

## On Making Dairy Calves Pay

Dairying is the largest farm income producer in Lancaster County and ranks very high in most of the neighboring counties.

The thousands of calves which the local dairy cows produce each year is of major economic importance.

But we wonder if all dairymen have put some really serious thought into how to achieve the best returns from these calves?

The alternatives are numerous.

Many of the better calves are held as replacement stock or for sale to other dairymen.

A few of the better bull calves are held as breeding animals.

Many are sold at an early stage as veal calves.

And some are held for varying lengths of time as feeder stock.

How many farmers have seriously analyzed which of these alternatives or combination of alternatives can make them the most profit?

The answer for the individual farmer will depend in large part on his present farm set up. Whether he wants to hold them beyond the weaner stage will depend on such factors as housing space, feed availability and cost, and labor, including whether or not he can take on additional work necessary to keep the dairy beef stock or dairy replacement animals and still maintain his existing farm program.

It all boils down to what system the farmer can use to make the most money from farming.

But we would suggest that while veal calves may be the easiest and fastest means of disposing of the new calf crop, perhaps more farmers should consider the alternatives.

Obviously the farmer who has cows with good blood lines, good production, and a high classification is in a position to raise dairy replacement stock or stock for sale.

But many farmers also are finding that dairy cattle held as feeder stock can be profitable.

Because of the large numbers of these dairy calves available locally, we think farmers who raise these animals have some natural competitive advantages in relation to conventional beef growers.

These advantages include, ready access to the dairy feeder stock from local farms, possibly a lower initial cost for the feeder animals, possibly reduced transportation costs. In addition, many local persons familiar with dairy animals should already know how to handle these animals for best results.

There have also been reports that indicate the trend toward a meatier type of animal may actually benefit dairy beef production, because dairy animals have a relatively high proportion of meat to fat.

While many dairymen already hold a few of their calves to fatten as beef animals, we think there is room for more of this and possibly even for some beef producers who specialize in dairy animals.



## NOW IS THE TIME . . .

By Max Smith  
Lancaster County Agent

### To Plant Corn

Many acres of corn have already been planted in the southeastern counties of the state and we feel this is the thing to do this year. Many local growers aim to plant corn the early part of May under normal conditions, however, this year with the threat of the southern leaf blight, it is suggested that the corn be planted a week or 10 days earlier in order to try to get maximum maturity before the leaf blight appears. We have no way of knowing the time of the last killing frost in this area, but planting corn now does not appear to be too big a gamble.

### To Be Careful With Pesticides

The storage of all kinds of chemicals and spray materials is very important during the growing season. In the first place, these pesticides should be kept away from children, pets and livestock, this is very important and needs the attention of every gardener and farmer. Empty containers may contain sufficient materials to poison

some youngster or some animal. Keep all materials in the original containers and be sure that weed killers (herbicides) are not stored near any seeds, plants, feed, or food items.

### To Be Alert For Termites

This humid climate is favorable for the activities of the termite, all property owners are urged to be on the lookout for these small insects that can weaken the wooden parts of any building. At this time of the year the termites may swarm and be found on or near sunny windows of the building; they are sometimes confused with winged ants that also collect in these warm places. The termite may be identified by having only one section to its body with four large wings, the ant has a two-section body and two wings are larger than the other two. Termites live in the soil and travel to and from the infested building. Effort is needed to locate the colony in the soil and treat it with materials such as chlordane. Commercial exterminators may be needed to complete the job.

## On the Farm Labor Trends

The USDA recently released some farm labor statistics which confirm other reports we receive on this topic and indicate what farmers can expect in the future.

Overall, the report showed the number of persons in the hired farm working force declined during 1970 with most of the drop in the migratory group.

The report by USDA's Economic Research Service states further utilization of farm labor-saving technology was mainly responsible for the cut in the number of hired hands from 2.6 million in 1969 to 2.5 million last year.

In 1970 about eight per cent, or 196,000 persons, were listed as domestic migratory workers. This was a sharp 24 per cent decline from the previous year when there were 257,000 persons in this category. The remainder of hired farm workers declined by only one per cent.

ERS stated that of the 2.5 million persons in the hired farm work force, only 22 per cent or 539,000 were engaged chiefly for wage work. Only 12 per cent or 306,000 persons were year-round farm workers. These persons averaged 318 days of work and annual earnings of \$3,467.

The ERS study also reported members of the 1970 hired farm working force were mostly young with a median age of 23, some 78 per cent were white and 73 per cent lived in non-farm places.

As a group, they averaged \$1,640 in cash wages, including \$887 for 80 days of farm wage work at \$11.10 a day and \$752 from 46 days of non-farm work at an average of \$16.35 per day.

