

47th Problem of Euclid

Extension Perspectives by Steve Turaj

Roughly 2500 years ago it's said there 'was great rejoicing' when ancient Greek philosopher Pythagoras discovered the method of finding the length of the hypotenuse of a right triangle in mathematics. So records my 1910 edition of "Handy Farm Devices and How to Make Them" The rule proved by him is that the square of the base added to the square of the altitude equals the square of the hypotenuse. A master mathematician, Pythagoras believed numbers "were the ultimate reality".

Greek history/ philosophy may not seem all that pertinent to 21st Century life. However, practical, everyday applications can be found. Derived from the 47th Problem of Euclid is another known by most builders: The Rule of 6, 8, and 10. "Measure 6 feet on the end sill of a building and 8 feet on the side sill. If it measures 10 feet across the angle, the building is square."

If all this construction stuff is interesting to you, a workshop being put on by the Coös County Conservation District and UNH Cooperative Extension might be something you'll want to attend. It's a followup to ones we have done over the last two years about concrete, geared to on-farm applications and for other do-it-yourself types. You may have seen the announcements in the local newspaper, we're calling it 'Farm Structures: Do-It-Yourself'. It will be held at Perras Lumber, Route 3, Northumberland on Wednesday, June 17. We will start at 10:30 a.m. There is no cost or registration required for this.

Our focus is basic Pole Barn construction. Hopefully we'll answer building questions like 'what are the best fasteners for pressure -treated wood' or 'what about laminated posts, roofing material, insulation...' then we'll take a look at some of the options. Our UNH Cooperative Extension advisor/speaker, Stan Weeks, is familiar to many of the region's farmers. As an agricultural engineer he has worked both at Cornell University and the Agway Research Center in Fabius, NY. Thanks to a Sigler Family Foundation grant coordinated by John Porter, retired UNH Dairy Specialist, he has been helping NH farmers with their construction decisions for many years now.

My copy of "Handy Farm Devices" is not for sale (barter is another story) but surprisingly, I did just find it ready to read on the internet. A more up-to date publication we do plan to have available is one by the NE's Ag-Engineering Service titled "Post-Frame Building Handbook", low priced, it is packed with information on materials, design considerations and construction procedures.

Hope to see you at the workshop, for more details call the Coös County Conservation District (788-4651) of the Coös County office of UNHCE (788-4961).