

Some Notes on Dairying

Pa. Dairying Strong Now

The Pennsylvania dairy industry currently is the envy of many other states, including some of the great dairy states in the mid-West, which lack many of the natural advantages we have such as close markets

Besides thousands of farmers whose livelihood depend directly on this vital dairy industry, many thousands more in agribusiness depend on it indirectly. The feed and supply business, the large system connected with getting the milk to the

consumer provide employment to thousands.

The health of the dairy industry, in turn, contributes substantially to all levels of the Pennsylvania economy, including both state and local taxes.

It is significant that dairying ranks second to steel as a Pennsylvania income producer.

We suspect that in terms of jobs provided and taxes paid, dairying is far ahead of steel.

But Dairymen Concerned

In many respects, dairying is a fragile industry. It requires high investment in land, buildings, equipment and animals. At a time when labor is increasingly expensive, it is labor intensive.

Put another way, it is a high risk business—except possibly for farmers who have been in it long enough to be debt free, and even they can never be too sure.

The one factor in the past which has made it possible for Pennsylvania dairymen to assume the high risks and long hours with some confidence has been the assurance of a dependable market and steady prices—made possible by the state

and federal milk control systems. These systems were developed only after many years of work and were the direct result of hard times in the dairy industry.

Political tinkering with the milk price structure can greatly increase the risks to the dairyman. It can bring severe financial pressures which will limit the Pennsylvania dairy industry's ability to prosper and grow. It can compel individual dairymen to seek increased profit margins in order to off-set increased risks.

Pennsylvania consumers will not benefit from any situation in which dairymen lose confidence

Some Little Ironies

The milk debate in Pennsylvania is riddled with little ironies. These include:

First, Jim McHale, Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture repeatedly criticizes the Nixon administration's failure to achieve a better level of farm parity—bring farm costs and prices into better line so that the farmer gets more profit.

Now, the Pennsylvania dairy farmer is being told in effect that he's making too much money and the consumer is going to have to get a better break. This break, unless it is too small to be significant, must come out of the farmer's pocket.

One dairyman near Pittsburgh informed us that loss of the Pennsylvania Milk Control Board would cost him 30 cents a hundredweight. We don't know how he arrived at the figure, but we suggest other dairymen begin to consider what changes might be necessary in their milk marketing operations if milk control is abolished and other marketing arrangements become necessary.

Second, The general feeling within the Pennsylvania dairy industry is that if Milk Control is eliminated, tremendous pressures will be brought to bear on independent local dairies which account for the bulk of doorstep milk delivery.

We are told that Pennsylvania has, compared to other parts of the country, a high milk consumption rate which is based largely on the high rate of doorstep deliveries.

We are told that elimination of Milk Control will virtually eliminate doorstep deliveries—as well as many small dairies. Fortunately, this comes at a time when dairymen apparently will have the opportunity to vote for the chance to pay for milk promotion.

Third, Secretary McHale repeatedly states his desire to protect and preserve the family farm.

When milk profit margins narrow, the smallest and most insecure family farms will feel it first. Only the larger and more efficient farms can spread the high overhead of dairying and still make enough profit on smaller margins.

Our sources inform us that most 25 head herds in this area are already feeling severe pressures to expand. The minimum level of efficient operation is generally believed to be 35 to 40 head. These figures, however, are based on current milk prices. The number of animals and capital investment needed to make a successful dairy farm operation will grow accordingly as milk profit margins are reduced.

In a profit squeeze, the poorest and the smallest will be forced out of dairying. Lowering profit margins would appear to be a weak formula for strengthening rural Pennsylvania.

While many marginal Southeastern Pennsylvania dairymen would undoubtedly be forced out of business and some others would have to upgrade the scale of their operation if any significant drop in milk prices occurred, we believe that our dairymen in general are probably better prepared to meet tighter margins than farmers in most other parts of the state.

Secretary McHale repeatedly states his concern about the problems of rural Pennsylvania, including high levels of poverty and outmigration. Secretary McHale is right in being deeply concerned and distressed by these problems. He is right in his determination to reverse many years of neglect by Pennsylvania in meeting these problems.

It is true in Pennsylvania, as it is true nationally, that the bulk of poverty exists in rural areas—and not in the cities, where it has received so much attention.

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NOW IS THE TIME . . .

