

From Where We Stand . . . To Merge Or Not To Merge

Within the past week and a half we have seen the merging of four farmer cooperatives into two huge organizations.

One is a service cooperative while the other one is a purchasing cooperative, but both are now big enterprises.

Last week members of the Eastern States Farmers Exchange and Grange League Federation voted to combine operations into one of the largest farmer-owned businesses in the United States. It will be known as Agway, Inc.

During the same time, and early this week, members of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Artificial Breeders Cooperative voted to merge their assets and services with Western Pennsylvania Artificial Breeders Cooperative. That organization is in the process of voting at district meetings, and preliminary counts indicate that the merger will be approved. If the merger takes place, business will be carried on under the name of Atlantic Breeders Cooperative.

Furthermore, it was learned that the Central Pennsylvania counterpart of the other two breeding co-ops has put out feelers that indicate a further merger is not too far away.

And — while negotiations seem to be stalled at the moment, we understand that the merger of another feed company with the Agway co-op may still be in the works

These two developments seem to be a continuation of the trend toward "the big get bigger and the little get squeezed out" situation in so much of the economic community of this country

We do not mean to condemn either of the mergers. If better service can be rendered, or if it can be rendered cheaper, we are for the mergers

However, bigness in itself is no guarantee of success. Unless the management grows in stature with the size of the business, the service can not continue to improve.

As cooperatives grow larger, they will be in more fierce competition with other businesses, and competition can either make an organization stronger or kill it completely.

We remember a time, long, long ago, when we went crying to Mother after being tramped on in a football game, we didn't get the kind of consolation we expected. She said, "If you are going to play with the big boys, you have to expect to get hurt a little"

But she didn't tell us to stop playing with the big boys. She knew that a few cuts and bruises are a necessary part of growing up

It may be that farmer cooperatives are growing up. It may be that the next few years will see some of the roughest play the cooperatives have ever been in, but those that survive may well be-

come the guideposts of the industry.

Businesses of all kinds are growing bigger. Private companies that sell to the farmer and service his equipment, and companies that purchase the farmer's products are growing larger. Management (called power by those who fear bigness) is being centralized in fewer and fewer hands.

For this very reason we believe the co-op mergers may serve a good purpose. We believe that it is better to see this "power" in a farmer-owned and operated business than in a business whose only interest in farming is the cash which comes from the farm.

Untold numbers of farmer cooperatives have been formed and most of them have folded. Most of them were formed to serve a good purpose. Those which did not serve the purpose soon died a merciful death. Others died because they fulfilled their service and outlived their usefulness, but many others died because they were poorly managed or because they were organized to do a job that did not need to be done

We believe a farmer cooperative can serve a useful purpose, but when it no longer does what it was organized to do, we believe it should be discontinued. If it continues to do the job, and do it well, it deserves the support of all members — in good times as well as bad. A cooperative — big or small — can not survive without such support.

At least that's how it looks from where we stand



At Least, Look

The old saying, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket," seems to apply to Lancaster County.

For too many years, county farmers have relied on tobacco as practically the only cash crop.

Now there is a frantic scramble to find a crop to replace tobacco which is becoming less and less "cash".

At a meeting this week, John Yocum, Superintendent of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Field Research Laboratory near Landisville, reported on work with several new crops which may or may not have economic possibilities.

After the meeting we heard one comment, "Most of that sounded way, way out"

Well, perhaps it was, but so what! If anyone of the new crops could be used to take up the slack in an industry in trouble, we believe it is not too far out. We believe it is not too early to explore any and all possibilities for an economic replacement for a sick cash crop.

At least that's how it looks from where we stand.

and truck holdups that follow — apart" "While we are not in ed a cooperative fight in New Jersey "You don't want that in Lancaster County," he said of the land"

Robert McKinley, President of Dairy Council, Inc., told the group, "dairy is fighting for its life" in the face of competition, scares, government paternalism, bad publicity, and "others who would tear us

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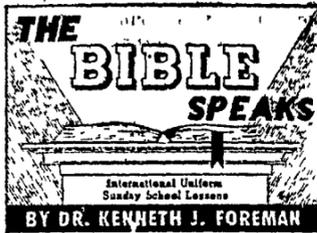
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Head of the House

Lesson for March 1, 1964

Background Scripture: Luke 10 38-42; John 11:1 through 12:11.
Devotional Reading: John 11:1-15.

A PICTURE-MOTTO often seen, though it is many years old by now, starts this way: "CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THIS HOUSE." It usually shows a picture of Christ, but such pictures are the work of imagination. What



Dr. Foreman your house.

