

# Farm Commentary

by Dick Wanner

## The Farm Bill Veto

It seems almost a foregone conclusion that President Ford will veto the Emergency Farm Bill which reached his desk on Wednesday afternoon. At least that's the impression we got this week during the annual Washington conference of the Newspaper Farm Editors of America.

Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz told the editors he's opposed to the bill, and added that the President had told him he'd veto it. Congressman Tom Foley, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, told the group that he believes the bill is a good one, that it's moderate and that he'd like to see it signed into law. But, Foley said, he feels it will be vetoed and he doesn't think there are enough votes in either house to override the veto.

There was some speculation though that in his veto message, President Ford would increase loan rates on feed grains. The loan rate for corn was expected to go to \$1.85 from

its present level of \$1.10.

To find out how increased loan rates would affect farmers in Southeast Pennsylvania, we talked on Thursday to Penn State farm economist H. Louis Moore. Moore said he doesn't feel loan rates have any great impact here. He said grain prices seem headed lower. While a \$1.85 loan rate could keep the market from dipping under that level, a completely open market wouldn't be likely to slip much under that anyway.

So, if corn producers here are willing to put their crops under loan, they'll be able to insure themselves a \$1.85 price, which by all accounts is a modest loss. And livestock feeders who buy grain on the market can probably expect to see drastically reduced feed costs in the months ahead. But the costs to feeders and the returns to growers are more likely to reflect market conditions than a low level of government support.

## Cutbacks and \$1.75 Corn

We had a chance this week to talk with farm editors from all over the country about the affect of the farmer movement to cut back corn and other grain production to boost prices in the fall.

There was a lot of interest in the movement. And a lot of people attended meetings like the one we reported on earlier, where 5000 farmers gathered in Ames, Iowa. But the net effect of all the effort seems to have virtually nil, according to the editors we talked to, who were in Washington to attend the annual conference of the Newspaper Farm Editors of America.

We discussed our findings with Lou Moore at Penn State, and he said his sources reveal the same thing. Moore said farmers are expected to plant only three percent less corn than last year, and that favorable weather would bring the price down to bet-

ween \$1.75 and \$2.25 per bushel for the 1975 crop. This is at or below the cost of production, which last year was pegged at \$2.21 for Illinois growers. A lot of farmers are understandably scared of the market.

"Nobody wants to see grain prices fall out of bed," Moore told us. "Even livestock producers would rather get higher prices for their products so they could pay the grain farmers at least enough to give them a fair return."

Moore said he'd talked to one man who's been driving from Pennsylvania to Indiana every year in the spring. This year, he said he saw more land ready for corn planting than ever before. "There was so much fall plowing and early fertilization that farmers just went ahead and committed themselves to planting as much as they could."

## Cattle on Feed Hit 12-Year Low

Cattle and calves on feed April 1 for slaughter market in 23 States estimated at 8,452,000, that's down 31 pct. from a year earlier, 37 pct. below the April 1, 1973 total — and the lowest April 1 total since 1963.

Sharpest declines from a year ago were in California, Texas, New Mexico and Montana. California's total (at 479,000) was down 50 pct. from a year ago. Texas' total (at 1,122,000) was down 49 pct., New Mexico's (at 125,000) and Montana's (at 62,000) down 47 pct. and 46 pct., respectively. Nebraska's total (at 960,000) head was down 30 pct., Iowa's (at 1,160,000) was off one-third — but it

still left it the Nation's leader.

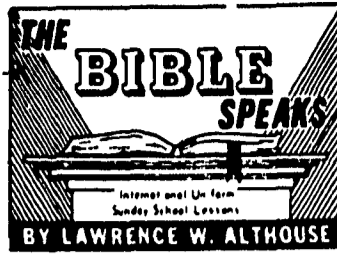
A couple of switches in the pattern: Wisconsin's total, at 125,000 head, was up 6 pct. from a year earlier; Illinois total was unchanged. It should be noted that the Illinois total was 500,000 a year earlier, 500,000 on Jan. 1, 1975, and 500,000 on April 1.

Jan. - March placements in the 23 States totaled 4,712,000 head, down 19 pct. from a year earlier. Fed cattle marketings for the period from those states totaled 5,487,000 head, down 9 pct. from a year earlier, 17 pct. below the same period two years earlier.

## Chick Hatches Under Year Ago

Chick hatches continue to run below year ago levels. March broiler-type hatch, at 277.4 million chicks, down 6 pct. from a year earlier.

This marked the 12th straight month this hatch has run below that of a corresponding month a year earlier. March totals brought the broiler-type hatch for the first 3 months to 768.4 million, down 7 pct. from a year earlier.



### STRANGE LOVE

Lesson for April 27, 1975

**Background Scripture:** Psalms 136, Isaiah 55  
**Devotional Reading:** Psalms 117; 118: 1-6.

A week ago I stood at Jacob's Well just outside the city of Nablus in Israel's occupied West Bank. The well, believed to be dug thousands of years ago by the Patriarch Jacob, is also thought to be the well Sychar where Jesus encountered the Samaritan woman.

"Can we drink the water?" our group wanted to know. "Of course," said Elias, our guide, "but remember what the Lord Jesus said: 'Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst ...'" (John 4:13).

He was right: the water was refreshing, but it wasn't long until we were thirsty again.

