

Dear Harvey,

12/13/72

It will be helpful, I think, if you can start a file on what we discussed as "capacity" on Monday. It will be the element of proof of loss that relates to what we did do and could have done with the business.

All of my thinking in the past was in terms of the agreement I worked out at the Pentagon at which, as I told you with respect to the meat-chicken claim, I had to make compromises in order to get the agreement. Thus there is no reflection of the possibilities of waterfowl. Finding the old records of the hatching old Charles Haight did for me reminds me of it, but didn't at the time I was going over that diary. If we are not now limited to that Pentagon agreement's terms, we can add a claim for waterfowl, particularly geese, and these records will show it to what I hope is a sufficient degree.

The conditions of farming and marketing imposed upon us by the helicopter overflights may be difficult to comprehend, but they were real. The immediate question was of survival, but over and above that was coping with the condition, the feeling of futility, and the extraordinary amount of wasted work. Aside from the great amount of extra time required to tend the chickens, there was an every greater waste of time in dressing them, because of the damages to them. The simplest representation of this is in defeathering. When the feathers were broken off in the milling, clawing and general turmoil, the remnants of the quills had to be removed. My ability to dress chickens was reduced by a large proportion by this simple thing. In order to keep going with meat chickens, I had to make adjustments and compromises. As I could dress fewer chickens, I also could dress fewer anythings. Waterfowl are more of a problem to dress, and they had to be reduced.

But the essence of a specialty business is having a quality product not readily available. The goose was ideally suited for this. It has other attributes that lead to my "Geese for Peace" project that got the Peace Corps its first good publicity break. This, I think, also gets into the kind of thing the trial lawyer in Mr. Lewin is seeking, the dramatic. That project got me and my picture on international front pages and led to R. Sargent Shriver personally asking me to join his agency.

I was also an authentic expert on geese, was Beltsvilles, the U of Md's, the French government's consultant, etc., on them. Beltsville and U of Md referred their few goose inquiries to me.

The goose is a rugged individualist. It comes as close as any farm creature to defying the assembly line and thus defies industrialization. This makes the goose ideal for a specialty business.

We also like them for their other qualities. I have the rough drafts of two books on them, written after we discontinued farming. I also have some Disney-like pictures of an exa before this kind of film became popular, and before the animals were trained for it, showing the kinds of things I did with them, again Mr. Lewin's trial interest. I have countless pictures of wild, Canada geese, so tame they came at my call and ate from my mouth without biting me.

There is almost no fancy restaurant that is not a probable customer for geese during the holiday season, beginning with Thanksgiving. I was never able to fill this market. Indeed, never able to explore it. I sold them to the few who asked me for them, and that was about it. There are people who like good and different food and people in whose cultural backgrounds the goose figures who are also customers for the goose as meat.

There was a small market for them as live goslings. My recollection is that we got \$1.50 each for goslings as hatched, with no feed or other costs in them after incubating.

On this basis alone, had I been able to seek that market, I could have figured a net income of at least \$20 per laying goose of the less fecund breeds, more of the better layers, like the Chinas, where I think I got \$1.00 or \$1.25 day-old, as hatched.

The goose is essentially a grazer. This is what led to my Peace-Corps project for the under-developed countries, its ability to survive on vegetation. This does not produce the best-quality food, but it does produce protein for areas where it is scarce. The only commercially-available geese in the United States were the by-product of weeding work they did in strawberry patches and cotten fields. Poor table quality because they were not given the simple care and investment required for top market quality. We also grazed them, which means no feeding cost for the vegetation. But we finished them properly, and much faster, meaning more tenderness and less overall feed cost. They grow astoundingly

fast, as survival of the original breeds required. By the time they are fully feathered they are marketable as food. Thereafter they grow at a slower rate and fatten more as they develop more muscle tissue. I am certain that I had some goslings that dressed 8 pounds and more by the time they were two months old. This meant a gross of about \$6.50 each at that tender age. But don't be deceived. Dressing them was much more work than dressing chickens, meaning also much more time and fewer that could be dressed in the same amount of time. To improve on this we obtained a special wax that required special heat and recovery processes, but because of the sum total of the problems we were never able to get to where we could use it. Economies, which also means more per-unit profit, were quite possible and were effected in the few, remote areas where prime geese were produced. There was a particular small area in Wisconsin, for example, and its prime market was New York.

The Baltimore live market regularly paid a real premium over the prices quoted by the Agriculture Department for the few months of the year when live geese were marketed there. Individual dealers paid individual growers, very few in number, much more for their better geese. Our friend Henry Wessel, whose interest was not in meat geese but in showing them, got such a premium yearly from one live dealer in Baltimore. This is always the case with the unusual with any food. I used to raise my own beef. A chef regularly offered and paid me as I now recall 5¢ a pound more than the top of the market for prime to get half of my last steer when I slaughtered it.

I would never have raised geese in the numbers we raised chickens, but per unit the profit was exceptional. My breeders took almost no work and little feed. No housing at all. We made a small pond before these troubles not to have to water them, so that also was no work. They even hatched their last clutch of eggs for me, no work there, and the last that hatched in the incubators, too, eliminating that part of the brooding. But we did have a market for geese I had to curtail in order to survive with chickens. This is clear in my 1957 diary, which is two years after the beginning of these troubles. If it does not show all the goslings we had, it shows enough. I can go over that diary again and tabulate those of which the record exists. It can total a fair sum without extension into the potential, if you'd like me to.