

Prison Farms Terminated

Government spurns teaching agricultural skills ...

It's bad enough to make a country preacher swear! The Canadian Government has clearly shown its hand with regard to their attitude to the agricultural sector by closing the country's prison farms.

In 2009 there were six prison farms – in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and New Brunswick. Three hundred inmates worked there.

They produced food-stuffs that supplemented prison kitchen budgets. Also, there was a training and rehabilitative program built in for each participant.

Today, when pet therapy is such an integral part of so many institutional programs, and a broad variety of therapists encourage people to work in local gardens for their sense for well-being and to support the community, the government's measure for success seems to be based solely on how many dollars are realized.

There is no measure for the mechanical skills that were learned, nor the way participants had to help plan and work together. There is certainly no appreciation for how a way-of-life could be shared, nor for the spin-offs from this way-of-life.

All this portrays the pitiful point of view politicians have for the rural culture and rural ways of doing things. As one TV pundit puts it, the bottom line seems to be "Money! Money! Money!"

Maybe the other farms ran at some loss, looking strictly from a cost-profit point of view. But the Kingston penitentiary farm more than paid its way, yet it seems to be among the earliest closed.

What happens when they have to write purchasing contracts for the likes of milk? And have to set their inmates up in new training and rehabilitation programs?

I shake my head when I look at the crass and inadequate measure this Federal Government uses to justify the unjustifiable.

I'm certain God watches over our country-side and its people even if the Feds don't!

(written by Joyce Sasse, 2010)