



Acreage Answers

Hi Neighbor!

by Donna Donald, ISU Extension Family Life Specialist

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Living in a rural area can make getting acquainted with your neighbors a big challenge. Ideas, interests and backgrounds may separate you from neighbors everywhere, but in rural areas distance also may be a factor. It takes extra effort to establish and maintain good relationships with rural neighbors. Here are four points to consider in building these relationships.

1. Make a deliberate effort to get to know your neighbors. A friendly wave as you drive by is a good start. Stop to introduce yourself with a quick hello when you see them outside. Don't wait for them to make the first move.
2. Keep communication open. Good communication requires two things, a mutual respect for the other person's opinion and the ability to listen with an open ear. You may think you don't have much in common with your new neighbors, but you may be surprised. Start by talking about those things you may have in common such as children, hobbies, gardening, etc.
3. Keep others informed. It can help to keep close neighbors informed of major activities. If you are planning an important outdoor event such as a wedding, graduation, or large family gathering, you may want to let others know in advance. Farming neighbors may want to adjust their plans if they need to move large equipment at a time when you will have cars parked on the road. They also might arrange to do a particularly noisy, dusty or smelly chore on another day so they won't interfere with your plans.
4. Be ready to compromise. Compromise is giving the other person a chance and being willing to accept his/her ideas. This is simply a little of the old give and take. Don't assume your chosen lifestyle is the only lifestyle. You may have to put up with slow moving farm machinery on the road, but in turn that neighbor may have to deal with your roving pets.

Neighbors are lots like your family, you might not have much control over who they are but they may be there for a long time. By approaching your relationships with acceptance and respect you are laying the groundwork for peaceful co-existence and possibly real friendships.

Please share *Acreage Answers* with your acreage neighbors. Call your local ISU Extension office to be placed on the mailing list for *Acreage Answers* and to give us suggestions for future articles.

Central Iowa Extension offices

Boone Co.	515-432-3882
Clarke Co	641-342-3316
Dallas Co.	515-993-4281
Green Co.	515-386-2138
Guthrie Co.	641-747-2276
Jasper Co.	641-792-6433
Madison Co.	515-462-1001
Marshall Co.	641-752-1551
Polk Co.	515-261-4202
Story Co.	515-382-6551
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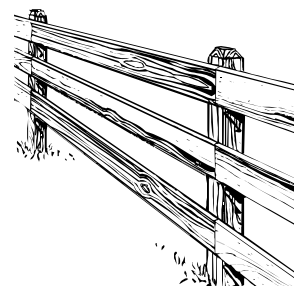
Fencing costs can be one the most expensive aspects of land ownership. Even if you don't have livestock you may be required by Iowa law to build a fence to contain a neighbor's livestock on a common boundary.

A lawful fence is described in detail by Iowa law (Chapter 359A.18 of the Iowa code).

Four types of fence, all of which meet the legal definition of a lawful fence in Iowa, are described in FM 1855 "Estimated Costs for Livestock Fencing." These include woven wire, barbed wire, high tensile non-electric and high tensile electrified. There are additional configurations that meet the requirements of a lawful fence, but these are some of the most common.

Cost varies by type of fence, where supplies are purchased, labor, and parcel shape. Of the four types of fence described in FM 1855, woven wire is the most expensive followed by barbed wire. The more irregular the shape, the higher the cost will be as it increases both materials and labor costs. Straight permanent fence can run \$3,000-6,000 per mile.

Interior fence can be provided by electrified polywire or polytape and is much lower cost to construct and maintain. This type of fence is not lawful for perimeter fence.



Programs for Sheep and Lamb or Mohair Producers

by Beth Grabau, USDA, Dallas County

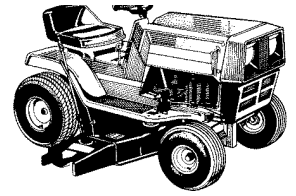
If you are a sheep or mohair producer you may be eligible to enroll in new programs. The Farm Service Agency has new programs for people that sell slaughter and/or feeder lambs. Producers could be eligible for an additional \$3 or \$8 a head.

