

Should We Have A County Fair?

Lancaster County agriculture is the cornerstone of the local economy. If farmers were to lock up their checkbooks and wallets for a month or two, many local businesses would have to lock up their doors. This is a fact of life evident to implement, fertilizer, seed and other farm supply businesses. It may not be as evident to the multitude of retail and service businesses that don't sell directly to farmers.

Why, for example, should the appliance store care about the fate of farming? How many TV sets does the average farmer buy? Why should the clothing store care? Farmers don't buy many suits. Why should the bookseller care, or the theater owner, or the dry cleaner or the department store manager? Losing farmers' business might sting a little, they might reason, but it would be a temporary inconvenience.

The inconvenience would be more than temporary. Throughout the country, from one-fourth to one-third of the labor force is tied directly or indirectly to the production, processing or marketing of food. Consider the trucking and canning companies, the implement manufacturers, the oil companies, the banks who do business with farmers. Many of them have employees who've never spent a day on a farm. Take away their incomes, and you cripple the economy. This is true in the nation. It's true in Lancaster County.

Farmland is more than an economic asset to the community; it's an esthetic one as well. Everyone benefits from the nearness of open spaces and pleasant vistas which abound in the county. Urban dwellers have lately become aware of the value of an uncluttered landscape, and farmers are getting lots of encouragement from all quarters to keep their land in crops and pastures.

Encouragement from all quarters is nice, but not quite as nice or necessary as healthy farm bank accounts.

To stay in agriculture, farmers need the right kind of business climate. Keeping conditions right for farming means making more non-farmers aware of the importance of agriculture to the county as a whole.

One way to get the farmer's story across is with community fairs. There are five of these fairs every year in the county, and they do an admirable job of getting farmers together and recognizing the achievements of farm youths and adults.

A tremendous amount of work goes into all of these fairs, and we're sure we express the feelings of the entire Lancaster County farming community when we say a hearty "Thanks!" to all the dedicated volunteers responsible for staging the Solanco, Ephrata, West Lampeter, New Holland and Manheim Community Fairs.

We feel these fairs do an admirable job of exposing non-farm people to the im-

portance of farming. But we can't help feeling that one big fair, a county fair, would do a better job than five smaller ones.

We have heard objections to a county fair. It would cost a lot of money - maybe a million dollars to buy land and facilities. The county had an annual fair before World War II, and it sank in the mire of carnival corruption. Nobody would want to do the work involved in a county fair. The Ephrata, Quarryville and West Lampeter fairs are flourishing. These groups don't want to subordinate themselves to a county-wide effort.

There's no way of getting around the need for a lot of money to start a fair. Land here is not cheap. Permanent buildings are not cheap, and letting them stand idle for 51 weeks a year does not sound like a good investment. Well, land and buildings are never going to be any cheaper, so there's no better time than right now to go ahead. And the right kind of facility wouldn't have to stand idle. The Farm Show complex in Harrisburg sees a lot of action during the year. A similar, possibly smaller, complex in the heart of thriving Lancaster County should have no trouble doing some business throughout the year.

A farm show is not necessarily a carnival, should not be a carnival. Ferris wheels and clicking wheels in no way enhance the exhibition of agricultural products. Keep the carnival out of the farm show, and there won't be any carnival problems. The Solanco and West Lampeter Fairs are strictly farm shows. Throngs of people attend, though, and there are never any problems. Ephrata's problems with gyp artists this year made the kind of headlines that shouldn't be associated with the county's farm community.

Lancaster County is today, more than ever, not just a collection of boroughs and townships. It is also a vast jumble of special and sometimes conflicting, interests. One of those special interest groups is composed of farmers. In a county of 300,000 people, there are 6000 farmers and 294,000 of everybody else. A county fair would give these 6000 one week a year to show a united face to the rest of the county. This alone couldn't perpetuate a favorable climate for farmers, but it would go a long way towards impressing on others the importance of agriculture to the county's economy and everybody's way of life.

In some quarters, the idea of a county fair is a little hard to swallow. And it's true there are many arguments against it. We feel, though, that the objections are outweighed by the arguments for a county fair. It is an issue which is being discussed and which bears further discussion. We welcome reader comments.

