

From Where We Stand...

Timeliness Puts You Dollars Ahead

The Lancaster County Farmer these days must skillfully combine land, labor, capital and management to produce the different raw products he sells. It certainly is no secret that his investment in land, livestock and equipment runs between \$100,000 and \$200,000. Being self-employed, his investment often is greater than the businesses in Ephrata, Quarryville, Mt. Joy or any other local town.

Usually the farmer is quick to substitute capital for labor mainly because good labor is hard to find. And he will use herbicides, insecticides, fertilizers and improved hybrids, etc., to increase his farm income. But too often, he does not recognize the value of time. Or should we say timeliness.

Take for instance planting and harvesting corn. Purdue University's William Uhrig reports that delayed planting — from May 2 until May 30 — decreased the yield on a full season corn hybrid by 19 bushels per acre average for 5 years at the Northwest Iowa Experiment farm. And harvesting before serious lodging set in also increased total income for the farmer. All a matter of timing.

Weather influences crop production and farmers have the same number of days to plant five acres or 150 acres. So to simply say a day's time is worth x number of dollars does not quite tell the story. At times, a farmer might well add \$100 or \$200 an hour to his income by getting a given job done on time. One example given by Uhrig showed farm income increased by \$3,860 through higher yields from more timely operations.

So, take a vacation when the work load is a little slack. Farmers need more of them. But when critical work periods are pressing, get as much of it done as possible on time. Do everything possible outside this short critical time period like spreading fertilizer, preparing seedbeds, etc. Hire some extra labor or get some custom work done.

Jobs done on time will put you dollars ahead at income tax time. At least that's the way it looks from where we stand.

Dangerous Manure Pits

Everyone knows about the incendiary tendencies of Mrs. O'Leary's cow as a result of the great Chicago fire.

Few, however, know that bovines are four-legged bombs. To be more precise — and as delicate as possible — a certain by-product of the dairy industry produces no less than four gases, at least one of which is highly explosive.

Now, most persons might think this to be an esoteric — perhaps almost non-existent — problem.

But W. J. Fletcher of the National Safety Council's Farm department says that's not true.

Gases from manure pits, Fletcher says, have caused both human and animal deaths.

In fact, an explosion caused by one of these gases — methane — is known to have literally lifted a dairy barn from its foundations.

Fletcher — who was born and raised in farm country — says that in the good old

days the only safety precaution necessary with manure was to watch your step.

Urban sprawl and a labor shortage, have changed all that.

Today's farmer, relies more and more on confinement feeding — that is, you keep the cows in the barn — and the pit storage of manure.

The manure drops through slots in the barn floor directly into storage pits below.

Disposal is not required for several months, which helps to drastically cut labor costs.

All this would seem like progress, particularly to anyone who has ever had to shovel manure with a pitch fork.

Unfortunately, however, potentially hazardous gases — primarily ammonia, carbon dioxide, methane and hydrogen sulphide — can, and frequently do, build up to dangerous concentrations.

Some of these gases, particularly hydrogen sulphide, are poisonous, and, among other things, Fletcher advises persons working in or around manure pits to use — are you ready for this? — self-contained air breathing apparatus, the same SCUBA equipment as used by underwater sports enthusiasts.

The situation might seem humorous but when you consider the hazards of each of the major gases involved you begin to realize the situation isn't particularly funny; Ammonia, lighter than air, is highly irritating and absorbed readily in water but is easily removed by ventilation. Carbon dioxide, heavier than air, is not detectable by smell, but a tankful of it will suffocate a person if he stays in the area, passing out before he knows what's wrong. Methane also causes suffocation but usually rises and escapes a building even without ventilation. It is explosive and can cause considerable damage if ignited. Hydrogen sulphide has a rotten egg smell and is poisonous. As little as 500 parts per million will restrict breathing and may make artificial respiration necessary. Levels as high as 800 parts per million of hydrogen sulphide have been measured at slat level over a manure pit. It is heavier than air and almost always present over a manure pit. Hydrogen sulphide tends to paralyze the diaphragm.

Fletcher says any closed space may be gas-suspect — silo pits, septic tanks, even well pits — and warns that agitation of pit contents will release large quantities of gas. All tanks, Fletcher cautions, should be treated as though they contain explosive gas. That is, no matches or other open flames should be permitted. The NSC agricultural engineer makes the following specific recommendations for manure pit work: never work alone; use a lifeline and make sure there is power enough to lift a victim clear of the tank; if you must go inside a tank, ventilate the tank before entering it and during the work; test for combustible gases and oxygen level with a miner's lamp or other testing device, not with an open flame and use a self-contained air breathing apparatus (SCUBA) if in doubt. Let's see, if Mrs. O'Leary's cow and a lantern could burn down almost all of Chicago, then a manure pit can — . . . At least that's the way it looks from where we stand.

Across The Fence Row

Hating people is like burning down your own house to get rid of a rat.

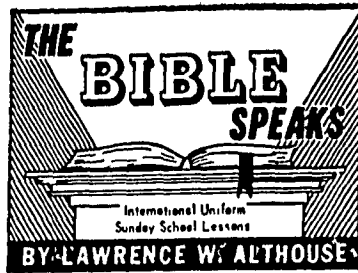
— Harry Fosdick

Local Weather Forecast

(From the U. S. Weather Bureau at the Harrisburg State Airport)

The five-day forecast for the period Saturday through next Wednesday calls for temperatures to average near normal with daytime highs in the mid 50's to low 60's and over-night lows in the upper 30's to mid 40's. Seasonably cool through most of the period. The normal high-low for the period is 58-39.

