

Organic Farming - An Opportunity?

Organic farming adherents, many of them, are claiming that a revolution is at hand. The day is imminent, they say, when the American public will forsake its bland white bread, its chemically saturated hot dogs, its addicting soft drinks, and embrace the organic philosophy of eating "whole, natural foods".

The apocalypse will be swift and merciless, they say. In its wake will be the ruins of the American "agribusiness establishment". Gone will be the dietary chains which have bound our entire population since the early part of the century to that most feared of apocalyptic horsemen, Death. People will feel better, live longer and enjoy themselves more after the organic revolution. Or so we're told.

This writer is not yet wizened, and only slightly gray. Yet we remember countless prognostications of doom just around the corner. It seems every day the world survives the unsurvivable. Among the awesomely destructive agents which haven't destroyed us are the atomic bomb, pollution, dirty movies, junk mail, cars, overpopulation, Communists, Constitutionalists, Republicans and Democrats.

If the world can survive these, it can surely survive hot dogs containing pig snouts. It can survive BHT in packaging material, and it can cope with Coca-Cola and Dr. Pepper. And, yes, the world can even survive loaves of bread which are nutritional ciphers.

We do not see a revolution in the supermarket. Nor do we see a need for one. Nor do we agree with the reasoning that would shut off the most abundantly flowing food production system the world has ever seen. This country will not, cannot and should not make an abrupt, complete change to organic farming and consumption.

The purpose of this editorial, though, is not to denigrate the people who farm organically, or the people who eat organic foods. Our aim is to attempt an objective assessment of the potential for a viable production marketing complex here for organic produce.

It is a fact that people are eating more and more organic foods. And it is a fact that

when people consume a product, they create a demand for that product. This is not the place to examine the reasons why people eat organic produce. Suffice it to say that we believe those reasons are durable enough to support a viable, growing market for specialty items.

Mushroom farmers in Chester County have demonstrated the economic soundness of producing for a special market. They are being threatened now by imported mushrooms, true, but it doesn't seem likely that this experience could be repeated in the organic marketplace.

There are many farmers in the area already farming organically. At the moment, they have no convenient outlet for their produce. Organically grown wheat, for example, is simply mixed with the wheat from other farms at the mill. Organic foods command a higher price in the store. That fact should be recognized in higher payments to farmers who farm organically, if only because they must, of necessity, work harder at producing a crop.

Organic producers who put their crops into normal distribution channels are depriving themselves of the premium they could be earning. At the moment, unfortunately, they often have no choice.

For those who farm organically, and for those who'd like to, there's a possible answer to this dilemma. It's called the Lancaster County Organic Farming Association, an idea proposed by Kevin Carroll and Jack Kirtner, co-owners of the Organic Market, 601 W. Lemon St., Lancaster.

Carroll and Kirtner have scheduled an organizational meeting for January 23 at the Organic Market. They hope to get some people with a lot of organic production and marketing experience to the meeting. They also hope to get a lot of local farmers. It could be a very interesting, productive meeting.

If the idea of organic farming for a profit appeals to you, we hope you'll attend. Farmers will run the association, and they'll be the real key to its success. More information about the organization and the meeting can be had by calling Carroll or Kirtner in Lancaster at 299-4891.

Grassroots Opinions

OXFORD, NEBR., STANDARD: "The reason they say the income tax is the fairest tax of all is that it gives every individual an even chance at poverty."

CLAREMONT, MINN., NEWS: "With the dozens of politicians wooing voters this year with rosy promises of benefits you'll reap if he is elected—just remember a politician can't give you anything unless he first takes away from someone else. Any political promise has as much substance as a wisp of smoke"

CHEROKEE, OKLA., REPUBLICAN: "Every hometown is 'Our Town' . . . good or bad . . . clean or stinking . . . growing or going to pot . . . because we are a part of it and responsible for its success or failure . . . It is high time that we drop the 'Why don't 'They' do something' and substitute 'Why don't 'WE' do . . . for our town . . . state . . . and nation."

McMINNVILLE, TENN., SOUTHERN STANDARD: "Americans are usually tolerant with those who do their thing or push their views with due respect and

courtesy to others. That includes listening to inexperienced youngsters and adolescents telling us how to run the country, even when they are often ruining their lives with drugs and other escapist, pleasure-seeking negativism. But bad manners, a lack of respect for the rights of others, turn the nation off, as moderates would say it."

PUNXSUTAWNEY, PA., SPIRIT: "A \$16.05 meal for \$1.51 may be a bargain on the menu, but not out in the kitchen. Senator Margaret Chase Smith gave this example from the Transportation Department's executive lunchroom to show how federal bureaus are using tax funds to subsidize meals served at cut-rate prices. While American housewives are paring their grocery lists to cope with inflation, executives at the Treasury Department are paying \$2.45 for a meal with costs \$14.31 to prepare. Lawyers at the Justice Department pay \$1.66 for a \$7.10 lunch. Mrs. Smith hopes to blow the whistle on this extravagance with some legislation. Meanwhile, how about offering the taxpayer some cut-rate bicarbonate of soda?"

