

Forces of Food Production

"Commerce," a publication of The Chicago Association of Commerce & Industry, has a few things to say about the meat industry that place a very large question mark on the wisdom of using such coercive measures as price control or boycotts to arbitrarily dictate the price of meat. Supporting these activities on the happy assumption that compulsion can bring about both "reasonable" prices and an abundant supply of meat is simply to ignore the stern realities of human nature and the marketplace.

Food production combines a chain of events and millions of individual decisions that determine the tide of supply as inexorably as the rising the setting of the sun. For instance, while consumers were busy boycotting their neighborhood meat markets, few of them realized what was happening way back at the beginning of the beef production line. As "Commerce"

describes the situation, "One factor contributing to the current low supply of beef coming to market is the increase in cattle production costs caused by higher feed grain prices. . . These dramatic increases were caused by the Soviet Union's massive purchases in grain markets in 1972. Many farmers who used to raise beef have turned instead to corn and soybean production to meet this new demand. In addition, grain farmers who used to raise cattle as a sideline. . . sell the corn on the open market, rather than feed it to cattle."

Prices can be controlled, boycotts can make life uncomfortable for helpless meat retailers, but no one can force a farmer to defy the laws of economics in the task of producing food. If prices are set by fiat or consumer pressure at levels below market requirements, the end result will be "theoretically" fair prices—but no meat. Is this what consumers want?

That Metric System Again

The foot-long hot dog may become a casualty of progress. If plans to convert the U.S. to the metric system in 10 years are successful, carnival goers will find themselves munching on 30.48 centimeters' worth of frankfurter instead!

The chances are good that metric conversion legislation will be passed by Congress this year. The Wall Street Journal reports that the Senate passed a 10-year conversion bill in 1972, and now ". . . the House Science subcommittee. . . has begun public hearings as the first step in assembling a bill." Debate has already begun to crystallize over the wisdom of federal government subsidies to help private industry convert, and some question the need for compulsory,

nationwide adoption. After a 3-year study, the National Bureau of Standards said in 1971 that, ". . . a coordinated national switch is needed to avoid excessive costs and confusion for small companies." If individual industries were allowed to change over at their own discretion, chaos would surely follow.

Right now the world of meters, liters and kilograms seems as foreign to most Americans as Mars. Still, these "new" measurements may soon become an integral part of our lives. In the end, prophesizes former consumer adviser Esther Peterson, the metric system "will make the life of the consumer a little more pleasant."

Success Story

In the long run, the best interests of consumers and retailers alike lie in striving for customer service and satisfaction and building volume sales at low markup. A remarkable merchandising success story from the state of Florida illustrates that these long-proven practices, even in these days of inflationary and competitive confusion, are still well and very much alive.

Two years ago, a business executive from Chicago moved to Florida. With no previous retailing experience he decided to open a music store selling only two things, pianos and electronic organs. As he put it, "I had absolutely no experience as a merchant and was relying completely on my instincts as a consumer. Needless to say, I was concerned that the consumer approach to selling might not be enough to pull me through, but now I'm convinced there's no better way." The results speak for themselves. The first 12-month sales goal of his organization was reached in 60

days. One store has expanded to seven, and sales are expected to exceed \$1.5 million in the second year. In addition to selling at competitive prices, dealing in top merchandise and assuring customer satisfaction, one of the first things the new merchant did was to start giving his customers a little something extra—trading stamps. The stamps, he pointed out, added ". . . even more value to the dollars our customers spend with us. And they help me keep my volume up."

Boiled down to its essentials, the private enterprise, free market economy adds up to a nation of people making their living by working to meet the needs of other people. Advertising and promotion are an essential part of the process. No battery of laws or team of consumer protectors could ever create the flexibility and capacity for consumer satisfaction built into the free market distribution system that we already have.

Cornerstone of the Good Life

US agriculture does far more than assure an abundant food and fiber supply for over 200 million Americans. It has become the nutrition hope of the world. So far as setting high productivity standards, it is also a foundation stone of U.S. economic stability. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the status of our agricultural economy is closely related to the total world economy. For example, while our trade deficit in 1972 was the worst in the history of the country, it would have been much worse were it not for U.S. farm exports hitting a peak of some \$9.4 billion last year.

It is a mistaken idea that, because one farmer now feeds something like 50 people besides himself, agriculture is less important than it was when the U.S. was a nation of farmers and frontiersmen. In reality, it has only been through the growing efficiency of agriculture that people have been released for the production of all of the other amenities of life now taken for granted. Even though there are fewer farmers among us, it should never be forgotten that agriculture-free market agriculture—remains a cornerstone of the good life.

