

Farm

Tribune



Farmers from a wide area attended the annual Pancake Festival at Charles Richards and Sons, Stouffville, February 26. Close to 500 orders (pancakes and other tractors) were taken with delivery right on the spot. A true tester of good food is Murray Richards shown here reserving a plateful for himself. —Staff Photo

At Bruce's Mill

Maple syrup season soon

MARKHAM TWP. — "Sugaring-off" time is fast approaching and the familiar Spring-time call of "sap's a-running!" will soon be heard in the Ontario countryside.

Sugaring-off, or making syrup and sugar from the sap of our native maple trees is becoming increasingly popular as a spectator pastime for people, particularly those who live in the urban areas.

Noting this increasing public interest, the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority is scheduling for the second successive year a series of maple syrup making demonstrations at its Bruce's Mill conservation area.

Bruce's Mill is located two miles east of Gormley. Two schedules have been arranged by the Authority — one for the general public, and the other

for organized school groups.

Commencing on Monday, March 15, the public demonstrations will run daily through to Sunday, March 23, then again on March 29 and 30; April 4-7, inclusive, and again on April 12-13. The times are between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Maple syrup and pancakes will be available on these public visiting days. There is a \$1 parking fee for cars.

The schedule for school groups and classes comprises each school day between March 24 and April 11. Authority staff will be on hand to discuss the syrup operations to the students, and distribute samples.

The 270-acre Bruce's Mill area provides an excellent showcase for maple syrup making since there are extensive stands of sugar maples on the site.

The public and the students will be able to observe both the old-fashion-

Land speculators should be taxed

By John Kruger, Councillor, Ward 5 PICKERING TWP. — Land speculators have Pickering Twp. in a vice-like grip and as they squeeze their profits out of the township they are dealing a death blow to farming in our rural area, and they are making a mockery of the Assessment Act. The urban resident in the township is being played for some type of fool who is forced to see his property assessed at or near market value, while the speculator can have his land assessed at only a fraction of its value. There is no legal way in which the speculator can be forced to pay his fair share of taxes to the municipality.

The problem stems from the Assessment Act but a cure may have to be found outside the Act.

The basis of all assessment lies in the concept that property value for assessment purposes is the "value in use" of the property. Thus farm land is assessed not at the price a speculator pays for it, but at the price it would bring if one farmer sold it to another farmer to be used for agricultural purposes. There are valid reasons for this.

First of all, the assessor cannot foretell the future and he is unable to project what a man may do with his land, or what its long term value might be. Secondly, there is a reluctance on the part of the provincial authorities to create a situation where farmers may be taxed out of their present farming livelihood, and be obliged to sell their property before the new use is feasible. Of necessity, this would create sterile land. In Pickering Township under the new assessment, farm land has been assessed at values ranging from \$280 an acre upwards, yet most authorities agree that a farm ceases to be an economic unit if it is assessed at more than \$275 an acre. The mass appeal in the rural section of Pickering Township is no doubt going to try and make a case based on the argument that the farm land was not correctly assessed at its proper "value in use." It will be up to the Court of Revision to decide this issue and it will be a very difficult one.

From this concept of "value in use" comes inequity.

This same land which the farmers are fighting to have reduced in assessed value so that

they might be permitted to continue farming is going up in value like a skyrocket. Under the new assessment, the farm may be assessed at \$400 an acre but in actual fact its value on the land market may be \$2,000 an acre. A speculator may buy the land for \$2,000 an acre and he will then sit on it and together with the farmers he will scream that the land should not be assessed at more than \$275 an acre. So long as the speculator puts a shovel in the ground he can claim it is being used for farming, for the assessment act does not look to the occupation of the owner of the land when the land is assessed.

Taking the speculator to court really doesn't help. The idea of "value in use" has been tested in the Supreme Court of Canada against speculators and they have won their case. Until such time as the law is re-written we are all going to take it on the chin.

At the risk of sounding presumptuous I would suggest to the province that if they can not adequately cover this problem under the Assessment Act, then it's about time they brought in a Capital Gains Tax on Lands.

Proof in performance

Free-stall system best for cattle

A. A. Wall, Agricultural Representative for York County, Newmarket.

Housing for cattle continues to move in the direction of more open space and less buildings. Beef cattle men, for example, are providing shelter only from wind, rain, and sun. The term limited housing is used to describe what amounts to a roof set on

posts, with the sides often just filled in with baled straw.

Research has shown that cattle are not very particular about temperature. They will do well at anything between 20 and 60 degrees. Over or under these temperatures there is some loss in feeding efficiency, but not enough to pay for fancy buildings at 1969 prices.

This is hard to accept for people who really like

cattle. We too often think that cattle like an environment the same as our own. But the real answer on this has to be judged by how cattle perform.

Experiments at Guelph worked out that where cattle had no shelter at all, daily gains dropped by only 9%. The difference in feed cost was greater at 15% but this can be accepted if it's offset by lower housing costs, or if greater numbers can be kept.