Precipitation may total one-half inch or more as rain showers mostly during the first half of the period.



ARE YOU LISTENING?

Lesson for November 2, 1969

Background Scripture: Jeremiah 7, 26, 52.

Devotional Reading: Jeremiah 5 22 25.

The casualty lists from the Battle of Megiddo were a crushing blow to the people of Judah. The nation staggered under the impact of this tragic news.

Necho, Pharaoh of Egypt, had sent a large army to assist the Assyrians whose empire was being eaten away, bit by bit, by the Babylonians. In order to protect the region of Haran against the Egyptians and keep them from



Rev. Althouse aiding Assyria, King Josiah and his forces had engaged the invaders in a fierce battle at the fortress of Megiddo. Many soldiers on both sides were lost in this battle.

Both reformer and reform

Most stunning of all was the name that stood at the top of the casualty list that was hurried back to Jerusalem:

Dead: JOSIAH, King of Judah, age 39, in the thirty-first year of his reign.

Judah's noblest king, the great reformer, was dead!

And so was the reform he had established. It was not long until, without the force of his leadership, the forces of moral and spiritual decay began the work of turning to reality the terrible prophecies of the Book of Law.

Two kings . . . two sons . . . and two reformations lost! Hezekiah's reformation had been willingly ruined by his son, Manasseh. Josiah's reform was allowed to die by his indifferent son and successor, Jehoiakim. Wouldn't Jerusalem ever learn its lesson? A cross on a hill named Calvary some six centuries later seemed to answer "No."

So, the reformation of Judah was lost. Jehoiakim was not Josiah. Furthermore, sincere and well-intentioned as it had

been, the reformation had not gone far enough or cut deeply enough into the life of the nation. It changed many of the external practices of the people, but it left untouched much of the spiritual decay that had accumulated through the years. It was only a repair job, when what was needed was radical surgery. As Jesus might have put it, it was like sewing a patch of new material on an old garment.

Continuing reformation

Had he lived longer, Josiah might well have carried further and deeper his reforms. But those who followed him were indifferent and the reformation eventually died. It is not enough to seek renewal just once, whether it be in the life of the individual, the church, or the nation. We must constantly be engaged in reformation. George Webber has written: "Every age, perhaps in our time every decade, demands a new Protestant Reformation" (God's Colony In Man's World Abingdon: 1960).

The people of Judah who had lived during the reign of Josiah had failed to profit by the mistakes and lessons of the past. Their neighbor to the North, Israel, had refused to heed prophetic warnings from Amos and others whom God had sent to them. Eventually, therefore, it was conquered and obliterated.

Unfortunately, Judah did not profit from Israel's example. Just as Israel had ignored the warnings of Amos, so Judah turned a deaf ear to the prophecies of Jeremiah. As a result, Judah fell to the Babylonians in 587 B.C., most of her people being carried off into captivity. Judah was finished. One reform had not been enough.

In every age

There have been times of renewal and reformation in our own national life. We can look back to "the Great Awakening" in America of the nineteenth century and acknowledge the renewal it brought to our land. But renewal and reform and repentance must continue in every age. It is of little value to honor the prophets of the past if we, like Judah, do not heed the prophets of today.

There are prophetic voices today. Are you listening?

(Based on outlines copyrighted by the Division of Christian Education, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. Released by Community Press Service.)



NOW IS THE TIME . . .

By Max Smith
Lancaster County Agent

To Ventilate Barns

Many dairy barns are filled to capacity and this presents a ventilation problem. When we see condensation on the ceiling or on the windows, it indicates that more ventilation is needed; also, condensation on ceilings may mean that more insulation is needed. Exhaust fan systems have worked for many livestock producers and are well recommended. Publications are available from your Extension Office.

To Feed Loose Salt

The common practice on many farms is to provide block salt for livestock; this is much better than no salt at all, but is not as good as to provide loose salt for the animals at all times. We have reports from livestock authorities that many animals will stop licking the salt block because of a sore tongue before

they can get sufficient salt. We recommend that a special box be placed in the barn or pens, away from the weather, that will permit free choice at all times. This same suggestion will hold true for minerals.

To Control Rats

Cold weather is here and soon the ground may be covered with snow, this means that many rodents, of which the rat is the most destructive, will be coming into buildings and other places for protection. We would like to again emphasize the large amount of damage and hazards that a large rat population will present. By cleaning up and by concreting all possible nesting places will be of great help; poison bait stations should also be used at all times in order to eliminate as many as possible. Early fall is the time to start the rat control program.

LANCASTER FARMING

Lancaster County's Own Farm Weekly

P. O. Box 266 - Lititz, Pa. 17543

Office: 22 E. Main St., Lititz, Pa. 17543

Phone: Lancaster 394-3047 or Lititz 626-2191

Everett R. Newswanger, Editor

Robert G. Campbell, Advertising Director

Subscription price - \$2 per year in Lancaster County; \$3 elsewhere

Established November 4, 1955

Published every Saturday by Lancaster Farming, Lititz, Pa.

Second Class Postage paid at Lititz, Pa. 17543.

Member of Newspaper Farm Editors Assn.