Another new program allows producers to be paid on shorn wool and mohair for the 1999 marketing year. If you think that you are eligible for these programs, please contract your local Farm Service Agency office for more information about program requirements.

Choosing a Lawn & Garden Tractor

based on information provided by Rick Hawbaker, sales representative for Van-Wall Equipment, Perry, Iowa.

Buying a lawn and garden tractor between January and April can mean discounts and lower interest rates. There are several questions an acreage owner should consider when shopping for a tractor.



◆ How much area do I have to mow?

If you have ½ to 1-½ acres to mow a 38-inch riding mower should be sufficient. For 1 ½ to 3 acres of mowing a 48-inch mower is best. A 54 to 60 inch mower would be necessary for 3 to 6 acres of mowing. Areas over 6 acres would require a commercial mower or small tractor.

◆ What other uses will I have for a lawn tractor?

You will want to consider other tasks for which you will use the lawn tractor, including blowing snow or using a loader. These attachments can be purchased at the point of sale or added at a later date.

◆ How much time do I have to mow?

In addition to the size of the yard to mow, you will need to consider your time constraints. The larger the mower the less time it takes to get the job done.

◆ What type of ground do you need to mow?

If the terrain of your acreage is rugged, you will need to consider a larger size tractor with bigger wheels and heavier frame to withstand the stress.

Wildlife Damage Management

By Dr. Jim Pease, ISU Extension Wildlife Specialist



Even homeowners who love wildlife can be frustrated by the damage various critters may cause. Here is a basic approach to assessing and dealing with wildlife problems of all types. Most often, some combination of methods is needed. There is no magic potion to make wildlife problems disappear. It takes thought, imagination, and work!

1) Identify the problem and the critter. This may be harder than it seems. The evidence (a chewed plant, a hole, or some droppings) helps narrow down the suspects. Don't assume that because you see an animal it is the culprit.

2) Alter the situation. Eliminate food, shelter, or

other resources that may draw the animal. Clean up piles of lumber, cover pet food at night, and store birdseed in sealed containers. Perhaps you can keep the problem animal away from the plant or resource it wants. Keeping your siding, vents and eaves, etc., in good shape is step one. Fencing and netting may keep animals from plants, and insulating foam helps exclude them from the home.

4) Use scare tactics. To scare birds, visuals such as balloons or "scare crows" or sounds such as recorded distress calls or loud noises work best. If overused, however, they may become ineffective.

5) Use repellent. For mammals, taste and smell repellents work best, including

concoctions containing hot pepper, rotten eggs, and other bitter tasting or foul-smelling substances. They must be reapplied after rains or prolonged hot weather. Hungry wildlife may ignore them, however.

6) Remove the problem animal. Removal techniques such as live or kill traps and poisons, are the most misused. People often think they are easiest, but they require even more knowledge about an animal's behavior and biology. Local, state, and federal laws may apply, so check first.

Visit your local Extension office or the Extension wildlife website at

www.extension.iastate.edu/wildlife for more information.

Pruning Evergreens

by Jeff Iles, ISU Horticulture
Specialist

Proper pruning of evergreen trees and shrubs can greatly enhance the beauty of your acreage. Evergreens are pruned to control their size or shape, to remove dead, diseased, or damaged wood, and to remove older branches, which allows for new growth.

When considering timing and methods for pruning evergreens, it is important to

remember that the location of buds determines the position from which new growth develops, and differs between various species of evergreens.



Evergreen trees such as spruce and fir that produce side buds (lateral buds) on the shoots should be pruned by cutting the tips back to the desired length in late winter or early spring when buds are dormant. The recommended place for cuts is just above a side bud or side branch. Top leader pruning should be avoided. Cutting into the woody portion of such growth may result in a multiple top. Multiple-topped evergreens are unattractive, and are more prone to storm damage from the weight of heavy snow.

The pines, easily recognized by their long needles that generally are arranged in bundles of two's, three's, or

Perennials

by Mohamad Khan, ISU Extension Urban Horticulture Specialist

Perennials are permanent plantings in the garden that, unlike annuals, come up year after year. However, many of the herbaceous perennials are short-lived, while others can survive for decades.

