

Keep Harvest Losses Down

It's harvest time again for the important corn crop and other late crops.

Farmers who have carefully followed all the best management practices through the season in an effort to get top yields should not overlook the harvest itself as a possible yield reducer.

Our reports indicate, for instance, that as much as 15 bushels per acre of corn can be left in the field because of improper harvesting practices.

Clifford M. Hardin, U. S. Secretary of Agriculture, recently noted that soybean producers leave an average of one bushel out of every 10 of soybeans in the field, at a cost nationally of more than \$350 million a year. Hardin stated that two-thirds of this loss can be avoided.

A 15 per cent harvest loss can mean as much as 10 to 20 bushels per acre of corn left unharvested in the local area. When we

consider that Lancaster County has nearly 150,000 acres of corn, the potential size of the harvest loss becomes staggering.

In commenting on the soybean loss, Secretary Hardin pointed out that with the typical production of 30 bushels of soybeans per acre, the loss is usually about three bushels per acre. If two-thirds of the loss is saved through improved soybean harvest management, it could mean a saving of \$6 or more an acre.

Similar or even greater savings can be achieved on many local corn fields. Making sure that the harvesting equipment is properly adjusted and working smoothly, that the crop is harvested at the proper time, that the equipment is operated at the proper speed and other simple, but essential, management practices will be amply rewarded at harvest time.

Be Safe at Harvest Time

Danger is never far away from the farmer who is constantly operating equipment.

Danger is particularly near during rush periods when the farmer is working long hours, gets in a hurry, and is tired. Such a time is now, during the harvest season.

The combination of long hours and hard work leads to both carelessness and slower reflexes. This can be fatal.

There's usually a rash of serious farm accidents both during the spring planting rush and the fall harvest rush.

Keep this in mind during the harvest season. A deliberate effort to be safe, especially when the hours are long and the work is hard, can be among the farmer's most important jobs in the next several weeks.

On Blackbirds, a Modern Pest

A few years ago, Alfred Hitchcock, with his uncanny ability to project the borders of reality, made a hit with a movie called "Birds."

Alfred Hitchcock's blackbirds were extremely numerous, to the point that there seemed to be no end to them. Now, people are increasingly finding that hordes of blackbirds are not just a movie man's dream.

Nearly everyone is familiar with the great flocks of blackbirds which fly overhead from time to time. They literally darken the sky and it takes quite a bit of time for the whole flock to pass over.

Hitchcock's birds, unlike the birds we know, became very aggressive, attacking man and becoming a threat to man's very survival. The blackbirds we know are not attacking individual persons, but they are becoming an increasing threat to his agricultural economy.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture recently issued an item quoting Lauree Crom, a Crawford County dairy farmer, on the farmer's problems with red-winged blackbirds. He said the birds ruined two-thirds of his 75-acre corn crop at an estimated loss of \$4,000.

Crom, who was urging that something be done to prevent such damage and to compensate farmers for the loss, said carbide cannons which fire intermittently are

no help. "Those black babies just love to roost on the cannons," he said.

It doesn't take much imagination to see what large flocks can do when they settle into a farmer's corn or grain field. What these birds lack in size they make up in numbers.

While some species of birds are endangered by man, the blackbirds are one of those species which thrives on the man-made environment. Deer and many species of ducks, so long as they are not over-hunted, also thrive and are reported to be more abundant than ever before.

Many of the prospering species seem to have one thing in common — they prosper at the farmer's expense. Actually, much of the wildlife feed provided by farmers is no direct cost to farmers, since much of the feed is in the form of grain and corn left on the field from inefficient harvesting.

Few farmers, we feel sure, will begrudge wild animals and birds a small share of their crops. Squirrels, racoons, deer and many species of birds have traditionally shared in the bounty of the farm.

But the modern farm scene, which has seen declining populations in many rural areas, the development of large acreages harvested by large machinery, and other developments have resulted in a situation where the food available to animals and birds has increased at the same time pressure by people has decreased.

Some species, such as blackbirds, have found these conditions ideal and have multiplied to the point where they are a threat to their human benefactors.

It now appears that the blackbird must soon join an already long list of pests, such as corn rootworm and Japanese beetle and hundreds more, which farmers must control in order to continue to feed the nation.

While the breeding of corn and grain varieties with maximum resistance to bird damage would appear to be a partial and temporary solution, it would appear that blackbirds lack the natural predators which will keep their populations under control. Direct action by man to reduce blackbird populations will almost certainly be needed in the future to keep blackbirds from becoming much more numerous and a far greater menace to our own food supply.

