

Version:1.0 StartHTML:0000000181 EndHTML:0000003134 StartFragment:0000002362
EndFragment:0000003098
SourceURL:file:///localhost/Users/computer/Desktop/obits/barefootfarmer.doc

Farms are for people. Soils, plants and animals all play their role in agriculture, but the human social aspect is at the heart of it. The farm offers a safe place to live in freedom, experience nature and develop responsibility. The welfare system which takes care of some people's needs was not necessary in a farm economy. Farms are the real welfare.

Before I wrote the word "welfare" I had to look it up in the dictionary. It has certain negative connotations, but this is what Webster's says; Welfare 1. The exemption from misfortune, sickness, calamity, or evil, the enjoyment of health and the common blessings of life; prosperity; happiness; well-being. 2. A blessing.

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The farm has plenty of food and plenty to do. Although money is tight , the things money can buy become less interesting. For those that don't fit into the 9 to 5 work day, try living on a farm.

We have many days with little work. Rainy spells or winter days find us making music and reading. But when the weather is right it's "all hands on deck." On this diversified vegetable farm, I need a lot of help all at once for planting, hoeing and harvesting the rest of the time my helpers can just do what they want.

This relaxed lifestyle suits some people. I need more responsibility, but not everyone does. We offer room and board in exchange for occasional labor. I think this is the traditional way society fosters a healthy place for everyone.

People are more important than money. With farms, we can take care of each other. Even the disabled or elderly can shell beans.

The idea of a lone farmer borrowing money to buy inputs from foreign-owned corporations to farm with does not have our welfare in mind. As Macon County rushes headlong into corporate farming via Tyson's broiler industry, we might consider the social consequences. Tyson's is

after our land, and the welfare system that follows starts with high taxes, necessitates high unemployment and doles out money and important food to people with nothing to do.

When I moved to Macon County in the early '70's, I found a true welfare system here. Family farms supported the community and each other. I've been involved in small-scale farming ever since, and it is much easier now. Tobacco can be replaced with vegetables. There is a huge demand for local food, and a lot of young people are willing to make it happen.

Macon County stands at a crossroad. Do we give our farming to the corporations and accept their welfare, or do we keep our farms and take care of ourselves?