

Editor's Notebook



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Editor &
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“Free Land” Available In Russia

A Missouri real estate agent has been running ads in farm newspapers offering “Free land in Russia”. The catch is you have to be willing to partner up with a Russian farmer to homestead the land.

Walter Storey, St. Louis, Mo., has been a regular visitor to Russia since the early 1990's. He says private Russian farmers in the 2.2 million-acre Kaluga agricultural region southeast of Moscow are desperate for help to start farming or to expand existing operations. Land is given free to farmer-homesteaders based on their ability to farm but there are few farmers who have the start-up money for machinery, seed, fertilizer, etc. Consequently, thousands of acres lie fallow in this productive region, which produces wheat, potatoes, corn, oats, rye, alfalfa, red clover, sugar beets and cabbage.

Foreign investors can enter into joint ventures with Russian farmers whereby they hold joint ownership of the land without actually living on the farm. Hubbard Farms of New Hampshire, Storey notes, has been in the region for almost two years and has recently turned their entire operation over to Russian farmers.

While many Russians just want to get started in farming, some existing operations also need help. Storey cites two small cooperative family farming operations of about 1,000 acres. One needs about \$50,000 to start up a seed cleaning business to improve cash flow. The other wants to start a mini-bakery to grind their own wheat into flour, and a hog operation. It needs \$100,000.

“They are good, well-educated farmers but simply do not have the money to operate as they need to,” says Storey, who’s looking for potential farmer-investors to join him on a tour of the area July 16 though 23 to investigate the possibilities. Cost of the tour is about \$2,100.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Walter Storey Real Estate Inc., 104 Bonnybridge Ct., St. Louis, Mo. 63021 (ph 314 394-9276; fax 9277; E-mail WStorey@aol.com).

Falling Silos Prompt Warning

An unusually high number of silo collapses in southeastern Pennsylvania since last fall has prompted some silo companies to issue warnings on the importance of proper filling techniques, according to “Farmshine”, a weekly farm paper published in Brownstone, Pa.

More than a half dozen silos have fallen down recently in that part of the state, for reasons ranging from deteriorating structures to improper fill patterns.

Filling a silo too fast can result in silage being distributed unevenly, especially if the distributor isn't working. Settling then exerts uneven pressure on the silo, causing it to fall if it's weak from age or deterioration.

In addition to silo collapses, some 40 unloaders in southeastern Pennsylvania fall into empty silos every year. To help prevent this, silo companies recommend that you:

- Never allow unloaders suspended by a single cable to twist when being raised.
- Replace unloader cables every six to 10 years.
- Oil cables and pulleys at least once a year.

Iowa Farmer Campaigns For Ag “Lemon Law”

“After your report in FARM SHOW, I found myself in a unique position to make a change for the better,” says Iowa farmer Melroy Buhr, who has become a “lightning rod” for farmers and farm groups interested in campaigning for a so-called “lemon law” for farm equipment.

Buhr is the farmer featured in a recent issue (Vol. 21,



Melroy Buhr got the attention of Minnesota lawmakers when he brought his “lemon” baler to the state capitol.

No. 1) who won a lawsuit against Deere & Company over a defective 535 baler. He and his lawyer convinced a jury to reimburse him for the cost of the baler, which he was never able to get to work satisfactorily, even though he had previously owned a 535 baler that worked fine.

Buhr still has possession of the baler and has painted a yellow lemon on the side of the baler along with the words “Lemon Baler - Court Documented”. It naturally draws a crowd wherever he goes.

“Since your report, I’ve heard from many farmers all over North America who have had experiences similar to mine. They have equipment that will not work and their dealers or manufacturers will not take care of the problems. I truly believe that most dealers do take care of problem equipment but I’ve discovered that there are cases where nothing is done. In those cases, I think we need a lemon law so manufacturers will be forced to take back expensive pieces of equipment that just cannot be fixed,” says Buhr.

