

## No Cutthroat Milk Pricing, Please

We noticed Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture James A. McHale in an Associated Press photo recently with Governor Milton Shapp and a Philadelphia barber. They were, the story said, dramatizing the governor's opposition to Pennsylvania's system of pricing milk.

While Secretary McHale looked on, Governor Shapp held a gallon container marked \$1.28, representing the price of milk in Pennsylvania, and the barber held a container marked 96 cents, the price of milk "at a discount dairy store about 300 yards into New Jersey."

Meanwhile, Pennsylvania egg producers recently have been concerned about some Pennsylvania retail stores which use eggs as "a loss leader." This means the stores take a loss on the eggs in order to get customers into the store; the store's belief, borne out by experience, is that the customer will buy enough other merchandise that the store can still make an adequate profit.

Unfortunately for the egg industry, retail stores which use eggs as loss leaders generate a large volume of egg sales; in order to minimize losses on these sales, these stores use every trick in the book to keep their price to the farmer down.

At the same time, the competition from these "loss leader" markets is felt by competing retail outlets, which also feel compelled to keep egg prices down and prices to the farmer low.

It has long been understood in the egg industry that the weakest seller and the lowest priced retailer have an overpowering influence on the trend of egg prices. They keep the price low for everyone, every egg producer suffers as a result of them.

Actually, according to representatives of the Pennsylvania Egg Marketing Association, there is a state law against selling products such as eggs at prices lower than the cost of production. As with many other laws, the problem is in enforcing it.

A similar situation exists with broilers. Many retail stores in Pennsylvania sell dressed, whole broilers for prices ranging from 21 to 29 cents a pound. No one believes these birds can be grown, processed and sold at these prices profitably. They're "loss leaders," profitable for the stores because of the customer traffic which is generated, but extremely costly to the poultry industry by keeping overall prices low.

As we understand it, one of the primary jobs of the Pennsylvania milk pricing system is to eliminate just this type of cutthroat competition.

Because milk is closely associated in the public mind with motherhood and babies, it represents the greatest potential loss leader of all the farm commodities. So it's easy to understand why discount stores

would favor elimination of the milk pricing system.

While consumers would benefit initially from low-priced milk, it's certain that retail stores must maintain their profit margins. What's lost from milk sales must be made up from other products.

The real loser in making milk a loss leader and in allowing milk sales wars will be the individual dairymen and the dairy industry.

Possibly the only dairymen who will be able to survive low milk prices without major losses will be those who have their own retail outlets. Dairymen who have high marketing costs, we predict, would feel the squeeze as marketing costs gradually took a bigger share of their milk checks. A major squeeze of this nature on the dairy industry would soon force many small operators out of business and greatly accelerate the trend to large dairy operations, we predict; as the egg and broiler industries have shown, only the large and well-financed operations can survive constant price wars.

Actually, the above points, as vital as they are to the local dairy industry and Pennsylvania agriculture, are not the most important in regard to the trip by Pennsylvania's governor and secretary of agriculture into the supposed milk haven across the New Jersey border.

The most crucial point—as dairymen know full well, but Philadelphia consumers obviously do not—is that the governor and secretary weren't comparing, so to speak apples with apples. They were comparing Pennsylvania retail milk prices with New Jersey discount milk prices. A valid comparison would have pitted Pennsylvania retail prices with New Jersey retail prices; and Pennsylvania discount prices with New Jersey discount prices.

Our sources of information within the milk industry indicate that regular New Jersey retail milk outlets price their milk at levels very comparable with, possibly a little higher than, their counterparts in Pennsylvania. At the same time, comparable "discount milk" is available at comparable prices in Pennsylvania directly from the farm or "jugger" operations. This Pennsylvania jugger milk is readily available in most areas directly from the farmer at prices of around 95 cents to \$1 a gallon, very comparable to the "bargains" found in New Jersey.

The milk issues facing Pennsylvania include: Can we afford to discount the entire Pennsylvania dairy industry, an industry which accounts directly or indirectly for nearly half of the dollar volume of Pennsylvania agriculture?

In our rapidly changing farm economy, which already includes many pressures resulting from costs which constantly rise faster than prices, the prospect of opening milk to use at the retail level as a "loss leader" should be viewed by alarm by all farmers and non-farmers alike.

We can understand that the prospect of low-priced milk is politically attractive to the state's urban citizens, who won't immediately realize the long-range impact of such policies. But we think most urban citizens would join farmers in opposition to low-priced milk if it meant the ruin of Pennsylvania's important dairy industry.

What we don't understand is how the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture can justify a low-priced milk policy, a policy which can seriously damage dairying, Pennsylvania's most important farm product.