It's good to consider this in the remodelling of barns for beef. There is a

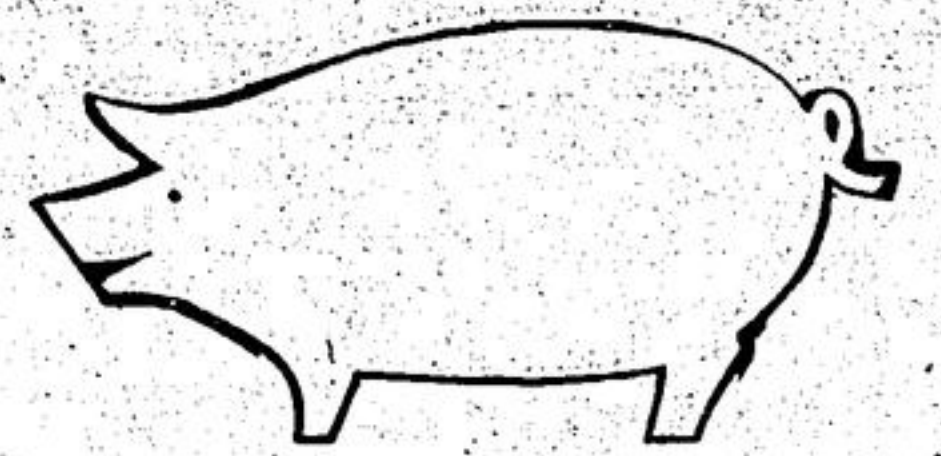
very strong preference nearly always, for putting the feeding area right inside with the loafing area. The idea is to provide a warm place to eat.

This warm place to eat, upsets the whole system. A good dry bedded area is just impossible, cleaning problems are doubled, humidity and ventilation are complicated, bedding costs are increased, and the tragedy is that the cattle really don't mind feeding outside.

Much of this approach to housing applies to dairy cattle too. Free-stall sys-

tems are a great step forward from the cow's point of view, as compared to stanchions, chains, gutter cleaners, slippery concrete floors, dampness, with no opportunity for exercise. And she would eat outside with no objections at all.

Visit O'Keefe Centre A 49-passenger bus, sponsored by the Stouffville Horticultural Society, took members to the Spring Flower Show at the O'Keefe Centre, Feb. 27. They also visited Allen Gardens.



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Ayrshire president

ASHBURN — Wm. G. Reid of Ashburn, was elected President of the Ayrshire Breeders' Association of Canada at the Directors' Meeting held in Quebec City, February 21. Mr. Reid is owner of Reidell Farm, in Ontario County, where he maintains a herd of 340 registered Ayrshires. He established his Ayrshire herd when he commenced farming in 1948. Mr. Reid has been active in the promotion and improvement of

the breed for many years. The newly elected Vice-President is Ulysse Bernier, Bedford, Quebec. He is owner of Ferme Des Sapiens where he maintains a 50 cow herd of Ayrshires. In 1966, Ulysse Bernier was conferred with the Order of Agricultural Merit as Quebec's outstanding farmer.

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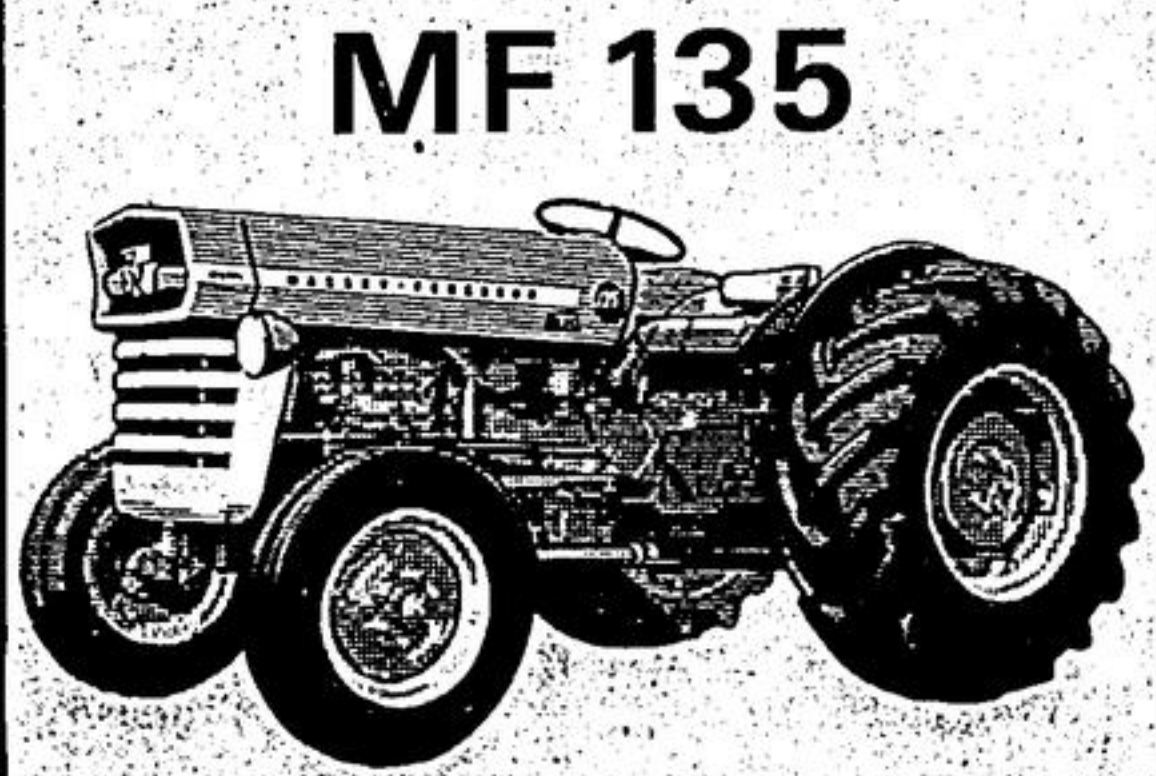
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