Since he is one of the few farmers who has ever been able to win a defective equipment lawsuit against a major farm equipment manufacturer, Buhr feels he’s got a moral obligation to make lawmakers aware of the need for an lemon law.

Buhr has been working with state legislators in Iowa, and in March he towed his “lemon baler” to the Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul and met with legislators there. Wherever he goes the baler draws a crowd and he ends up on the TV news and in the local newspapers.

“I’m not a rabble rouser and I’m not trying to make trouble. I just want to make people aware of the problem. Most lawmakers I’ve talked to are surprised there’s no lemon law for farm equipment,” says Buhr. “I just want to get the ball rolling and then I’ll stay home on the farm.”

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First “Bin-Run” Corn Seed With Hybrid Vigor

Researchers working near Mexico City are growing the world’s first hybrid corn crop planted with “bin-run” seed.

If the new variety pans out it could save North American corn growers millions of dollars in production costs by being able to plant their own seed rather than buying it every year. Plus, it’ll mean third world farmers will be able to reap the benefits of hybrid corn.

The scientists believe that within three years they’ll be able to produce a “bin-run” corn with the yield and quality of today’s hybrids. The breakthrough is the result of locking in a trait called apomixis, which allows many wild plants to produce seed even when weather stress or competition prevents pollen production. The trait preserves a plant’s hybrid vigor.

The trait should also result in new varieties getting to market faster because any apomictic corn will breed true from the moment it’s created, the scientists say.

They predict the first such new varieties will be available to farmers in four to six years. (Farm & Country)

City Can’t Tax View

Five years after the California city of Port Hueneme slapped a “view tax” on beachfront homeowners, a judge has ruled that the tax was improper because it isn’t spread out evenly among all residents.

About 1,200 beachfront homeowners were charged as much as \$210 a year, depending on how close they lived to the ocean. A total of about \$750,000 was collected.

City Manager Dick Velthoen stands by the tax. He says the ocean contributes to the value of the nearby homes so the city was justified in levying the extra tax.

How long before governments start taxing farmers extra for the beautiful country vistas they enjoy?

A Customer

You know me. I’m a nice person. When I get lousy service, I never complain. I never kick, I never criticize and I wouldn’t dream of making a scene. I’m one of those nice customers. And I’ll tell you what else I am. I’m the customer who doesn’t come back. I take whatever you hand out, because I know I’m not coming back. I could tell you off and feel better, but in the long run, it’s better to just leave quietly.

You see, a nice customer like me, multiplied by others like me, can bring a business to its knees. There are plenty of us. When we get pushed far enough, we go to one of your competitors. *Anonymous*

He’s Winning Fight Against “Tractor Elbow”

Do you get sore arms when doing a lot of tractor or combine driving? Maybe you’ve got “tractor elbow”.

Illinois farmer David Adcock has long been familiar with the intense pain of carpal tunnel syndrome, which some farmers call “tractor elbow”.

Although carpal tunnel is most often mentioned in connection with computer operators or factory workers, he attributes his problems to the years of basketball he played in high school.



All that ball-playing left him with problems in his forearms.

His doctor recommended the use of spinner knobs on combine and tractor steering wheels, and also suggested working out with dumb bells and other gym equipment. “At farming time, I develop serious problems in the arms. It is the vibration of the steering wheels that sets it off,” Adcock says. Exercise helps a lot, but sometimes the pain is so intense it keeps him up at night. A half hour workout with dumb bells usually provides relief. (C.F. Marley)

Church Bulletin Bloopers

- Don’t let worry kill you - let the church help.
- For those of you who have children and don’t know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
- This afternoon there will be a meeting in the south and north ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends.
- Thursday at five o’clock there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers Club. All wishing to become little mothers, please see the minister in his study.
- The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the church basement Friday.
- A bean supper will be held on Tuesday in the church hall. Music will follow.
- Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.
- At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be “What is Hell?” Come early and listen to our choir practice.
- Wednesday the ladies liturgy will meet. Mrs. Johnson will sing “Put Me In My Little Bed”, accompanied by the pastor.