

Editor's Notebook



Mark Newhall
Editor & Publisher

The World Keeps Getting Better

A recent survey of 7,500 consumers asked, "Do you think your children and/or grandchildren will have a better economic future than you?" By a 62 to 38 percent margin, respondents said they do not expect the future to be better.

I couldn't disagree more and here are a few reasons why: **War:** The Human Security Center in British Columbia has been keeping track of armed conflicts since WW II. It reports that the number of violent armed conflicts dropped rapidly in the past 15 years and that in 2005 the number of conflicts was down 40 percent from 1992. Wars have also become less deadly. In 1950 the average number of people killed each year per conflict was 38,000. In 2002 the number was down to 600.

World Economics: Let's look at recent numbers. According to *The Economist*, in 1993 the overall annual growth rate worldwide was just 1.2 percent and inflation was running at almost 35 percent per year. Over the past 13 years, annual average GDP growth averaged 3 percent so total growth over the period was about 45 percent. Worldwide GDP in 2005 was an extremely healthy 5 percent. Inflation, measured across the globe as a whole, slowed dramatically to 3.7 percent. World population increased by more than 18 percent over the 13 years but GDP per head rose by nearly 40 percent.

Living Standards: According to the World Bank, the proportion of the world's population living on \$1 a day or less was 22 percent in 1993, or 1.2 billion people. By 2001, the proportion had fallen to 17.8 percent, or just over a billion people. If the percentage continues to fall at the same rate, the number of people living on less than \$1 a day will have dropped to about 620 million by 2015, or about 9 percent of world population. Still far too high but getting better.

Politics: In 1993, 20 percent of the world's population lived in countries that were fully free in terms of political rights and civil liberties. By last year, nearly 50 percent of the global population was living fully free. Wait until China breaks the bonds of Communism!

Knowledge: Over the past 15 years, much of the knowledge of the human race has been digitized and anyone can access it on a home computer. What a tremendous resource! Can anyone doubt that having virtually all the world's information at our fingertips is a huge advance that will just keep paying off as time goes by?

The above facts are just a taste of recent history. If you go back further – say 50 or 100 years – the figures are much more dramatic. So cheer up! Your kids and grandkids are inheriting a world that's becoming richer, safer, and more interesting every day!

A Texas farmer goes to Australia for a vacation. There he meets an Aussie farmer and gets talking. The Aussie shows off his big wheat field and the Texan says, "Oh! We have wheat fields that are at least twice as large."

Then they walk around the ranch a little more and the Aussie shows off his herd of cattle. The Texan immediately says, "We have Longhorns that are at least twice as large as your cows."

The conversation had almost died when the Texan saw a herd of kangaroos hopping through the field. He asks, "And what are those?"

The Aussie asks with an incredulous look, "Don't you have any grasshoppers in Texas?"

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If you like what you see in the regular issues of FARM SHOW, we think you'll really enjoy our new DVD featuring 50 of the most exciting inventions and ideas that have ever appeared in the magazine. It's like seeing the pages of FARM SHOW come to life!



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This 2-disc DVD runs about 180 min. and sells for \$15.95 (\$19.95 Can.) plus \$4.95 S&H. Use the order form on page 43 or call us toll-free at 800 834-9665 to order.

What's more . . .

In response to requests from readers, we've reprinted some of our most popular collections of ideas from past issues, including: "Money-Making Ideas To Boost Farm Income", "How To Repower Anything", and "I Made My Own Tractor". We also have a new collection called "Combines & Schoolbuses". You can read more about all of these on page 43 or give us a call and we'll fill you in. Thanks, as always, for your support.

Billions Of Barrels Of Oil

There are at least 800 billion barrels of oil shale locked up in Wyoming and Colorado according to some estimates. That's enough to supply the world for 60 years but until now it has been too expensive to extract it.

Inventor Byron Merrell hopes to change all that with a recovery method he developed that can extract oil for \$33 a barrel. He's currently getting ready to demonstrate his process in a plant that will produce about 1,000 barrels a day. If successful, larger projects could whittle the price down to under \$20 a barrel. Merrell spent five years "mentally" designing his oil shale extractor in which pulverized rock is baked, and vaporized oil extracted. He built his first prototype in 1993, buying shale from an abandoned mine to experiment with.

Getting oil out of the rock is not the problem. Any high school kid can do that with a Bunsen burner. "Extracting it economically is the trick," Merrell says. And that's the trick that, so far, has eluded almost everyone who's tried. If the price of oil stays high enough, and if environmental concerns can be satisfied, there's a lot of oil to be had. Crushed oil shale is dumped into the top of a tower, then heated to about 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit on its way down, until the organic material inside is vaporized. It takes about a ton of rock to produce a barrel of oil. When it's operating, Merrell's new hand-built prototype will make 24 barrels a day.

