

On the PPM Economy

In a very real sense, all these problems farmers and others are running into in regard to residues in food, feed, air and water is a result of "progress."

The simple truth is that most of the trouble results from residues so minute in quantity that they couldn't even be measured a few years ago.

Problems stemming from DES residues in beef livers and residues including pesticides, various food additives, and other products results from measurements in terms of a few parts per million. Until recently, it was assumed there was no problem because such minute parts couldn't be measured. But sensitive new measuring instruments have made it possible for scientists to analyze things by parts per million (PPM).

A recent marketing letter by H. Louis Moore, Penn State marketing specialist, and Max Smith, Lancaster County ag agent, asks if we realize how small a part per million is. To put the matter in perspective, the report makes these comparisons:

"1 penny is a part per million (PPM) of \$10,000; 1 inch is a ppm of 15.78 miles, 1 minute is a ppm of 19 years, 1 pound is a ppm of 500 tons, 1 ounce is a ppm of 31¼ tons. Pretty small isn't it?"

That's the type of thing farmers are dealing with when the government tells them that DES residues in beef livers exceed allowable limits, or pesticide residues or other chemicals in food exceed allowable limits. It's parts per million, amounts so small they usually couldn't even be measured until recent years.

In many cases, the whole thing is a lot of noise about nothing. Often, the residue levels have never been effectively proven to be hazardous. Some official or officials have set an arbitrary standard and farmers who don't meet this standard are wrong and subject to lots of problems.

The attitude is that the farmer is wrong until proven otherwise and the consumer is right until proven otherwise.

We're not attempting to argue against the situation. We're merely trying to show how it is, and why farmers have to be a little more careful than they ever were before.

Actually, there's good reason to be a little more concerned than we ever were before about the consumer. Chalk it up to our higher standard of living. We can afford to be more concerned.

Also, it's true that if we feed the consumer the wrong thing, he may not have a second chance. Let the buyer beware is an attitude which has less and less appeal—particularly where it involves food and drugs which directly affect the health of the buyer. The attitude is growing that the seller must be concerned about the impact

of his products on the health and well-being of the buyer.

Perhaps even more importantly, it's simply good business to put the consumer first.

Evidence is growing that firms which can guarantee the consumer a consistently high quality product are the firms which are going to survive and prosper in the future.

Egg producers, milk producers, meat producers, vegetable producers all need to keep this in mind.

The consumer is king today.

King Consumer today doesn't have the time or inclination to pick and choose among the various brands of eggs, milk or meat for a quality product.

What the consumer wants, as we see it, is the assurance that any dozen eggs he picks up any time or anywhere is going to be of top quality; the same for milk and meat.

Any dozen eggs which doesn't meet the top quality is a reflection against not only the producer and processor, but against the whole egg industry. Likewise, pesticides and chemicals which are used improperly by one egg producer is not only a bad reflection on the particular producer, but also on the entire egg industry and on every farmer.

The same goes for milk and meat producers. Lack of quality at any point endangers the industry at every point.

It's parts per million. If a million farmers do the job perfectly, but one farmer is slip shod, the reflection is not on the million who are right, but the one who is wrong.

No reasonable person can say that such an attitude is just and fair. But likewise we believe that no farmer can justly say that this is not a fair statement of the situation today.

Taking the situation as it is, rather than as it ought to be, we can only advise the agricultural industry of the very grave need to do a much more stringent job than it has ever attempted before to police itself, to assure that the consumer can never have cause to complain about the quality of even one part per million.

As we see it, those farms and agri-business firms which take the extra care to guarantee the consumer consistent high quality—perfection in every part per million—are placing themselves in a position to reap extra rewards and stay ahead in the race for economic survival in the competitive farm economy.

It is probably also true that those farms and agri-business firms which don't take such care are putting themselves in a vulnerable position, as well as endangering those who do the job right.

In a parts per million economy, the farm community needs to be more alert and better informed than ever before, farmers need to do the job right—everywhere and all the time.

Farmers also need to work a little harder to make sure that the pressures being brought about by the sensitive new measuring techniques are fair. It's possible to tie the farmer's hands without helping the consumer, possibly even hurting the consumer by forcing lower quality food at higher prices.

But largely it's a matter of doing the job better than anyone thought was necessary just a few years ago.

NOW IS THE TIME . .