Perennials can be used in many ways - in combination with annuals, trees and shrubs, rock gardens, border plants, pathways or in geometric shapes to create formal gardens. Whatever the design, make sure all the plants can be viewed at their peak times.

When creating a home landscape, consider planting perennials to blend with the permanent structures and other plantings. Perennials must complement the rest of the plantings. Make sure the blooming periods overlap, so as to have a continuous blooming garden. When planting perennials in a corner make sure there is a dark background. Locate the tallest plants in the rear and shortest and last blooming ones in the foreground. Plants in a bed should have tallest in the middle so they can be view from all sides.

Select appropriate plants that can tolerate the conditions such as dense shade, filtered light, partial shade or partial sun. Plants such as ferns and lily-of-the-valley can tolerate dense shade, while peonies, coreopsis and phlox prefer open sun. A good plan on paper will eventually result in a successful perennial garden.



five's, are pruned in early June to early July when the new growth is in the "candle" stage. Pinching or snapping off 1/2 to 2/3 of the candle results in the formation of numerous buds for next year while reducing annual growth. Candles should snap off easily and cleanly with the fingers. Cutting these plants with a knife or shears should be avoided since this may injure some of the needles, resulting in a general brown appearance later. It is important to remember that pines do not produce buds or shoots along existing branches or from cuts made in older wood. Consequently, pruning must be confined to the current year's growth if the plant is to

be dwarfed or shaped. Once pines become overgrown, it is too late to start corrective pruning.

Removal of unwanted or dead lower limbs may be done at any time of the year for spruce, fir, and pine. Wound dressings have been found to be of no value in hastening the closure of such pruning wounds.

For more information ask your local Extension office for publication SUL-5 "*Pruning Trees and Shrubs.*"



Rock Drives

From information provided by the Iowa Limestone Producers Association

Living in the country may present the new acreage owner with many situations not found in city life. One of these situations may be the building and maintaining of a rock drive. A rock drive is similar to the rock roads we drive everyday. The difference is the amount of and type of traffic that will be using the drive.

A drive is comprised of three components.

Materials - First is the subgrade, the existing earthen material below the driving surface. The top soil is removed, and the earth is compacted by the equipment removing the topsoil. A very simple drive may have only one layer of crushed rock (roadstone) placed on the subgrade. Over several years this rock will sink into the subgrade and require additional layers of roadstone.

Rock is applied in layers 2 to 4 inches in depth. Roadstone contains a broad range of rock sizes which makes it compact easily for a smooth driving surface.

Limestone is an option to use as road rock. The angular shapes of limestone provide strength and stability and resist movement once compacted.

These shapes also allow for the drainage needed to deal with surface water.

A gradation number using a standard set by the Iowa Department of Transportation identifies crushed rock. For example, roadstone is Gradation Number 11.

Cross-Section Geometry – The width will depend on the use of the drive. For one vehicle, 12 feet is adequate. Ditches may not be necessary. Look at the drainage in the area. If the drainage will cause damage to the drive, ditches should be considered.

Horizontal/ Vertical Geometry - Drives can be adjusted to fit the site. The drive should be used to create an atmosphere as well as provide a basic transportation link.

Many counties have codes that apply to drives and their connections to roadways. Be sure to check with the local county or city engineering department before you start work on a drive.



Prairie Program Planned

Prairie establishment and maintenance is the topic for a two-hour program offered by Iowa State University Extension in central and east central Iowa on February 19th from 7-9 p.m. Approximately fifteen sites will be offering the session via the Iowa Communications Network.

Rich Pope, ISU Program Specialist, and Loren Lawn, Natural Resources Specialist for the Polk County Conservation Board will be the presenters. The program will begin with discussion of “What is a prairie?” and “What are prairie plants?”

The session will address the selection of appropriate materials including seeds and plants and management of prairie plantings including over-seeding and over-planting.

Cost of the Prairie ICN is \$6.00 for individuals and \$8.00 for couples registered by February 14th. For more information contact your local Extension office.