

Farmer With Soul

Max Yasgur

Special to The New York Times

BETHEL, N. Y., Aug. 17—
Until a few days ago Max Yasgur was just another dairy farmer in Sullivan County. Now he gets phone calls threatening to burn him out. And even more calls praising him and asking how the callers can help. The reason for his unwonted

Man
in the
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prominence is that it was on 600 acres of his land that hundreds of thousands of young-

sters gathered for Woodstock Music and Art Fair, their cars blocking roads and overflowing onto lawns.

But Mr. Yasgur, a dairy farmer since boyhood, has the stubbornness of most farmers. He also avoids the phone these days.

"I never expected this festival to be this big," he told an acquaintance the other day. "But if the generation gap is to be closed, we older people have to do more than we have done."

He Gives Away Food

A gaunt man of 49, with glasses, he looks even taller than his 5 feet 11 inches. He is trying to do his bit to bridge the generation gap by giving large amounts of dairy products to the youngsters at the festival, sometimes at cost and often free.

His red barn, fronting on Route 17B, with its long line of parked cars, displays a big sign reading, "Free Water."

He put up this sign when he heard that some residents were selling water to the youngsters at the festival. He slammed a work-hardened fist down on the table and demanded of some friends:

"How can anyone ask for money for water?"

The other day, as he was preparing to give away substantial quantities of butter and cheese, someone asked what the youngsters would put the butter on.

That evening a relative brought a car filled with loaves of bread to the farm.

Mr. Yasgur and his wife, Miriam, have two children, a daughter, Lois, and a son, Samuel, who is an assistant district attorney on the staff of District Attorney Frank S. Hogan of Manhattan.

The gently rolling Yasgur farm is the home of a herd of 650 cows, mostly Guernsey. Mr. Yasgur raises some of the corn used as feed for his dairy herd.

Friends Concerned on Health

As he paces nervously in the heavy work shoes he has worn almost all his life, his friends become increasingly concerned. He has a cardiac history and they fear another heart attack.

Mr. Yasgur has been getting very little sleep at night and refuses to ease up during the day, often flying over the music festival area in a helicopter.

A man in this county who has known Mr. Yasgur for many years, and who thinks the festival was a terrible mistake, said:

"I don't doubt that Max made a good business deal. But I think he was motivated at least as much by his principles as by the thought of making money." Sponsors of the fair said they had paid \$50,000 to rent the farm.

And a successful businessman who has been dealing with the dairy farmer for a long time declared:

"Max is not just a successful farmer. He is an individualist."