By Max Smith
Lancaster County Agent

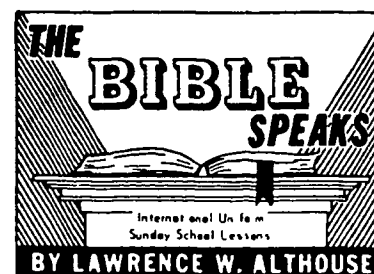


To Treat for Lice and Mange
Biting and blood-sucking lice and chorioptic mange (barn-itch) are quite common and severe in Pennsylvania cattle herds this winter. The best treatment is high pressure spraying of the animals with Ciodrin; select a clear, still day for spraying the animals and wet them thoroughly, including their heads and lower part of the legs. Use cold water rather than warm water in order to prevent chilling. Both of these infections are spread through contact with other animals and infestation can get to the point where the health of the animal is reduced. The use of the cable-treating mechanism is another method of treatment, but not as quick or as thorough as the spraying of each animal.

To Use Custom Operators
One good way to save labor and machinery investment is to hire custom operators to do the farm work. By hiring both man and machine it can be a financial advantage. In this part of the country small acreages may not justify the enormous machinery investment. In addition, custom operators should be more knowledgeable concerning the materials to use in spraying and in the correct methods and time of application. A custom operator that spends most of his time with his equipment doing a particular job of harvesting or spraying should be an expert and be very efficient in his work. The greater use of custom operators could be an economy move.

To Change the Use of Stilbestrol
Due to the seven-day withdrawing period of feeds containing stilbestrol before slaughter, it is very important that all beef and sheep feeders follow this FDA regulation. It is suggested that feeders might change to a feed without stilbestrol for the last several weeks of the feeding period, or separate the cattle that are going to be sold in the next week or two, or implant the cattle with the stilbestrol pellet and feed a supplement without any stilbestrol. The profitability of using stilbestrol in cattle rations has been well proven over the past 10 to 15 years. Therefore, special management is necessary now if it is to be continued as an aid to cattle and sheep production.

To Participate in Community Decision-Making
Again we urge our farm folks to become active in community affairs where decisions are to be made concerning zoning, pesticides, pollution, and other important subjects. With the trend of urban folks moving into the country changes will be made and I feel that it is very important that some agriculture thinking go into making those changes and the regulations to be followed. If farmers will not become a part of this community planning, then regulations may be made that will make it more difficult to continue profitable farming. We must try to get along as a community and appreciate the problems and opinions of others. We can do this better when we are active in the community.



TO SING THE DAWN!

Lesson for February 13, 1972

Background Scripture: Luke 17:20-37, 21:5-38
Devotional Reading: 2 Timothy 4:1-8.

In nineteenth century America between fifty and one hundred thousand people were persuaded that Jesus' "Second Coming" would take place sometime between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844. When that period passed uneventfully, the date was revised to October 22, 1844. As this date also came and went without the return of Christ, many of the people in this movement stopped setting dates.



Rev. Althouse

"Come back home!"

The Christian churches have always had difficulty with the idea of Christ's "Second Coming." The early Church obviously believed that Jesus would "return" before the passing of the generation, but later had to revise this expectation. Today when we study the words of both Jesus and Paul on this subject, most of us are left with a feeling of profound confusion. It seems almost impossible to know just what Jesus meant by his "return" or to calculate when that event might be.

In fact, the more we study Jesus' words on this subject, the

more we get the impression that he was not interested in having us know the time, the place, or the manner of his return. What he seems most intent about is that we should live in readiness and preparation for that event regardless of when it comes. The key word in his teachings on this subject seems always to be "watch!"

This past summer while we were on vacation in the Maritime provinces of Canada, we heard repeatedly on our car radio a song entitled, "Come Back Home!" Although not mentioned by name, it was obvious that the youthful vocalist was addressing a heart-felt plea to Jesus to come and put this world back in order. This is the substance of the Christian faith some time, some where, some way God will fulfill his creative purpose and plan and through his Son Jesus Christ the kingdom of God will come in all its fullness.

Living by the light

Theologian Emil Brunner has said that "Faith is indeed nothing but living in the light of that which is to come."

It is the same way with getting up in the morning's early hours. It may be dark as we arise, but because we know the dawn will come, we begin to work with the certainty that it will come. Thus a follower of Jesus Christ can live in the midst of deep darkness and work hopefully by the light of the promise of Christ's return. Someone has said "Prose can paint evening and moonlight, but poets are needed to sing the dawn." That's the challenge by which we begin this Lenten season. Come, let us sing the dawn!

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