NOW IS
THE TIME . . .

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To Control Stomach Worms

The blood-sucking parasites of sheep, horses, and cattle thrive and multiply rapidly during hot, humid weather. Each female worm produces up to 10,000 eggs daily during such weather. These eggs hatch quickly and nearly all of the larvae survive when the weather is wet and when there is enough grass or other animal or vegetative waste to protect them from the sun. After the eggs hatch, the larvae attach themselves to the grass or forage blades and are consumed by the animals. Young animals should be given several worm treatments during the summer in order to eliminate the parasite problem. Local veterinarians can be helpful in recommending materials to use. After treatment, it is a good practice to move the animals to a new pasture for several weeks.

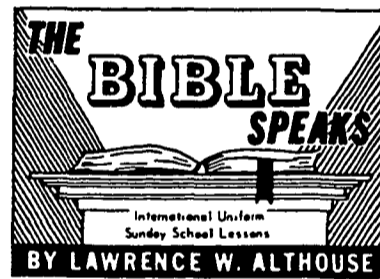
To Prevent Bloating

The grazing of legume hay fields after the first or second cutting is made is a common practice; however, there is considerable danger from bloating when the animals do not have other sources of forage. Good management requires that the plants be dry when grazed; wet alfalfa or clover plants are more likely to cause severe bloating. Also, a feeding of hay,

silage or other forage before the animals are turned to the straight legume pasture is strongly recommended. Grasses mixed with the legumes reduces the danger of bloating. When animals are changed from an old pasture to a fresh, lush growth of forage, it is best that they get other feed or forage before going to the new area. Careful attention and management should eliminate the problem of bloat.

To Control Leafhoppers

Many local farmers have a beautiful crop of second cut alfalfa; we hope that weather conditions will permit the crop to be harvested with little damage; there have been some cases of leaf hopper infestation but more are expected for the third cutting. Last year the leafhoppers did severe damage to many third cuttings when the crop was needed very badly. The best time to apply the methoxychlor spray is when the new growth is three to six inches high; it will do little good to wait until the plants are larger and evidence of yellowing and stunting. The later cuttings of alfalfa are very high in protein and very valuable; we urge alfalfa producers to make every effort to harvest a maximum amount of the high protein later cuttings of alfalfa.



SUBTLE KILLERS

Lesson for July 8, 1973

Background Scripture Exodus 20:13, Matthew 5:21-26, 12:9-13, James 4:1-2b, 1 John 3:11-18.
Devotional Reading: 1 John 4:7-12

Two friends of Pogo, the comic-strip swamp 'possum, gleefully announced one day: "We're filled with loathing!" "How come you look so happy then?" Pogo wanted to know. "We're always happy when we're filled with loathing!" they chirped.

Most of us know a few people who seem happiest when they are filled with loathing, resentment, or just plain ill humor. This, it seems, is the way they like it. Unpleasantness has become for them a way of life.



Rev. Althouse

Catalogue of complaints

Some time ago while making hospital calls, I saw a woman emerge from the "Intensive Care" unit and overheard her announce to a group of waiting relatives: "Dad's feeling better — he's started to complain!" Could that be said of you? Are you a walking catalogue of complaints; grudges, and discontentments? Are you sure?

The sixth of the ten commandments declares: "You shall not kill." This commandment often has a comforting effect because most of us know full well that we have not broken it, nor are we likely to. Jesus, however, did not intend to let us off that easily. According to his understanding of

God's purpose, it is not only the murderous act that kills, but also the hateful thought or the vindictive attitude. "But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgement" (Matthew 5:22).

One doesn't have to cut his neighbor's throat to violate God's purpose for interpersonal relationships. There are many ways of injuring our neighbors, ways that fall short of murder but still bring us under God's judgment. They work slowly but surely to destroy us from within. They are the subtle killers.

When a person indulges himself in hating his neighbor, he hurts himself as well as the person he hates. His resentment becomes a formidable barrier between himself and God. Thus, a man attempting to worship may find that he cannot truly do so until he has first been reconciled with his brother.

Poisonous grudges

Many medical doctors today believe that bitterness and anger affect the body like destructive poisons. Many sicknesses are closely related to unresolved anger and resentment. Often before we can be made well physically, we must first be made whole spiritually.

"You shall not kill," says the sixth commandment. "Do not hate," says Jesus, further developing the meaning of this commandment. Yet there is more to it than just what a person is supposed to do. There is also something that a person is supposed to do: "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you." There must be something positive to fill the void left by the subtle killers.

And how far does he expect us to go with this forgiving love for enemies? No less far than he went to a cross, if necessary!

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