

Doggone good read

Thank you so much for running a great farm dog contest (July issue, Page 6). Our family member, named Hope, received a honorable mention! We were so excited. It brightened our day.

You know with the way the troubles of farming seem now-a-days, out here trying to make a living, it was nice to stop and read the articles about the other farm families and their dogs. My husband had to sit down and read the article. It put a smile on his face. He has been so busy with the concerns of our family farm.

He was smiling when he read that I had entered Hope into your contest. He reads your publication all the time and gets vital information for our farming operation.

We truly believe that it is your effort and passion to do what you do that makes your *Prairie Farmer* publication so great. Thanks again. We are looking forward to always having the *Prairie Farmer* in our mailbox here on our farm.

Steve and Theresa Owens
Woodhull

Lessons from mining mess

Thank you for your wonderful article "Mining mess" (June cover) and sharing it with those of us who are deeply affected by longwall mining.

Our connection — which starts with the Pittsburgh seam of coal that transits from Pittsburgh southwest to near Beckley, W.Va. — as is said by the

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coal people, may be the largest known amount in the world. Much of the area from Pittsburgh to Waynesburg, Pa., has been over the years the scene of room-and-pillar mining at about 600 feet below the surface on about a 6-foot seam. Now all that is changing over to the more efficient and productive long-wall method.

According to the Pittsburgh newspapers, subsidence caused by long-past room and pillar shows up in cracked foundations, gas lines causing explosions and deaths of folks in their homes due to sinking ground and cracked transit gas pipes along with subsidence that seems to never quit.

A side story: A friend of mine was working on his driveway area that was sinking and a large hole developed. He asked me to take a look. I told him it probably was mine subsidence and that his house foundation was in jeopardy. I suggested that an order of granulated-slag in an 18-wheeler would probably do the trick.

It was a good idea, except it took 18 18-wheelers to almost get it to stop flowing.

Whether the land is hilly or flat, I can assure you it's going to be bad. It will disfigure the land, create crevices and dangerous holes that one could fall into (mainly children). Also you lose your water, wells, streams and, the most important, springs.

The price of coal went from \$27 to over \$70 a ton in my short history here in the coal area. They have lots of money and they know how to use it to manipulate, grease the skids, pressure the poor downtrodden farmer, use the politicians and grab anything that benefits them. Their mothers must not have ever told them to not lie, steal or cheat. But as they say, all's well that ends well.

Ray Schuler
Lone Pine, Pa.

Super job on the mining feature in the *Prairie Farmer*!! The pictures are good, too, but it is especially well-written, from the angle of a farmer!

I especially heard comments from those rural subscribers in Montgomery County where I attended the Irving homecoming, and passed out fliers regarding the upcoming referendum.

Cathy Edmiston
Abingdon

Community challenges

I too have been somewhat concerned about who is going to keep the local organizations, even the small churches, serving the community (My Generation, May issue, Page 10).

I served 21 years on the local youth fair board, which was made up solely of volunteers, except for the fair secretary. Without other volunteers from the community, the fair would never have succeeded.

Fortunately, we still have some younger people involved, but through

the years it has become more and more difficult to enlist volunteers. We are all busy.

I suppose it is normal for us older-generation folks to worry about the future, but the fact is that we are advancing in years where we simply cannot carry the load we once did. My hope is that younger people will see the needs and move into action. Many are doing that and I'm sure many more will.

We are so organized and overscheduled today that we are "booked up" and sometimes don't pause and consider the really important things for our children and grandchildren. It is not a simple decision to know how to best use our energies, but I have both faith and hope that things will work out for the best.

Keep writing your challenging thoughts for us to read and ponder.

Clark Williams
Metropolis

Gas-guzzling light pickup?

Dear readers: July's story about pickups ("True cost of a trip in your farm pickup might surprise you," Page 20) left some readers scratching their heads and wondering: How could a light pickup cost more to run than a bigger one?

North Dakota State's Kris Ringwall sticks by the data gathered from the state's transportation department cost analysis. One possible explanation is that maybe the half-tons didn't have enough muscle to handle trailer-pulling, thus jacking up maintenance costs.

Editor Cherry Brieser Stout

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