

## Farmers: Our Past, Our Future

All of us like to drop names. It seems that associating ourselves with someone famous helps to make us stand out...at least a little bit. A mentor of mine once said that anybody who claims not to enjoy name dropping will lie about other things, too. I'll admit I've been known to drop a name here and there. In fact, this forum gives me an opportunity to drop another one...Charlie Sisson. You haven't heard of him? Let me introduce you.

Charlie Sisson was a life-long farmer, active in church and community. He fathered three children and helped Mollie raise six more. He was a pioneer, as a young adult settling in the Indian Territory now known as Oklahoma. He cut and hued the logs, then built the house he and Mollie shared from their wedding day until his death in the fall of 1946. He was persistent, surviving two world wars, the Dust Bowl, and the Great Depression. He was also the first 'field' agronomist I ever met.

You probably still don't know who Charlie Sisson was, but you surely knew a few like him. They loved the land, worked long, hard hours, and seldom complained. In fact, I'm privileged to know those kinds of farmers today. They're pioneers like Charlie, except they're trying to grow 200 or more bushels of corn per acre instead of the 30 or so he squeezed out of the soil. Charlie and his contemporaries each grew enough to feed about 15 people. Today's farmer feeds more than 100...and will need to do even better.

This issue of *Better Crops with Plant Food* emphasizes high yields and how they can increase farmer profits, feed more people, and make more efficient use of our soil and water resources. It's about the survival of today's Charlie Sissons. We at PPI believe high, efficiently produced crop yields are essential to that survival, as well as to agriculture's ability to feed an ever-growing world population.

By the way, Charlie Sisson was my Grandpa. He died when I was six years old, but the principles he taught me still help to guide my life. To me he was famous. That's why I dropped his name on you.



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