Liberty Quotes

"The philosophy of the classroom today will be the philosophy of government tomorrow." *Abraham Lincoln*

"Government machinery has been described as a marvelous labor saving device which enables ten men to do the work of one." *John Maynard Keynes*

"Liberty is not collective, it is personal. All liberty is individual liberty." *Calvin Coolidge*

"The penalty good men pay for indifference to public affairs, is to be ruled by evil men." *Plato*

"The state remains, as it was in the beginning, the common enemy of all well-disposed, industrious and decent men." *H.L. Mencken*

"Every actual state is corrupt. Good men must not obey laws too well." *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

"Wherever the real power in a Government lies, there is the danger of oppression." *James Madison*

"A society that puts equality... ahead of freedom will end up with neither equality nor freedom." *Milton Friedman*

"New opinions are always suspected, and usually opposed without any reason but because they are not already common." *John Locke*

"No matter how noble the original intentions, the seductions of power can turn any movement from one seeking equal rights to one that would deny them to others." *Tammy Bruce*

"The public good is in nothing more essentially interested than in the protection of every individual's private rights." *Sir William Blackstone*

Amphibious ATV

A friend of ours in England, who's always on the lookout for new ideas, recently sent us a blurb on a prototype amphibious ATV from a British Company, Gibbs Technologies. Called the Quadski, the high-speed ATV can reach speeds of up to 50 mph on both land and water. It has a marine jet propulsion system and retractable wheels with a jet hull underneath. It takes less than 5 seconds to go from land to water by just flicking a switch. You can get more info, including videos of the Quadski in action, at www.aquada.co.uk. Contact: Gibbs Technologies, Avenue Road, Nuneston, Warwickshire, CV11 4LY United Kingdom (ph 011 44 2476388828).



Be Ready For Skunks

When I was a kid we had a dog named Bruno whose nose didn't work too well. He proudly brought home trophies like deer heads, dead birds and, yes, skunks. He'd thoughtfully bring these prizes to the back step for us to admire.

I remember scrubbing him for hours with tomato juice to get the smell off. It worked but not too well. So, in case you also have a nose-impaired mutt, here are some skunk "de-smelling" ideas we've spotted recently.

1. **Homemade Solution** – 1/4 cup baking soda, 1 quart 3 percent hydrogen peroxide, and 1 tsp liquid dish soap. Mix together and give dog a bath.
2. **Lime Juice** – Put some in a spray bottle and squirt anything that has been skunked up.
3. **Skunk Kleen** (www.ggbean.com; ph 207 729-3708) - Produced by G.G. Bean in Brunswick, Maine, this product can be sprayed directly onto pets or humans.

Garage Pit Hazards

Many do-it-yourself-mechanics have been building maintenance pits into their garage and shop floors. In case readers are unaware, we wanted to pass along a safety warning we have been seeing frequently.

According to some auto magazines, the potential for disaster is great. Gas and oil fumes migrate downward because they're heavier than air. They can accumulate in pits. Smoking, grinding, welding and even sparks from a slipped wrench or cold chisel could light them off. If you still want to install a pit, you need to add ventilation. However, you must use a non-sparking motor. And if you add electricity, lights, and other wiring, you need to use "explosion proof" wiring, which can be quite expensive.

The conclusion of experts we've read is that you're better off biting the bullet and installing a two or four-post lift.

Beware Paper Shredders

My neighbor's golden retriever recently caught his tail in a paper shredder that was sitting on a low table next to a waste basket. The dog's tail was sucked in and cut badly. He was able to yank it out, after wildly pulling the machine to the ground. Then he proceeded to run around the house, spraying blood all over the walls, carpet and furniture.

If you have a shredder, it could happen to you. Sales of paper shredders have boomed recently due to concerns about identity theft. But keep in mind that they're motion-activated so they will start running as soon as a piece of paper is held up to them.

The problem is that they'll also start running if a piece of clothing, a baby's hand, or a dog's tail gets into the opening. That's what happened to my neighbor.

The good news is that the dog's tail healed up nicely with no sign of the trauma.

Strange Sports Quotes

Jim Finks, New Orleans Saints G.M., when asked after a loss what he thought of the refs: "I'm not allowed to comment on lousy officiating."

Steve Spurrier, Florida football coach, telling Gator fans that a fire at Auburn's football dorm had destroyed 20 books: "But the real tragedy was that 15 hadn't been colored yet."

Frank Layden, Utah Jazz president, on a former player: "I told him, 'Son, what is it with you. Is it ignorance or apathy?' He said 'Coach, I don't know and I don't care.'"

Shelby Metcalf, basketball coach at Texas A&M, recounting what he told a player who received four Fs and one D: "Son, looks to me like you're spending too much time on one subject."