## NOW IS THE TIME . . .

By Max Smith  
Lancaster County Agent

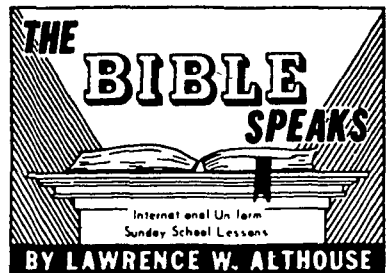


**To Control Internal Parasites**  
For many years both sheep and hog producers included internal parasite control as one of their major practices for good gains and healthy animals. As the livestock population increased, these stomach worms became more common in cattle, both beef and dairy. With the heavy concentration of cattle in Southeastern Pennsylvania, it is strongly recommended that both dairymen and cattle feeders treat their young animals for stomach worms. Feeder calves that have been brought in from areas south of Pennsylvania may have high worm infection due to the warmer and more humid climate. Fecal samples submitted to the local veterinarian will reveal the extent of the worm infestation. Treatment at the beginning of the feeding period, or when six to eight months of age, will produce more efficient gains and more desirable market or replacement cattle.

**To Exercise Milking Herd**  
Dairymen with stanchion or comfort stall barns are urged to permit the milking cows daily exercise, if at all possible. There are many good health reasons why the cows should get out of the stalls daily, including breeding efficiency and the condition of their feet and legs. In extremely bad weather this may not be practical, but the other 90 per cent of the time it is best if the cows have a chance to get outside for at least 15 to 20 minutes; do not permit them outside too long or they may lie down on the cold ground and do udder damage.

**To Move Silage in Cold Weather**  
It is becoming a common practice to store surplus silage in a horizontal silo, or a pile, until some has been fed out of the tower silos and then refill from the temporary structure. It is best if this transfer of silage is done during the winter months when air temperatures are below 50 degrees in order to keep heating and spoilage to a minimum. Too often the job is not done until warm weather arrives in March and April and more heating takes place. The silage should be moved as quickly as possible and no preservatives or water should be needed. The feeding of this silage through the tower silos is recommended because of the mechanical unloading and feeding equipment that is a part of most upright silos. It may be fed directly from the horizontal silo if handling equipment is available.

**To Practice Good Sanitation**  
The farmer's image will be improved to everyone if good sanitation prevails on every farm. This is especially true with dairymen due to the handling of fluid milk; the cows should be kept clean as well as the barn and milk house. Many infections are brought home to the farm by the farmer himself or on some of his equipment. Trucks and feed bags have been sources of infection. Footwear that is worn at a public yards or auction should not be worn into the barn with livestock or poultry unless it has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Stray dogs, cats, and birds should be kept to a minimum because of the danger of spreading disease.



### A GOD WHO ACTS!

Lesson for December 12, 1971

Background Scripture Luke 1:5-8; 2:25-35

Have you ever been so excited about something that you've felt you just had to sing about it?

That's the way the writer of Luke apparently felt about the birth of Jesus Christ. In the first two chapters of this gospel he

uses four stirring hymns to express both the depth of meaning and feeling stirred by these events. First, there is Mary's beautiful and humble response to the angelic announcement that she will be the mother of Christ (Luke 1:46-55). We call this hymn, the "Magnificat" ("my soul magnifies the Lord . . .").

"Mine eyes have seen . . ."

Then in Luke 1:68-79 there is Zechariah's ecstatic response to the revelation that his newborn son, John (the Baptist), will be the prophetic forerunner of the Messiah. Because it begins with the word, "blessed," it is known as the **Benedictus**.

The announcement to the shepherds of the birth of Jesus is also a hymn, this time by an angelic multitude (Luke 2:14):

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men

with whom he is pleased!

The fourth of these great lyrical testimonies comes shortly after the birth of Jesus when he is brought to Jerusalem for the rite of presentation in the temple, (2:30-32). Here an aged and faithful Jew realizes that this infant is the answer to Israel's hopes. His life is fulfilled: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation . . ." This ecstatic testimony is often known at the "Nunc Dimittis," ("Now lettest . . .").

#### Action verbs

If you examine each of these songs closely, you will see, however, that they are not speculative in nature. There are no speculative, philosophical ideas about who or what God is. Rather, they are recountings of what God has done and is doing! These are not passive verbs, but action verbs. They speak of God's activity in his world. For example in Zechariah's "Benedictus," (1:68-79): God has "visited," "redeemed," "raised," "spoke," "to perform," "to remember," "swore," "to grant." This is no absentee God, but one whose presence is evident in the dramatic work he performs.

The verbs describing the response of Mary, Zechariah, and Simeon, are also active. What each has to testify comes, not through idle contemplation, but observation of what God is doing.

The God of Mary, Zechariah, the shepherds, and Simeon was a God who acts. So is ours, if we will open our hearts.

(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