

FOOD

# Store owners must be aware of farming trends

"Farmers are specialists, businessmen, mechanics -- everything -- they have to be or else they won't survive today," says Bruce Thompson, owner of Thompson Farm



**Loading up**

Gary Thompson, a co-owner of Thompson Farm Supplies (Belleville) Ltd., loads a truck for delivery at their store on South Church St. Gary's dad,

Bruce has worked at that location for 40 years purchasing the operation five years ago. The store is marking its 40th anniversary Saturday.

Supplies (Belleville) Ltd.

This development has occurred through several years, he added, noting that the days of a farmer having a small farm with a variety of livestock such as a small flock of chickens is gone.

While the number of farms have declined over the years, he said, farms have grown in size. "Where a farmer once had 100 acres, they need 400 or more to survive."

This trend has resulted in less animals on the farm, he commented, and an increased demand for fertilizer. "They don't have the manure to fertilize." Another effect is a decline in demand for livestock rations.

"But we have to go with the times...but it's not necessarily good."

Celebrating his 40th year serving the Quinte area, the store is marking the occasion Saturday with a cake at noon. There have been numerous changes in the store since Thompson started June 20, 1939.

As farmers became specialists, the store had to change, he commented.

"We have to know the variety of needs whether its a corn grower wanting the proper spray or a housewife wanting something for her shrubs or lawn. We have to have the right education...it takes intelligence," he said, adding, customers come in for advice."

With the number of farmers declining, Thompson said, the store diversified. "We are now selling a lot of dog food and pet foods in general."

There has been a continual

swing from the country to the city consumer, he noted. All feed stores are starting to

cater to the city consumer.

Eventually, Thompson said he plans to increase the

store's specialized lines to meet the demand. "We have to change with the times."

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