Among the trends and facts this government analysis shows, we believe, are:

Despite rising unemployment and in-

creasing numbers of persons needing jobs, there were fewer farm workers in 1970.

This trend probably surprises few farmers, who are faced with relatively stable or declining prices and rapidly rising costs. Because labor costs are rising faster than any others, this is the first place the farmer looks to cut back, particularly as the cost of unskilled labor in many instances rises beyond its return. Increasing paperwork required by law and by fringe benefits hastens the squeeze on labor.

At the same time, rising welfare benefits and growing non-farm employment opportunities increasingly divert labor away from the farm.

The experience of the California grape and lettuce producers was a deep shock to farm employers nationally. To see large farming operations totally dependent on unskilled workers boycotted at harvest time compelled farmers across the country in a similar condition to begin to take action to assure the same thing would not happen to them.

One result has been a major new trend toward mechanization of some areas of agriculture, particularly key fruits and vegetables, which previously relied very heavily on large numbers of unskilled farm workers. This trend likely will continue and even accelerate.

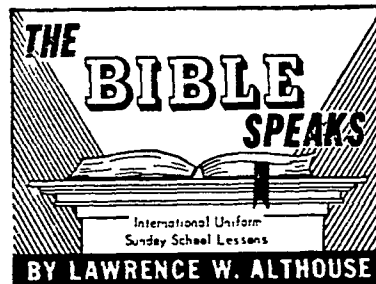
The report shows there is now only somewhat more than a quarter of a million of farm workers who are engaged "year-round" or full time. Compared to the country's total population of around 200 million, that is relatively small, about the size of the total population in Lancaster County or a little more than one tenth of one per cent of the national population.

The report shows most of the farm labor force is young, white and living in non-farm places — a combination which probably is sharply different from the image most persons have gotten from the news media.

While the individual can be hurt if he needs labor and it's not available at the price he can afford, we do not think the trend overall necessarily represents a setback for the farmer.

As farm laborers become scarcer, those who remain, particularly those who are both hard-working and competent farmers, become more valuable.

The labor of the farm owner will also, we believe, become more valuable.



### AN OUTSIDE AGITATOR

Lesson for April 25, 1971

Background Scripture: Amos 1:1; 2:4 through 3:15; 6:8-8:47  
Devotional Reading: Ezekiel 18:19-29.

We've been asking, "Who's a prophet?" and one of the answers that we might give is: someone who appears to be an outside agitator, if Amos is any example.

We need to remember that in his day there were two Hebrew nations, not just one.



The twelve tribes had been joined together briefly under David and Solomon, but after the latter's death, the kingdom split into two hostile nations: Israel in the North and Judah in the South. Although the people of these two nations had much in common, they also differed in many ways. They were constantly acting like two brothers who might stick together when threatened by others, but quarrel incessantly at all other times.

### O seer, go away!

Amos, thus, was an outsider when he went to Bethel, the religious center of Israel. He was a citizen of Judah, not Israel. Who did he think he was, criticizing Israel when everyone knew there was so much corruption in Judah? Why didn't he stay home and prophesy among his own people and concern himself with their sins?

He was also an outsider in that he was not a professional prophet. He was a layman, a shepherd and dresser of sycamore trees by trade. Where did he get the authority to presume to speak the Word of God? Who was he to criticize the legitimate religious leaders of Israel? Thus, it is not surprising that the high priest of Bethel, Amaziah, greets him with,

"O seer, go away, flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there!" (Amos 7:12).

### When God says "Go!"

Peter and John, Jesus' disciples, were also regarded as "outside agitators." Warned to cease preaching Jesus Christ, they had said to the Jerusalem authorities: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19). And later when again they were hauled before that same Council: "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

What had been said of Amos was also applicable to Peter and John. They were from Galilee, not Jerusalem or Judea. In fact that had been true of Jesus too. Jesus and his disciples, like Amos, were laymen, not recognized clergymen. These northerners, it seemed to the Jerusalem Council, had come to their city simply for the purpose of stirring up the people and creating a crisis situation.

In his Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *GHANDI'S TRUTH* (W. W. Norton & Co., 1969), Erick H. Erikson tells us that as the great Indian leader went throughout the vast nation of India, identifying and assisting the causes of the oppressed and victims of injustice, he was often denounced as an "outsider." But it was Ghandi's conviction that "a man who takes it upon himself to redress a local injustice even in a place remote from his own 'home,' if he could only prove welcome as a helper to the victims of that injustice, may consider himself a native there, provided only he is willing to accept the suffering thus invited and to play the game with the fairness dictated by a more inclusive identity." Ghandi did not feel himself an "outsider," just as Amos had refused to be turned back by that charge.

Neither had Jesus regarded himself as an "outsider"—though others did—for wherever sin, evil, and corruption exist, no man with God's message is really an "outsider!"

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