

New Ways Good — But

The USDA recently released reports showing a stepped up attack on insects and plant pests through development of new concepts of control.

These include: selective chemicals which will be effective against the harmful insect without also killing off the harmful insect's natural enemies; development of new crop varieties which are resistant to both insect and disease attack.

From the farmer's standpoint, these approaches make sense. They represent an effort to get at the heart of crop production problems. They represent an attempt to work with nature and to let nature do as much of the job as possible.

If used sensibly, this type of approach ultimately will benefit everyone, including farmers, consumers and the growing numbers of persons concerned about the quality of the environment.

But we must recognize that these new concepts represent radical changes all along the line — for the farmer who is responsible for crop management; for distributors and manufacturers responsible for chemicals, seed and other products which go into the farmer's crop management program, for educators and others who help influence the type of farm management program the farmer will use.

The lag time between the point of discovery and widespread application of improved farm concepts is necessarily great. For instance, it has been known for many months that the best and only safe solution to the Southern leaf blight is to use normal (N) seed, but only some 22 per cent of corn seed in 1971 will be N seed. This is true despite a massive effort by corn seed producers to switch to N seed.

By 1972, most seed corn is expected to be N seed. This means that the switchover to N seed will have been made two years after the Southern blight became a major problem.

But most other important changes in agriculture will take longer — much longer. The seed corn change is occurring so fast only because it is a massive, crash

program in response to a national emergency in the form of a threat to the all-important national corn crop.

Few other problems which exist in farming will receive the attention and urgent treatment that seed corn is receiving. Most other problems will have far fewer persons with much less resources at their command with which to work.

This does not mean most of the other problems will not be solved. It does mean the solutions will take longer.

It also means that some problems won't be solved at all, or only at some point far in the future, simply because no one yet believes them important enough to give them the manpower and resources they need.

While the nation was committed to giving virtually unlimited resources to saving the multi-billion dollar corn crop from blight, much smaller crops or lesser threats inevitably receive less attention.

What does this mean for the farmer?

It means that new insect and pest control concepts and procedures are in the making.

It also means that their impact, with some exceptions, will come gradually and not make any dramatic differences for many years.

Any effort to substantially speed up this slow process of change should be viewed critically by both farmers and non-farmers.

If the process of change is to be speeded up dramatically, it generally involves a combination of more persons with more resources (i.e., more money) to find out how to do the job, to see that those (in this case, farmers) who actually do the job know how, and that the materials are available with which to do the job. Attempts at shortcuts, such as through restrictive legislation, can be extremely costly.

If change is forced faster than the "system" can handle it, serious disruptions result. If, for instance, chemicals are banned before the more natural means of pest control are perfected, crops can be seriously damaged with resulting losses for farmers and higher costs to consumers.

Keep Retail Margins Steady

In recent months, pork producers have been justifiably upset by the failure of retail pork prices to reflect the extremely low prices which pork producers have been receiving.

By keeping retail pork prices high, the retailers have in effect helped stop the stepped-up consumer buying which usually occurs when a product reaches over-supply. And by keeping demand down, retailers have helped prolong the period of pork over-supply and the period during which producers receive low prices.

In short, the fat retail margins which retailers have been taking during the present pork over-supply have come in large part at the expense of the consumer. But the retailer has also hurt the pork producer with a prolonged market downturn.

Don Paarlberg, USDA's Director of Economics, recently released a statement in which he urged the food trade to give both farmers and consumers a "better break by holding their marketing margins more steady."

Paarlberg said that meat packers and grocery chains generally follow the prac-

tice of increasing their margins when prices of live animals fall, and decreasing their margins when live animal prices rise.

"This perverse pricing policy aggravates price gyrations at the farm level," he said. Results are undeserved losses for farmers, such as the present situation with pork producers; uneven rates of earnings in the food industry; alternate cutback and overstimulation of livestock production, and uneven flow of food to the consumer.

Among the points that Paarlberg cites is the alternate cutback and overstimulation of livestock production.

When retail prices stay high while producer prices stay low, such as the current situation with pork, consumer demand is artificially held back and low prices to the producer prolonged. This can result in an excessive cutback by producers in an effort to bring back higher prices.

On the other side of the scale, when retail prices fail to rise fast enough to adequately reflect a shortage of pork, consumer demand is artificially stimulated and increased production is encouraged too much for too long. This leads to overproduction and a prolonged market downturn.

The result is that the retail pricing practice, which Paarlberg describes as one of "increasing their margins when prices of live animals fall, and decreasing their margins when live animal prices rise" is a policy of great "service to both consumers and farmers.