"Why do you spend your money...?"

This is one of life's lessons: material goods do not bring us either long-lasting relief or satisfaction. The lure of the material is that it seems to promise us something which it cannot deliver.

Have you ever looked forward to going to an expensive, well-known restaurant? If you have, you have probably realized that, no matter how good the food is, the satisfaction it gives is but momentary. Someone told me recently of a friend who will sometimes when he is at a fine restaurant will spend a hundred dollars or more for a bottle of wine. "Frankly," my friend told me, "it didn't taste any different than a three-dollar wine."

I'm sure that a wine connoisseur would take exception with that last observation, but it is at least indicative that what we pay for a material good does not necessarily insure that its benefit will be longer-lasting. This is what Isaiah meant when he cried: "Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?" (Isaiah 55:2)

God offers us something that nothing can dissipate: his love.

"While he is near..." While this love of God cannot be purchased, neither is it delivered with the morning milk! If we want this gift from God, we must be receptive: "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near." (55:6). It is our human nature to put off accepting God's gracious gifts.

Furthermore, something else is required of us:

"... let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (55:7)

From man's point of view, the love of God is a mystery. It satisfies our deepest thirsts and hungers and yet it



## NOW IS THE TIME...

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### To Evaluate

#### "Clean and Green"

Recent publicity regarding this special farm land tax assessment program should cause local land owners to consider the program. After talking with Leo Grasser at the County Tax Assessment Office, there are still many uncertain facts in this program; however, there is a law to give special assessment to farm land based upon the capability of the land and not on the current market value. The timing of this assessment is still uncertain, but it is suggested that land owners who want this special assessment consideration for the 1976 tax year fill out an application form by July 1. These are available from the County Tax Assessment Office, 37 North Duke St. Lancaster, Pa. If the program cannot be initiated in 1976, then these applications will be on file for the 1977 tax year.

### To Check Waste

#### Disposal Practices

Many folks are on the alert for both stream and air pollution this time of the year. Local livestock and poultry producers are urged to be extremely careful in the spreading of this current manure crop. Field applications should be made early in the day rather than late afternoon; also, manure spread on fast drying days will produce less odors. Soil injection of the manure or incorporating into the soil as quickly as possible, after spreading, will give more general satisfaction and preserve more fertilizer values. Do not spread manure on slopes close to public streams or on fields close to streams without adequate sod buffer strips.

### To Protect Gardens

Many gardeners find that birds and rodents also like flowers and vegetable plants. The control of wild birds is very difficult and the covering of the plants with cheesecloth, or some other very light material, gives best results. Rabbits are very damaging in many places and especially in the suburbs. Repellent sprays are not too successful and trapping and removing from the area is a very slow task. The enclosing of the garden, or area, with 24 to 30-inch chicken wire (or small mesh) fence works the best for rabbit control. If the problem included muskrats, raccoons, or groundhogs, then control is much more difficult because these animals can climb over the fence. Local game wardens can be consulted for recommended control practices.

### To Feed Hay On Pasture

The pasture season is at hand when many herds and flocks will be glad to fill up on the lush grass. We urge special handling of the animals on fresh grass to avoid bloating and digestive trouble. One of the most successful practices is to continue to feed hay, or other dry matter, during the entire pasture season. This will not only prevent bloating but slow down the passage of the lush forage through the digestive tract and enables more time for the digestive juices to extract the feed value. Animals on forage containing legumes such as alfalfa or clover, need more dry matter and more attention in order to prevent bloating.

## Farm Calendar

**Saturday, April 26**  
8:00 a.m. - Little International Livestock Exposition, Ice Pavilion, Penn State.

8:30 p.m. - Lebanon Valley Expo. Corp. square dance, Lebanon Fair Grounds.

**Wednesday, April 30**  
8:00 p.m. - Land application of sewage sludges, educational meeting at Lancaster Farm and Home Center.

**Monday, May 5**  
10:30 a.m. - Ayrshire breeders tour of Masonic Homes Farm in Elizabethtown.

**Wednesday, May 7**  
7:30 p.m. - Lancaster County Conservation District board of directors meeting, Lancaster Farm and Home Center.

**Thursday, May 8**  
7:00 p.m. - Testimonial

is freely offered to us for the taking.

It is a strange love. But, then, as God tells us: "my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. It is not necessary to understand this strange love, just enough to receive it.

dinner for J. Lin Huber, retiring after 39 years from the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board, Hershey Country Club.

**Saturday, May 10**  
9:30 a.m. - 8th Annual Ag Alumni of PSU meeting, 117 Borland Lab.

7:00 p.m. - PSU Ag Alumni Banquet, HUB dining room AB

8:00 p.m. - Lebanon Valley Expo. Corp. square dance, Lebanon Fair Grounds.

**Friday, May 16**  
Lancaster Horse Show, Lancaster Riding and Tennis Club. Continues through May 18.

**Saturday, May 17**  
12:30 p.m. - Southeast Grape Industry Association field day, starting at Pequea Valley Winery. Reservations required.

**Tuesday, May 20**  
7:30 p.m. - Ephrata Area Young Farmer monthly meeting, baler troubleshooting, Ephrata H.S. vo-ag room.

**Saturday, May 24**  
8:30 p.m. - Lebanon Valley Expo Corp. square dance, Lebanon Fair Grounds.