



America's Farmers

Every day, America's farm families rise to meet the challenge of feeding and clothing the world.

- Satisfying world demand is exactly what they do. America sends her bounty all over the world, and it all starts on family farms.
- To these men and women, the land is more than a livelihood--it's a legacy.
- It's a resource to be cared for, preserved, improved and passed to the next generation.
- They're the caretakers of our land.
- They make their living from it.
- They provide for us with it.
- In some way, we're all connected to agriculture.
- To keep up with population growth more food will have to be produced in the next 50 years as the past 10,000 years combined.
- Today, the average U.S. farmer feeds 155 people. In 1960, a farmer fed just 26 people.
- Today's farmer grows twice as much food as his parents did--using less land, energy, water and fewer emissions.
- American farmers ship more than \$100 billion of their crops and products to many nations.
- U.S. farmers produce about 40 percent of the world's corn, using only 20 percent of the total area harvested in the world.
- Farmers are a direct lifeline to more than 23 million U.S. jobs in all kinds of industries.
- In the past five years, U.S. farm operators have become more demographically diverse.

'So God Made a Farmer' Speech



A decades-old speech from a conservative radio broadcaster who passed away in 2009 became a major topic of chatter when it was condensed and delivered as the audio backdrop for a Ram Trucks ad during the second half of the Super Bowl Sunday, February 3, 2013.

The speech was originally delivered in 1978, smack dab in the middle of President Carter's Administration, and with its folksy timbre and talk of God, Paul Harvey's words stood out amid the stream of ads that ranged from salacious to ridiculous to sentimental on 21st-century CBS.

This New York Times obituary well-situates Harvey politically, and describes the role he played in American life:

In his heyday, which lasted from the 1950s through the 1990s, Mr. Harvey's twice-daily soapbox-on-the-air was one of the most popular programs on radio. Audiences of as many as 22 million people tuned in on 1,300 stations to a voice that had been an American institution for as long as most of them could remember.

"Hello, Americans," he barked. "This is Paul Harvey! Stand byyy for Newwws!"

- The 2007 census counted nearly 30 percent more women as principal farm operators.
- The count of Hispanic operators grew by 10 percent, and the counts of American Indian, Asian and African-American farm operators increased as well.
- One bushel of corn is 56 pounds. That means U.S. farmers produce an average of more than 9,000 pounds of corn per acre.
- If U.S. farmers used crop production practices from 1931 to produce an amount of corn equivalent to the 2008 crop, it would require 490 million acres—an area more than 120 million acres larger than the state of Alaska.
- The U.S. produces about 40 percent of the world's corn – using only 20 percent of the total area harvested in the world.
- Individuals or families own 82 percent of corn farms. Another 6 percent are family-held corporations.
- Less than 15 percent of U.S. corn acres are irrigated.
- Farmers today produce 70 percent more corn per pound of fertilizer than as recently as the 1970s.

Can we count on you to stand up for farmers?

Contact Us:

Collier Soil and Water Conservation District
14700 Immokalee RD
Naples FL 34120-1468
Phone: (239) 455-4100
FAX:(239) 455-2693
www.collierswcd.org

Like Walter Winchell and Gabriel Heatter before him, he personalized the radio news with his right-wing opinions, but laced them with his own trademarks: a hypnotic timbre, extended pauses for effect, heart-warming tales of average Americans and folksy observations that evoked the heartland, family values and the old-fashioned plain talk one heard around the dinner table on Sunday.

He railed against welfare cheats and defended the death penalty. He worried about the national debt, big government, bureaucrats who lacked common sense, permissive parents, leftist radicals and America succumbing to moral decay. He championed rugged individualism, love of God and country and the fundamental decency of ordinary people.

Here's the text of his speech, made newly famous during the Super Bowl:

And on the 8th day, God looked down on his planned paradise and said, "I need a caretaker." So God made a farmer.

God said, "I need somebody willing to get up before dawn, milk cows, and work all day in the fields, milk cows again, eat supper and then go to town and stay past midnight at a meeting of the school board." So God made a farmer.

"I need somebody with arms strong enough to rustle a calf and yet gentle enough to deliver his own grandchild. Somebody to call hogs, tame cantankerous machinery, come home hungry, have to wait lunch until his wife's done feeding visiting ladies and tell the ladies to be sure and come back real soon--and mean it." So God made a farmer.

God said, "I need somebody willing to sit up all night with a newborn colt. And watch it die. Then dry his eyes and say, 'Maybe next year.' I need somebody who can shape an ax handle from a persimmon sprout, shoe a horse with a hunk of car tire, who can make harness out of haywire, feed sacks and shoe scraps. And who, planting time and harvest season, will finish his forty-hour week by Tuesday noon, then, pain'n from 'tractor back,' put in another seventy-two hours." So God made a farmer.

God had to have somebody willing to ride the ruts at double speed to get the hay in ahead of the rain clouds and yet stop in mid-field and race to help when he sees the first smoke from a neighbor's place. So God made a farmer.

God said, "I need somebody strong enough to clear trees and heave bails, yet gentle enough to tame lambs and wean pigs and tend the pink-combed pullets, who will stop his mower for an hour to splint the broken leg of a meadow lark. It had to be somebody who'd plow deep and straight and not cut corners. Somebody to seed, weed, feed, breed and rake and disc and plow and plant and tie the fleece and strain the milk and replenish the self-feeder and finish a hard week's work with a five-mile drive to church.

"Somebody who'd bale a family together with the soft strong bonds of sharing, who would laugh and then sigh, and then reply, with smiling eyes, when his son says he wants to spend his life 'doing what dad does.'" So God made a farmer.