

Farm Commentary

by Dick Wanner

Can a Corn Cut Back Work?

The movement to cut back corn production has been felt very little here, but farmers in the Midwest are apparently very interested. A meeting in Ames, Iowa, on Thursday brought close to 5000 farmers. Without a doubt, they represent a significant chunk of Iowa's and the nation's corn production.

There's been some noise in Pennsylvania about cutting back, but even so, a lot of farmers haven't heard much about it, and many of those who have wouldn't think of taking the planter out of the field until they've got every last kernel planted. Some Midwestern growers have pledged to plow down an acre a day for every day after June 1 that the corn price is below \$2.90. It would take a pretty strong-willed farmer to do something like that, and Robert Lounsberry, Iowa's secretary of agriculture, told Lancaster Farming that he couldn't see very many people doing it.

Because Pennsylvania is a grain deficit state, many Keystone farmers could suffer from the effects of a cutback in corn production. Farmers who specialize in corn production could, of course, benefit by higher corn prices whether or not they went along with the cut back notion. One thing that seems to have been overlooked, though, is that a cut back won't guarantee a price high enough to offset the loss in production.

Lou Moore, Penn State's well-known extension ag economist, said that if domestic usage stayed the same, corn prices could jump 40 to 45 percent if production were cut back 10 percent. But domestic usage could very well plummet with that kind of a price hike. Most of that corn, after all, goes into the bellies of hogs, cattle, chickens and dairy cows. And if corn today were 40 percent higher, farmers would be paying well over \$4 a bushel.

Or would they?

Emergency Call For Hay

Vermont farmers are sorely in need of hay right now, and they're looking for sources in Pennsylvania. They need good dairy quality hay, and if any of you farmers or dealers think you can help them out, contact Al

Heald, 802-862-6501, extension 6386. Heald is with the Vermont State ASC Committee, 411 Main St., Room 396, Grassmount Building, Burlington, Vermont 05401

House Sends Farm Bill to Senate

The House passed an emergency farm bill on Thursday that could put extra income into farmers' pockets this year. Perhaps the best news for local farmers is the proviso that milk price supports be computed quarterly instead of annually as is now the case. Dairy groups had been lobbying also for a change in dairy parity to 85 percent from the present 80 percent, but the bill retains the old parity level.

The bill was passed on a 259 to 162 vote and went to the Senate. The Senate Agriculture Committee planned to start considering it on Friday.

The bill provides higher government supports for wheat, cotton and livestock feed grains in addition to more frequent computation of ad-

justments for dairy price supports.

Farm experts have estimated it will cost the government \$470 million.

Figures on its cost to consumers have been disputed. The Agriculture Department estimated that a year from now milk will go up 6 cents a gallon, butter up 15 cents a pound and cheese up 7 cents a pound.

However, backers of the bill say that projected inflation over the course of the coming year will be responsible for price increases and not necessarily the impact of the bill alone.

The cost of the bill was estimated by farm law experts as \$350 million for cotton, \$50 million for milk and \$70 million for grain. The measure affects government supports for these crops.

Cattle On Feed Hit 6-Year Low

Cattle on feed on March 1 for slaughter market in 7 States (Ariz., Calif., Colo., Iowa, Kans., Nebr., Texas) at 5,463,000 head. That's down 41 pct. from a year ago and the lowest since Sept 1968 (way back when there were only 6 States in the monthly total. Kansas was added in

1972).

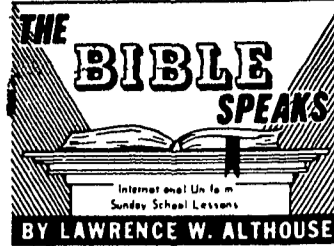
Sharpest declines from a year ago were in California, Texas and Arizona. California's March 1 total, at 476,000 head, was down 55 pct.; Texas', at 1,076,000 head, was down 54 pct.; Arizona's total, at 304,000, was down 49 pct.

Potato Stocks Hit Record

U.S. potato stocks held in fall production areas totaled a record 102.3 million cwt on March 1. That's up 26 pct. above a year earlier, 4 pct. above the previous record March 1 holdings of 1972.

Here's the breakdown. Stocks in

the 8 Eastern States, at 21.6 million cwt., up 40 pct. from a year ago; those in the 8 Central States totaled 17.8 million cwt., up 28 pct. from a year ago. Stocks in the 8 Western States, at 62.8 million cwt., up 22 pct. from a year ago.



THE GREAT RACE

Lesson for March 23, 1975

Background Scripture: Hebrews 11 through 12.
Devotional Reading: Revelation 3:18-21.

Perspective can make all the difference.

For example, life can be viewed by one person as a "wild goose chase," while another views the same circumstances as "the great race."

It is the latter view which captures the imagination of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Climaxing a long passage on the meaning of faith, he challenges his readers: "... let us run... the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

This is a view that very much parallels that of a little boy who was leading his sister up a rocky hillside. "Why this isn't a path at all," complained the little girl, "It's all bumpy." "Of course," replied her brother, "the bumps are what you climb on!"

Lighten the load

If we are to regard life as "the great race," however, there are certain provisions that will help us from experiencing it as a "wild goose chase."