REW

NOW IS THE TIME . . .

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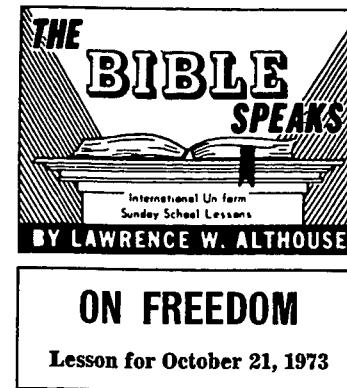


the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law. The local Soil Conservation Service staff has been authorized to assist in developing these plans. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources will have the authority to enforce the regulations. A request form must be filed with the local Soil Conservation Office. Farmers are urged to give this program prompt attention in order to comply with the existing regulations.

To Check Vision - Hunters
A hunter's decision to squeeze the trigger depends upon what he sees, or by what he thinks he sees. The quality of his vision is a key factor. If vision is inadequate, the accident potential increases and the hunter becomes a hazard to himself and to others. Some hunters are unaware of defective vision, while others realize it but hesitate to be checked for fear they must give up the sport. Fortunately, most vision defects can be corrected with little need to give up hunting. At this time of the fall we urge all hunters to check their vision with a professional examination, correct any defects, and enjoy a more successful and safer hunting season.

Editor's Quote Book

"Leisure is the mother of philosophy."
— Thomas Hobbes



Lesson for October 21, 1973

Background Scripture Romans 6:1 through 7:25
Devotional Reading Romans 6:5-14

Nothing is more confusing than the word "freedom".

In the months that followed the granting of India's independence from Great Britain, thousands of Indians attempted to ride the various railways without paying

fares. They had heard so much about the wonderful "freedom" that was coming to them that they assumed it meant they would be able to do whatever they wanted

Rev. Althouse to do

A different kind of bondage

Freedom, of course, is always a relative term. No one is ever completely "free," because all of us are bounded by certain limitations. I am be "free" to choose to leap over a tall building, yet I am not really "free" to do so because of my physical limitations.

Young people often assume that when at last they have managed to move beyond the managements of their parents, they will be "free" and never more in bondage. Yet nothing is more deceptive than our freedom "to do as we please." A young man at college, away from home for the first time, may feel that he is "free at last." There will be no one to tell him what to do, when to do it, or how to do it.

In time he begins to drop from

his lifestyle all those things he felt his parents forced upon him. In a short time, however, his life may be hedged-in by various habits and practices which hold him in an even greater bondage. His rebellion against a now-absent authority may become a new kind of bondage. He begins to do certain things, not because he finds them all that pleasurable, but so that he can assert his independence. His lifestyle becomes determined by new compulsions more captivating than any of the restrictions ever placed upon him by his parents. He may become enslaved to his own appetites and temptations. Soon, he may find that he is no more "in charge" of his life than he was at home.

Are we free to sin?

Paul tackled another perspective of freedom when he said: "What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace?" (Romans 6:15). It is a reasonable question. If we are saved, not by our good works, but by God's grace, then are we not to conclude that we may do whatever we like without losing God's grace? If God is going to save us anyway, what's the point in trying to please him?

Paul answers "By no means!" When we choose to put ourselves in bondage to sinful practices and habits, when we let base emotions run our lives, we have, in fact, lost our freedom. The Christian can do anything, but, because of the gift God gives him, he will not choose to do those things which he knows violate his freedom. As Paul puts it so well in another of his letters "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25). The highest freedom any man can know is to willingly submit himself to God's will.

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Grassroots Opinion

The National Association of Manufacturers offers some advice worth listening to. "Many high school graduates are uncertain as to how and where to seek a career. The junior college may have the answer. It offers many career-oriented courses. Flexible time schedules provide the opportunity to work and go to school at

the same time. It is estimated that in the next ten years the rate of demand for technically-trained workers will be twice that of all other careers. If you feel that you would like to become technically-trained for a worthwhile career, consult the staff of your nearest community college. It just might provide the answer you have been searching for."