

# PREFACE

WILLARD SCOTT

“Agriculture is the Mother of all industry.”

FOR THE LAST 212 YEARS, this declaration has appeared on the cover of J. Gruber’s *Hagerstown Town and Country Farmers Almanack*. There were never truer words written. For proof of this, just look around at our great country.

My family settled here in 1759, and as their ancestors had done before them in England, someone from every generation of Scotts has made his living by farming. As a youth, I spent summers on my grandfather’s farm in Maryland. It was there that I came to know a whole different world from what I’d experienced living in the city. For one thing, I learned how to milk a cow! I remember so clearly loading the milk cans into an old Model A Ford and delivering them safely to the Sealtest Dairy pick up station. From there, they would go on to Baltimore. It made me feel like I was playing a small but important part in feeding America, and that notion filled me with up with pride and excitement.

My grandfather never owned a tractor. He used real “horse power” on his farm. When he cut the fields for hay, I would stomp it down with my feet. There were no tractors back then, just plain old-fashioned manual labor. Today, even with machines, farmers are still the hardest-working people I know.

I also remember the sweet taste of water from the country spring on the farm, the rooster crowing at dawn—nature’s best and most trusted alarm clock—and eating those hearty homemade breakfasts with fresh eggs, milk, ham, and just-baked bread made from grain grown right there in our fields. I suppose that’s why my favorite meal of the day has always been, and still is, breakfast. And the bigger the better!

The memories of those days on the farm are an important part of who I am, and I consider that heritage to be priceless. Farmers and ranchers are the backbone of our country, indispensable providers of the food, and now energy as well, that has enabled the United States to remain stable and strong throughout history. From the heart of our farmlands have come many of the nation’s greatest leaders, inventors, innovators, and caretakers of our natural resources. You know, farmers were “green” before anybody else! They are America’s true patriots and pioneers, who stand for the ideals that most all of us hold dear. *American Farmer* pays glorious tribute to these ordinary heroes, and reminds us of just how extraordinary they are.

God bless America’s farmers.

W. S.

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