area for 40-plus years. We looked forward for Weights and Measures to make a semi-annual check of our truck meters. It would surprise you how much out of calibration these meters would be in six months. Not every time, but most of the time they needed to be adjusted.

Don't you think the gas, electric and water meters could be getting out of calibration also? It seems to me we might be getting the shaft.

Chet Korff
Evansville, Ind.

Time to defend property rights

I don't understand why landowners do not deserve compensation for surface and personal property damages associated with mineral removal ("Time to prop up property rights," April issue, Page 12).

If I were to damage a drilling company's rig, tank or pipeline in the course of conducting my business (farming), I'm sure they would expect, pursue and receive damages. Any state or federal law specifying this type of inequality is unjust and must be changed. I would gladly support any effort to that end.

Dennis Sagez
Chesterfield

Property rights, as applied to oil production, is a concern, as well as coal mining, longwall mining and the resulting subsidence.

As I see things, once subsidence has occurred, the land is ruined forever. If a 6-foot vein of coal is removed 600 feet below the surface, and the land above the vein falls 6 feet within three to six days, everything on the surface is impacted and water wells are worthless. Yet, IDNR states that you will be able to farm your tillable acres and your water wells will return. Yeah, and I have a bridge to sell you, too!


Actually here in Fayette County, one-third of the acreage is in danger of subsidence — more than 160,000 acres. Eight members of the Fayette County Board of Supervisors voted to sell the coal under the 160,000 acres for \$5 million plus (\$35 per acre) under the cry of "jobs, jobs, jobs."



As I see it, every surface owner (especially farmers and other owners of farmland) must understand that if their coal rights are already sold, they have the potential of having worthless property once subsidence occurs. Understand that not all of the soil below the surface and above the coal seam will "fall" at the same time or rate. Even timberland and trees will be destroyed.

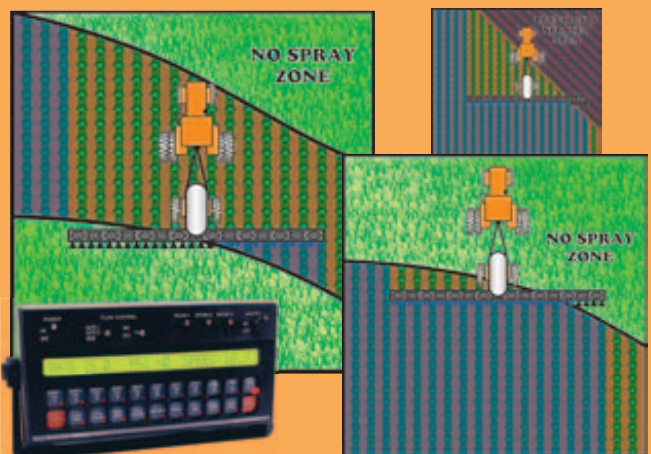
Herbert Wodtke
Loogootee

A taxing matter

The proposed gross receipts tax is like the abominable value-added tax prevalent in many European countries ("Blagojevich's tax proposal raises

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by  



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