For one thing, a runner must travel light! "Let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely..." (12:1). A runner in a race will not be able to successfully complete the race in good time if he is burdened down with non-essentials. His uniform is lightweight and he carries nothing on his back or in his hands.

Unfortunately many of us try to run "the great race" with too many encumbrances. We are weighted down with things that cannot possibly help but slow us down. If we want to run the race successfully, then we must get rid of any and all encumbrances.

So it is, says the writer, with life itself. If we are burdened with the weight of our sins, we will be too preoccupied to meet life's challenges with confidence. As the obese person must give up food, the alcoholic his drinks, the lung cancer candidate his cigarettes, so the disciple of Christ must divest himself on any encumbrance in running the "great race."

Keep going

Running the "great race" also requires perseverance says the writer of Hebrews. What this means, of course, is that in life as in races, we must not give up before we have reached the finish-line. Just as the tortoise defeated the speedier hare by his perseverance, so this is the same means by which we can prevail in this race. So many people lose the race because they do not persevere and give up somewhere along the way. The road of life is dotted with the evidences of those who did not "keep going!"

There is one other principle that is necessary to keep life in perspective: we must keep our eyes on the goal. The writer of Hebrews says: "looking to Jesus, the



NOW IS THE TIME...

Max Smith
County Agr. Agent
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To Meet Lime Needs

One of the best ways to get maximum results from fertilizers is to have the soil at the proper degree of acidity. In most cases this is from a pH of 6.5 to 7.0 (potatoes will be lower on the scale). If the soil needs more lime and it is not applied, then the fertilizer elements will not be as available to the plants. As was stated last year, one of the best ways to make fertilizer dollars go further is to meet the lime requirement before the fertilizer is applied. This is true for commercial farms as well as home lawn and gardens. An investment in lime helps to get greater returns from the fertilizer.

To Place Fertilizer

Carefully
Many folks are anxious to grow maximum amounts of crops and vegetables from their small plots and as a result, are quite liberal in the use of commercial fertilizer. A word of caution is needed to prevent the fertilizer from burning the seeds or plant roots. Any fertilizer containing nitrogen or potash can do damage to seeds or roots. This means that the fertilizer should be applied and worked into the ground ahead of planting, or placed to the side and deeper than the seeds or roots. When they both go into the ground together, and in contact, the seeds may not germinate or will be stunted. Fertilizer placement is important in order to get strong plants and top yields.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, March 22

Pa. Landrace Swine Sale, Farm Show Arena, Harrisburg.

6:30 p.m. - Lancaster County Swine Assoc. annual banquet, Blue Ball Fire Hall.

6:45 p.m. - Twin Valley Young-Adult Farmer annual banquet, Twin Valley H.S.

Tuesday, March 25

7:30 p.m. - Solanco home gardening clinic, vo-ag classroom, Solanco H.S.

Wednesday, March 26

7:00 p.m. - Pa. Farm & Power Equipment meeting, Shainline's Power House Restaurant, Collegeville.
7:30 p.m. - Adult farmer

pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (12:2). Jesus could endure the hardship along the way because he kept his eye focused on the goal. Because he did, he was richly rewarded at the completion of his race.

So let us run unencumbered, persevering in the tough places, and keeping our eyes on the goal in this Great Race that is set before us!

To Graze Animals Gradually

Forage growth is starting in many fields and pastures. Winter rye is making rapid growth and some livestock producers may be grazing their animals in the next few weeks. Since this new growth is very lush, it could cause scouring or bloating if the animals are not accustomed to the grass. We suggest that animals first be given a feeding of dry matter such as hay and silage before going to the spring pasture; also, it is best to permit them on the new pasture for short periods (20 to 30 minutes) for the first several days. The continued feeding of dry matter after the animals are used to the new growth is suggested for best results.

To Keep Weed Killer Sprays Out of Gardens

Many gardeners are of the opinion that chemical weed killers may be sprayed or worked into their garden soil to prevent weed growth this summer. This is a dangerous practice in the hands of the inexperienced grower and we would suggest that weed killers not be used in the home garden. Some plants may not be harmed by the common weed killers while others nearby can be killed by this same chemical. With the large number of different kinds of vegetables growing in such a small area, it is not practical to consider trying to stop weed growth with chemicals. In many cases they will do more harm than good. We suggest clean hand or mechanical cultivation for the home gardener for best results.

meeting, clean streams law, Hinkletown Alternative School, Hinkletown.

7:30 p.m. - Chester County grain marketing meeting, Octorara H.S.

Thursday, March 27
7:30 p.m. - Elizabethtown Young Farmer meeting, beef and hog management, E-Town H.S.

7:00 p.m. - Pa. Farm and Power Equipment meeting, Dutch Town & Country, Paradise.

Monday, March 31
8:30 a.m. - Lancaster County Guernsey Breeders annual tour. Leave Willow Street Mennonite Church. Pick up also at 8:45 at Mussers Store, the Buck.

Tuesday, April 1
Penn State milking school, at Penn State. Continues through April 3.

Pa. Poultry sales-service conference, Keller Conference Center, Penn State.

American Egg Board annual meeting, St. Petersburg Beach, Fla., continues through Apr. 2.

7:30 p.m. - Chester County vegetable gardening meeting, Devereux Foundation, Berwyn.

Wednesday, April 2
Pa. Ag Bankers meeting, Sheraton-Conestoga, Lancaster.