By Max Smith
Lancaster County Agent



To Segregate Livestock

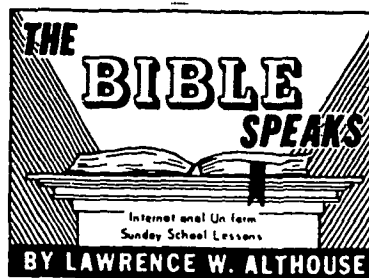
With the Farm Show fresh in our minds we are once again reminded to take precautions when introducing new animals into an established herd or returning show animals to the home farm. Animals that have spent a week at a cattle show have undergone a heavy stress. They have also come in contact with the many other animals each of which could possibly be carrying a disease producing organism. The combination of an animal under stress and this exposure to foreign organisms could develop into a serious disease threat to the animal and the rest of the herd. The same is true with new animals from a single source. The disease organisms might not be a great threat but the stress factors might be even greater. The animal not only has the stress of hauling and moving but the added stress of new feed and water. Additionally the animal has the psychological stress of new surroundings and new stable mates. Isolation of new or show animals is ideal but not always possible. Weigh carefully the cost of isolation and proper handling and against the possible affects of a major disease problem in your herd. As with everything else, to cope with this potential problem we must use common sense as a part of good management.

To Control Parasites

All livestock and dairy producers should be certain that they are not supporting a parasite infection in any of their animals. Body lice on the outside can do as much damage as worms in the stomach. Efficient milk production and weight gains are necessary in order to make any profit; any kind of a parasite will decrease the efficiency. Two treatments two weeks apart are needed to clear out body lice. Stomach worms may be identified by submitting a fecal sample to your local veterinarian.

To Recognize The Value Of Insulation

Buildings filled with livestock during cold weather may need some attention to both ventilation and improved insulation. When warm air strikes a cold surface, condensation takes place and we get sweating and dripping from the walls, windows, or ceilings. In some barns a six-inch cover of straw or hay on the barn floor above the livestock will serve as good insulation and reduce condensation. Some system of moving out the warm foul air in confinement barns is necessary.



GOD WILLS WHOLENESS

Lesson for January 16, 1972

Background Scripture: Luke 4:31-40, 5:12-26; 9:1-3, 25-56
Devotional Reading: Isaiah 61:1-7.

No concept so disturbs me in my pastoral work than the frequently unannounced belief that tragedies represent God's will. A child is killed and someone "comforts" the parents with the assurance that "It must have been God's will." A husband is lost to the ravages of cancer and we are told that "It was meant to be."



Rev. Althouse

The enemy of God

Remarks such as these, well-intentioned though they may be, verge on blasphemy, for they make God the source of evil as well as good. Jesus, however, never saw it that way. Thumb through the gospels and you will find that Jesus regarded illness and brokenness as the enemies of God. The evil spirits he cast out of the possessed were never addressed as God's little "helpers." Healing and the bestowal of wholeness were always regarded as a divine victory over evil, the vanquishing of a foe.

Look again at the stories of Jesus' feats of healing. Even though he was frequently approached by the less desirable elements of society, we never

find Jesus saying, "I'm sorry, you are not righteous enough to receive healing." Although requests for his healing ministry frequently came from those who were not even Jews, he never turned anyone away because of their theology, their doctrines, their religious practices—or the lack of them. Healing was never meted out to people because they deserved it.

Nor do we find Jesus ever saying, "I'm sorry, but I think you will be better-off by remaining ill." He never suggested that God had made them ill for their own good, their spiritual growth. In short, Jesus seems never to have wondered whether it was God's will to heal anyone. He never prefaced his prayers for wholeness with "If it be your will, heal . . .!"

The will of God

Have you ever stopped to think that if illness were God's will, Jesus would have been opposing the will of God with his ministry of healing? If God wanted people to be broken, why would Jesus have set them free? Furthermore, if you believe God may will you to be ill or broken in some way, why do you go to the doctor to be made whole? If God wants you to be ill, are you not opposing him by seeking medical help?

Jesus apparently believed that God's will for men is wholeness just as it is righteousness. Just as he wants us to live by the laws of righteousness, he desires us to live by the laws of wholeness and health.

So Jesus came as the healing Christ because he knew that God wills wholeness for his children.

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