

On Cutting Fire Losses

Fire is still a major farm problem. Hardly a week goes by, it seems, without some farm building burning down in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Nearly every farmer who hasn't lost a farm building to fire knows of many relatives and friends and acquaintances who have.

Sometimes two or three barns burn in Lancaster County alone in one week.

Kinds of Fire Losses

Fortunately, relatively few lives are lost to fire, but sometimes livestock and poultry are lost; machinery and equipment, as well as feed, hay and supplies, are frequently damaged or destroyed; buildings are often a total loss or sustain many thousands of dollars of damage.

Altogether, fire represents a relatively minor personal danger to the farmer, but a very major economic danger. Fire in a few minutes or hours can literally wipe out the efforts of many years.

Fire insurance, we hope, generally reimburses a large portion of the fire loss.

But we feel sure most farmers, even with insurance, don't get reimbursed for everything.

Often the insurance was adequate when it was taken out, but wasn't increased over the years to reflect higher building costs. Often the insurance does compensate the farmer for the value of his building, but this may be only a small portion of the amount that will be required to build a comparable building.

In some fires, the loss of livestock, equipment and supplies equals or exceeds the building loss. Many farmers don't take much care in insuring the building contents, so that fire loss can be tremendous even when the building itself was adequately insured.

In addition to the direct fire losses are the indirect losses. There's the problem and expense, for instance, of feeding and housing livestock between the time a barn burns down and is rebuilt. There's the cost of replacing equipment and supplies at higher prices today than when they were originally purchased.

Because of today's high interest rates, this replacement cost factor can be particularly important.

There are many other indirect losses, such as the physical and psychological shock of the fire, the rebuilding program, and the additional exertion necessary to keep the farm together until rebuilding is accomplished. Depending on the persons and their situation, the physical and psychological blow can be more severe than the economic blow.

The Helping Hand

Good neighbors and friends are vitally important in minimizing fire loss. Their presence and assistance in time of need can bolster the morale of a family which has just seen years of effort go up in smoke.

The local custom of assisting friends and neighbors in need, particularly following a fire, can be vital in getting fire victims back on their feet.

A barn raising saves huge sums of money in the form of wages.

But even more important can be the savings in time. Often, a family which would be forced off the farm if it had to wait additional months to build a barn can find the courage to keep going with the help of a time-saving barn raising.

Certainly, barn raising and neighborly generosity rank along with fire insurance as a vital means of fighting destructive fires.

There are other means however. Farmers should consider them in relation to their own farm enterprises.

The Local Fire Company

Local fire companies, most of them manned by volunteers, are very important. These fire companies frequently are called on to hold fire losses to a minimum.

While farmers are often among the most loyal volunteers and generous contributors to the local fire company's operation, this is one area where more farmers should consider getting involved.

Local firemen know, or can readily find out, more about fire hazards on local farms than anyone else, we think. Any farm fire prevention program should include the cooperation of the local fire company.

We feel that if farmers did get more involved in their local fire companies and really put their minds to it, programs could be devised that would sharply reduce the number of fires on local farms.

We feel sure that even now an inquiry to the local fire station would bring knowledgeable fire inspectors to the farmer's door to assist with an inspection to identify possible fire hazards and what can be done about them. Such an inspection would cost the farmer little or nothing and could save untold cost and grief from a fire.

We're surprised that no farm organization has encouraged and organized such inspections locally. We can't think of a better civic project.

Informing farmers about the possible use of irrigation systems for fire fighting (see story on page 8) is only one of many fire prevention programs the local fire company could sponsor; or a farm organization could sponsor the program in cooperation with local fire companies.

Prevention

Smokey the Bear often reminds us that we can prevent forest fires. The same goes for building fires. Most of them can be prevented.

Faulty electrical wiring and piles of unnecessary debris are invitations for fire.

This winter and every winter, after the rush of the harvest is over, the farmer should consider his operation in relation to fire prevention. He should immediately correct the obvious fire hazards.

And the farmer should periodically, at least every few years, have someone more familiar with fire and fire prevention point out the not so obvious hazards.

This by no means exhausts the possibilities, but it does give an indication of the many possible avenues open to reduce the local farm fire hazard.

Individual farmers and farm organizations should begin to think in terms of finding ways to cut back on the tragic loss caused by fires on farms.

We're convinced that efforts in this direction can sharply reduce the number of farm fires.

The effort can be very worthwhile, because the fire you prevent may be on your own farm.

Barn Movers?

Lancaster Farming has just received this letter of distress from Mrs. Harriet P. Covert of Muncy RD4, Pa. 17756:

"We are soon to lose our farm home to a Beltway to be constructed east of Muncy. In January our house will be moved but movers are skeptical of moving our barn."

"To see it demolished and wasted would be a terrible experience for us."