NOW IS THE TIME . .

By Max Smith
Lancaster County Agent



TO RESPECT FLY-FREE DATE

Winter wheat continues to receive considerable acreage in many parts of the country. Growers are reminded that the Hessian Fly is still a problem with most varieties available at this time; for several years it was regarded that Redcoat was fly resistant, but according to the experiences of 1971, we suggest that this variety not be classified as fly resistant. The recognized fly free date for Southeastern Pennsylvania is around October 10, or after the first killing frost. This means that wheat for grain purposes should not be planted before this time.

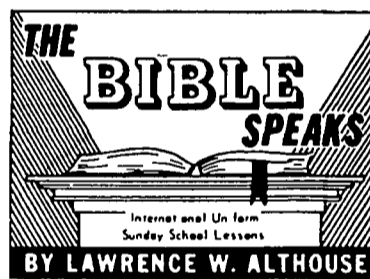
TO MANAGE HERD CAREFULLY

Dairymen are reminded of the danger of grass-flavored milk when the milking herd is grazed on alfalfa or clover at this time of the year. This lush growth of legumes should be handled similar to the early growth of the spring. Cows should be grazed on the area after the milking period and removed from the forage for at least four hours before the next milking period. Also, freshly chopped forage or corn silage should be fed after the herd is milked rather than prior to the milking period. Milk flavor and quality must be good in order to prevent rejections and loss of milk prices. Garlic infested

pastures should not be grazed by the milking herd; we notice that the fall growth of garlic has already developed and dairymen should be aware of this milk quality threat.

TO RODENT-PROOF CORN STORAGE

Corn picking time is approaching and many cribs and storage bins will be filled to capacity. The damage done by rats is enormous on too many of our farms. This is especially true when normal storage cribs will not hold the crop and piles of corn are placed on the barn floor or other temporary places. When cold weather arrives, rodents will come looking for a home for the winter; these open grain storage places is inviting to them and soon the rat population will increase. Hardware cloth or other metal shields may be used on normal storage cribs and the open storages should be fed out as soon as possible. Good sanitation about the premises will help keep down the rat population along with poison bait stations. Broken concrete floor or walks and loose stone or black walls are good nesting places for rats and should be repaired before cold weather arrives. Rodents carry disease as well as destroy or damage valuable feed grains. We urge all farmers and property owners to wage war on them and make every effort to eliminate all rats and mice.



WRONG NUMBER?

Lesson for October 3, 1971

Background Scripture: Exodus 3:1-20, 2 Timothy 1:8-9
Devotional Reading: Mark 2:13-17

Have you ever noticed how often it seems that God makes some poor choices in the people whom he calls for leadership? Frequently he selects precisely the kind of persons that you and I would ignore or reject if the decision were ours. Sometimes we can't understand how God could exercise such poor judgement.

A case in point was the man named Moses. He seemed the least likely candidate to become the leader who would successfully lead the people of Israel out of Egypt. He had started out well enough, for though he had been born a Hebrew, a "lucky break" caused him to be raised in the palace by the Pharaoh's daughter. Brought up as an Egyptian noble, he had all the benefits of the culture and education of the royal court. These bright prospects, however, were thrown away with a senseless, violent act.

The tragic disappointment

Many years later this tragic failure is confronted by God in a mystical experience and in his awe, asks: "Whom am I . . . ?"

There were a number of answers that might have occurred to us:

- the murderer of an Egyptian slave-master
- a fugitive from Egyptian justice
- a simple Midianite shepherd
- an eighty year-old "has-been"
- a descendent of Abraham who knows little, if anything, of Abraham's God.

Surely this is not the man for the job! Perhaps God has gotten a wrong number!

This same thought occurred to Moses too. He too could not believe that God wasn't giving the message to the wrong man. "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11). It was a good question, but Moses would find that God could always match a good question with a good answer.

I will be with you

Actually, Moses had asked the wrong question. Instead of asking, "Who am I", the real question was "Who are you?" It is not because of who Moses is, but who God is that the task can be performed. "I will send you" and "I will be with you" he is assured. The success of this mission will not rest upon the power of Moses, but upon the power of God. All that Moses will have to do is to hear the call and respond to it.

But why Moses? For one thing, Moses had "turned aside to see this great sight." If he had ignored the burning bush, if he had refused to listen to God's voice, he would not have received the call. Furthermore, Moses not only "turned aside," but he accepted the challenge and thus God was vindicated in his choice of this man whom we would likely have regarded as a "wrong number."

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