In the Gospels Luke and John we are given glimpses of a home where Jesus was really the head of the household, even though that expression itself is never used. It was the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

Seeing things his way

That Jesus was the head of that household, that family group, does not mean that he interfered with their work or their arrangements. We all dislike meddlers, and Jesus was not a meddler. He would lean over backwards, so to speak, to keep from being one. When they had him to dinner, you remember, Martha got quite tired and cross working hard over the dinner. Jesus (had he been inclined to take over running the house) might have ordered Martha to put out the kitchen fire and let them eat sandwiches for once. He might have demanded that she sit beside Mary and listen while he talked. But he let them each do it her way, he did not put in his oar till the right minute. And when he did, it was in the most tactful and affectionate way possible. He didn't say Martha was wrong. What he said was that she was "anxious and troubled"—unhappy, in short. He didn't say Mary

was better than Martha, simply that she had chosen "good portion," the "better part." He was inviting Martha to look at things his way. Ten days, ten years, half a lifetime after the dinner, Mary would remember what Jesus had been saying, but who would remember what they had to eat? A glowing truth thought often remembered is worth far more than the finest foods perfectly served. See it my way, Jesus said.

His way of doing

This was not the only occasion Jesus worked with some member of the family to see things as he saw them. But consider another point. Jesus had his own way of doing things, and he was not being conceited when he urged others to do likewise. Take the incident John tells of this Mary's pouring out upon Jesus an expensive box of perfume. What a waste! Some of the men said. But Jesus did not think it a waste. He himself was often known to do the same thing,—waste a great deal that was precious, out of sheer love. He told his disciples many things that they never remembered. He made many a plea for understanding and support that fell on deaf ears. In time of death and sorrow

It is particularly remarkable how Jesus dealt with the great trial and tragedy in that home. Don't most of us feel awkward, embarrassed and silent in the time when death and great grief come to those we love? Jesus certainly did not talk to Martha and Mary, after Lazarus died, as if death were not real. He did not try to distract their attention by trite remarks—we all have to die sometime, we must remember what a good man Lazarus was, and all that. What Jesus did was to say in effect: "Think of Me. I am the Life." He brought comfort by bringing—himself.

Now maybe we can see a little better what it means to say "Christ is the head of this house." A home where he is welcomed, in spirit, every day; a home where every one in it comes more and more to see things his way and to do things as he would do them; the home where "Love thyself last" is the daily rule; and above all, the home where in time of crisis and grief, and even in the hour of death, Christ comes foremost in the mind,—this is the home where he is truly the head.

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Now Is The Time . . .

BY MAX SMITH



MAX SMITH

To Plan for Early Pasture

Livestock producers that are a bit short on hay and silage supplies might consider the application of 50 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre on winter grain or straight grass pastures. This extra shot of nitrogen will force the grass to grow faster and make it possible to graze the animals 10 days to two weeks early. Permanent grass pastures should respond well to this treatment.

To Plow Atrazine-treated Corn Ground

Growers of spring oats are urged to plow their corn stalk ground instead of discing. Due to the growth conditions of last summer, it is possible for some of the atrazine weed spray to remain in the topsoil and injure the germination of the oats. Plowing

will help to eliminate this danger. Oats ground should be plowed and prepared as early as weather conditions will permit.

To Attend Dairy Day Program

All Lancaster County dairymen are urged to be present at the annual Dairy Day Program; this event is scheduled for Tuesday, March 10th at the Guernsey Sale Pavilion. We have been interested in this program for the past 12 years and recommend it as one of the most worthwhile days spent away from home for the dairyman. The speakers will discuss current trends and problems and will have something beneficial for everyone. All dairymen are welcome.

To Discard Hybrid Tobacco Seeds

Growers of Pennbel or Pennleaf hybrid tobacco last season should not attempt to keep any of the seeds for this year's crop. Since these two varieties are hybrids, the second-year seeds will not hold true to character and will produce an inferior tobacco plant. New, certified seeds should be purchased in these varieties.

Interstate

(Continued from Page 1)

Milk Bargaining Cooperative does not need membership, but is making the rounds because of ill feeling caused by Interstate's withdrawal from the agency last year

He said Interstate withdrew because they felt they could represent their members in the New York milkshed as well as, or better than, Metropolitan

He said he fears that the competition between cooperatives would confuse farmers causing them to withdraw from all cooperatives and be without representation in the market place

"Don't let co-opticide come to Lancaster County," he said "You have not lived long enough to see what's in go on when cooperatives get themselves into a fight"

He told of barn burnings