NOW IS THE TIME . . .

Max Smith
County Agr. Agent
Telephone 394-6851



To Wage War on Rodents

Rats and mice will be coming into the farm buildings at this time of the year and property owners are urged to take special effort to keep them away. They will be looking for nesting places and places for protection. A good clean-up program is suggested because rodents thrive among dirt and filth. All cracks in concreted walls and floors should be corrected and feed rooms and alleys kept as clean as possible. A poison bait program along with good sanitation will help keep down the population. When the rats and mice are doing considerable damage it might be advisable to get a commercial exterminator to come and eradicate them. Good farm management includes a strong rodent control program.

To Practice Good Sanitation

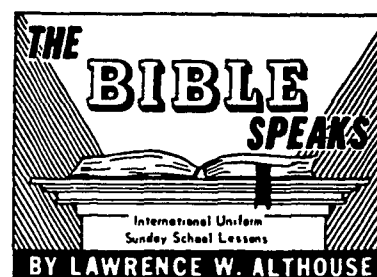
Livestock and poultry producers have huge investments in animals and supplies. There are a number of infectious diseases in the area that could be brought home on the shoes of the farmer or on his truck. I'm thinking of the dreaded swine disease of hog cholera that is in several neighboring states. Hog producers must be careful in order to keep this disease out of the area. Respiratory infections of cattle can be spread by man, equipment, or other animals. All of these are very hard or impossible to cure and prevention is the best approach. Producers are urged to be very careful about admitting strangers to their buildings and likewise change clothes or footwear after being in public livestock place.

To Beware of Feed-Grain Assistance

Due to weather conditions during this past summer, some livestock producers will be able to qualify for emergency feed grains through the local ASC Office. Approximately 40 counties in Pennsylvania have been declared emergency counties which makes the government feed-grain program available. There are a number of requirements that must be met before any feed-grain will be sold at the reduced price. In order to become acquainted with these requirements, we suggest that producers contact the local ASC Office in the Farm and Home Center. The period involved runs to May 15, 1973. Many dairy and livestock men are short of hay and roughage; this could result in the use of larger amounts of feed grains to replace the roughage shortage.

To Practice Snowmobile Safety

One of the new winter sports is snowmobiling and when we get snow cover, the countryside shows evidence of considerable snowmobile traffic. This winter-time recreation, however, is not without its dangers. All of us are aware of some of the accidents of the past; most of them could have been prevented. We offer a few suggestions: Dress as though you had to walk back home because you may have to. Carry a first aid kit; carry a repair kit for the snowmobile machine. Travel only on familiar grounds; wires, banks, holes, fences are dangerous when not expected. Snowmobile safety is just as important as with other machines; don't take chances and become another fatality.



THE PROBLEM OF 'ONLY'

Lesson for December 3, 1972

Background Scripture: 2 Chronicles 36;
Jeremiah 1-26
Devotional Reading: Jeremiah 4:14-22.

We sometimes forget that the great men of the faith have often been reluctant heroes. Moses, called to lead the people of Israel, protested that he was not gifted as a speaker. Saul, elected by lots to be Israel's king, was found hiding among the baggage! Isaiah, confronted by a vision in the temple, protests that he is unworthy.



Rev. Althouse

"Only a youth"

Jeremiah, who was to become one of Israel's greatest prophets, was no less hesitant than some of his predecessors. Informed by God that he had been chosen to be his prophet, Jeremiah replies in fright: "Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth" (Jeremiah 1:6).

Most of us, when we are confronted by something that God wants us to do, also manage to be "only" something. We are "only" a layman, or "only a minister." We are "only a youth" or "only a senior citizen." In short, we feel inadequate for the task.

Actually, we may be right! It may be that we are too young or too old, too lacking in skills and talents. Some of the tasks to which God calls us may well be too difficult for us. Perhaps Jeremiah was not being falsely modest when he said "I do not know how to speak."

A woman went to the psychiatrist complaining of an inferiority complex. After examining the woman, he said gravely: "Madam, you do not have an inferiority complex—you are inferior!" So it may be that we may not only feel inadequate for what God gives us, but that we are, in fact, inadequate.

" . . . For I am with you . . ."

The key to Jeremiah's call—as well as our own—was not in his personal adequacy, but in God's sufficiency. Even if Jeremiah was a poor speaker, God said:

"Do not say, 'I am only a youth; for to all to whom I shall send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you you shall speak . . . Behold, I have put my words in your mouth' (1:6,9)

Even if we are not skilled enough or talented enough for a particular field of service, God provides whatever we need in order to do what he wants. One of the great miracles of the world is the great number of people who, with his help, have achieved great things for him. Yet, often, these people seemed quite inadequate for the tasks they were given.

Thus, the problem of being "only" something when God calls us is that it is not a legitimate excuse to a God who not only challenges us with a task, but also supplies and equips us with whatever we need to perform it.

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