It's a retail policy which encourages prolonged boom and bust cycles for the farmer.

By using a constant margin approach, however, retail prices would react with producer prices. When a product such as pork

Without a properly functioning pricing system at the retail level, the farmer is severely hampered at the producer level in keeping supply in tune with demand.



NOW IS THE TIME . . .

By Max Smith
Lancaster County Agent

To Transfer Silage

Many livestock and dairy producers have been storing extra silage in a bunker-type silo until the upright silo was partly emptied. If the material is to be transferred into the upright silo in order to feed mechanically, we suggest that it be done during cold weather rather than later this spring. There will be less danger of spoilage if done early in the spring and done as quickly as possible. There will be some re-heating after transferring, but this should not be serious when other qualities are desirable.

To Control Garlic

Some permanent pastures are infested with wild garlic plants. If there are dairy cows on the farm in milk production, the cows should not be permitted to graze the garlic-infested area because of the strong onion flavor in the milk. Farmers are

urged to have the area sprayed as soon as possible in order to kill the garlic plants. Dry cows and young stock may be used to graze the area after a 10-day waiting period. Young garlic plants will be killed much easier than mature ones and there will be less clover in the pasture mixture when sprayed during March.

To Decide On No-Till Corn

This method of planting corn is very controversial and may not be best for every farm. We hear various reports on the degree of success from those who have experienced this new way of growing corn. Soil type, amount of mulch, and moisture conditions have a lot to do with success or failure. Special equipment is needed. We urge those planning to use this method to secure a copy of a recent Penn State release on No-Till Corn Planting.

THE BIBLE SPEAKS

International Uniform
Sunday School Lessons

BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

WHEN ACCOUNTS ARE SETTLED

Lesson for March 28, 1971

Background Scripture: Matthew 25:14-30.
Devotional Reading: Hebrews 3:1-6.

Henry had been an employee at the local store for ten years. Then, one day he died. "Are you going to hire someone to fill Henry's vacancy?" a customer asked. The proprietor paused, then said, "Henry was a nice fellow, but he didn't leave a vacancy."



This might be an apt description of many people we know. They are not greatly missed, not because they are troublesome personalities, but because they seldom do anything that is really worthwhile or notable. It is easy not to miss them because they rarely made much of an impression upon us.

The one-talent man

Some people might say in self-defense that they cannot help their insignificant existence. They feel that they were "behind the door when the talents were passed out," that in contrast to others they were greatly shortchanged by their Creator. You can't expect much of people who were given nothing, they protest.

This parable in Matthew 25 tells us, however, that the question is not, how much have we been given, but what do we do with that which we have? It is certainly true that we are not all equal when it comes to talents and potentialities. Some of us are very gifted, while others of us seem to have few and very small talents. So in the parable of the talents we find that one man is given five talents, another two, and a third, one. This is the way we find it in life. (In the New

Testament "talent" is a measure of weight, so that a talent in the parable means so many pounds of gold, silver, or some other metal used as a medium of exchange.)

When the owner of the household returns, he does not judge the servants on the number of talents they present to him. He does not expect that all will return to him the same amount. What he does expect is that each one will have used what he was given to make some kind of profit. He expects to receive what he gave plus something more. From the one talent man, therefore, he expects, not ten talents as the first servant gave him, but at least one talent and something additional.

So it will be with the judgement of God that each of us face. We will be judged, not on the basis of what others have done with their God-given gifts, but what we have done with ours. God has given some endowment to each of us and he expects us to do something worthwhile or fruitful with what we have.

The wicked and slothful servant

The owner's judgement on the one-talent servant seems harsh at first glance: "You wicked and slothful servant! . . . So take the talent from him . . ." (25:26, 28). Was not the man simply afraid? No, the implication here is that the servant tries to cover up his laziness by turning the blame onto the owner himself: "I knew you to be a hard man . . ." Jesus implies that this is simply an excuse, a dodging of responsibility. In other words, he is saying, don't try that sniveling excuse when you face God's judgement; it won't stand up.

"For to every one who has will more be given," says Jesus, ". . . but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away" (25:29). Once again, the judgement seems harsh, but if we use well the little we have, our good stewardship will bring us the responsibility for managing more. The reverse, of course, is also true.

Once again Jesus tells a parable to describe the kingdom of God: the coming of the kingdom will mean a settling of accounts with the Lord and there will be no place for excuses.

(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.)

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

Robert G. Campbell, Advertising Director
Zane Wilson, Managing Editor

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
Pa. Newspaper Publishers Association, and
National Newspaper Association