I have heard of the Amish people being excellent barn builders. Do you think an ad in your paper would find any Amish farmers who would be interested in dismantling a good barn for their future use?

Please reply, Mrs. Covert urges. Our reply is that Mrs. Covert has already expressed herself very well.

Although we don't know the details of what Mrs. Covert has in mind, we feel sure that our local farmers, Amish or whatever, will feel just as badly about needless waste as she does and will take care of this matter in their usual efficient manner.



NOW IS THE TIME . . .

By Max Smith
Lancaster County Agent

To Manage Cattle Carefully

High Price Feeder Cattle and High Price corn usually lead to small profits, or even losses, in the cattle business. Feeders are urged to do everything possible for efficient gains. Keep cattle healthy, eliminate both internal and external parasites, feed balanced rations with free choice of salt, minerals, and fresh water. Make a special effort for low costs of gains, otherwise, your feeding operation may be a failure.

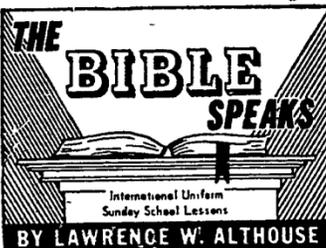
To Exercise Breeding Animals

All species of livestock that are kept for breeding purposes should have access to plenty of outside exercise during the winter months. This applies to sheep, both dairy and beef cows, and to males. Exercise keeps the adult female more healthy and will result in stronger young. Many females

will get too fat when kept too tight and this will result in small, weak offspring. Plenty of good roughage should be the basis of most rations outside of the lactating dairy cow. Moldy silage or moldy feed should be given to other than the breeding females in a herd or flock, but never to horses or sheep.

To Spray Chickweed

Alfalfa growers who are having trouble with chickweed in their stands are reminded that late November and December are good times to spray for control. The use of Chloro IPC in colder weather in stands without any grasses is recommended. The Dinitro Sprays may be used in warmer weather (above 50 degrees) on mixed stands of alfalfa and grass. Spray now when the plants are young for best control.



SICK OF LOVE

Lesson for December 6, 1970

Background Scripture: Isaiah 1:16, 17; Matthew 5:21-44; 1 John 3:11-24.
Devotional Reading: Romans 15:1-6.

There was a story the other day about a man who was sent to jail for attacking a neighbor who had come to his door to seek contributions for the "heart fund". When asked why he had committed this seemingly unprovoked



attack, he explained: "I guess I lost my head. It's just that on Sunday the preacher made a plea for a special offering for missions, yesterday at work we were told how much we were expected to volunteer for the United Fund, when I came home from work today I found my wife had given away my fishing clothes to the Rescue Mission, and there was a note from her saying I'd have to make my own supper 'cause she was working at the hospital garden party—and then when my neighbor came to the door suggesting that I 'demonstrate my brotherly love' by making a 'respectable contribution',—well, I guess I just blew my stack!"

The 'ceaseless appeals'

Few of us would go that far, probably, but many of us may feel a certain sympathy for that man. The human spirit does seem to weary under what appear to be ceaseless appeals to love. No matter to how many causes we give, it always seems as if there are so many more that are confronting us. Is it really possible for a person to be so loving, so selfless? Won't all this love for others so impoverish us that we have nothing left over for ourselves? Can a man really survive all this loving, forgiving and understanding?

Have you ever noticed the level of appeal of many of Christ's teachings? They often seem an ill-disguised appeal to a man's own selfishness or desire for self-preservation. For example: "Judge not, and you will not be judged . . . give and it will be given to you . . . For the measure you give will be the measure you get back." It used to disturb me to think that God would appeal to us on such a base level: do good and you will receive good.

One day it occurred to me, however, that God is simply doing what we often accuse of him not doing: he is being utterly practical. He knows that man will only on rare occasions be motivated by the truly altruistic and loving feeling toward his neighbor. Self-sacrifice does not seem to come naturally to man. Thus, God "tells it like it is" in showing us that love, much more than something you feel, is basically something you do.

Serendipity: the unexpected prize

Yet there is another aspect of God's ingenuity, for he is the master of the art of serendipity. Serendip is the ancient name for that land in the Indian Sea which we know today as Ceylon. Columbus set sail upon the unknown Atlantic to find a new route to Serendip and the other "spice islands". In looking for Serendip, however, he stumbled upon the continent of America. Thus, today we use the word "serendipity" to describe "the faculty for making desirable but unsought-for discoveries by accident".

This is what God does with his world. He has so fashioned it so that man will often in seeking one thing stumble across something even better. And so it is with his appeals to love. In seeking to please God by helping our neighbor, we may just also discover our brother. In striving to get closer to God, we may find that we have moved closer to our fellow man.

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