

Farm Commentary

By Dieter Krieg

Life on the farm

The envelope I was fingering never contained good news, and this one, I knew, was worse than any ever received before. Just seeing it made me feel weak and I wished all this was only a dream.

But it wasn't. Printed in big, red, bold letters near the top of the message were the words "SECOND WARNING."

What followed was a brief description as to why the warning was issued, and what the next course of action would be for the Baltimore City Health Department, (BCHD).

The next morning, shortly after the milking was done and the barn was being swept up, a light green Dodge pulled up around the barn. On the side of the door were the initials "B.C.H.D."

Watching the man step from the vehicle out of the corner of one eye, I prayed weakly and silently and pushed the broom to the center of the barn and out towards where the silos were. I continued my sweeping there, pushing the broom in short, brisk spurts and thinking only about the possible consequences of this visit by the health department inspector.

Feeling disgusted, discouraged and weak for the rest of the day, I worked carefully and slowly, all the while clinging to a little bit of hope for favorable results.

Forty-eight hours later, Tom Moore, fieldman for Maryland Cooperative Milk Producers, turned his light-blue Volkswagen on to the gravel driveway leading around to the barn. The sound of tires on loose stones alerted me and suddenly that weak, deflated feeling was with me again.

The news was good and bad, and in this case the bad prevailed. Samples of milk taken out of the bulk tank two days earlier by the BCHD official showed that the leucocyte count was high for the third consecutive time. The penalty for that was a three day suspension from the milk market.

A high leucocyte count is usually associated with udder inflammation and infection — mastitis — which troubles every dairyman in the country in varying degrees from time to time. In this case the problem had lingered for months at tolerable levels and suddenly spread to epidemic proportions.

According to a report published several months ago in the Holstein-Friesian World, at least 50 per cent of the nation's dairy cows become infected with mastitis, and of those that do, the National Mastitis Council says three out of four will be infected for 75 per cent of their milking lives.

The Council figures that the disease costs the dairyman \$100 per cow per year. That's a figure which is hard to comprehend because much of mastitis goes unnoticed. But when it strikes hard, and the results force the health department to take serious action — a three day suspension — the costs add up rapidly and in a way which isn't at all hard to comprehend.

At today's prices, the value of the milk lost during that episode of Life on the farm adds up to over \$400. That's only the value of the actual milk produced, not counting the lost potential in milk production and the added medical expenses encountered to fight mastitis.

Farm barometer unveiled

In its August 1975 issue of Agricultural Situation, the United States Department of Agriculture furnished a chart which illustrates the economic plight of the farmer. The publication also indicated that

"family living expenditures cost the average farmer \$10,786 in 1973, or about three and a quarter times as much as in 1955." The figures speak for themselves, but are they loud enough?

Item	1973	1974	1975—latest available data	
Farm Food Market Basket ¹				
Retail cost (1967=100)	142	162	168	March
Farm value (1967=100)	167	178	171	March
Farmer's share of retail cost (percent)	46	43	39	March
Farm Income				
Volume of farm marketings (1967=100)	116	116	102	2
Cash receipts from farm marketings (\$bil)	88.6	95.0	90.6	2
Realized gross farm income (\$bil)	97.0	102.0	98.0	2
Production expenses (\$bil)	64.7	74.8	76.5	2
Realized net farm income (\$bil)	32.2	27.2	21.5	2
Income and Spending				
Disposable personal income (\$bil)	903.7	979.7	1,017.4	2
Expenditures for food (\$bil)	143.6	164.5	177.4	2
Share of income spent for food (percent)	15.9	16.8	17.4	2
Prices				
Consumer price index, all items (1967=100)	133.1	147.7	158.6	April
Food (1967=100)	141.4	161.7	171.2	April
Agricultural Trade				
Agricultural exports (\$bil)	17.7	22.0	1.9	March
Agricultural imports (\$bil)	8.4	10.2	7	March
Farm Employment and Wage Rates ³				
Total employment (1967=100)	89	89	*85	April
Family labor (1967=100)	86	86	*83	April
Hired labor (1967=100)	89	92	*92	April
Wage rates (1967=100)	157	176	*189	April
Farm Debt, January 1				
Farm mortgage debt (\$bil)	35.6	41.3	47.4	5
Short term debt excluding CCC (\$bil)	37.3	42.1	45.9	5
CCC loans and guarantees (\$bil)	1.8	8	3	5
Farm Real Estate				
Total value March 1 (\$bil)	259	324	370	
Value per acre March 1 (\$)	247	310	354	

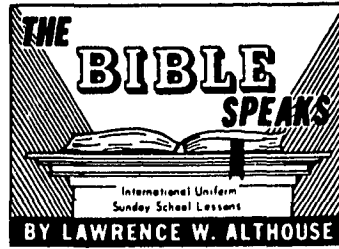
¹Average annual quantities per family and single person households bought by wage and clerical workers, 1960-61, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics figures.

²Annual rate, seasonally adjusted, first quarter.

³Seasonally adjusted.

⁴Indexes based on quarterly survey, adjusted for comparability to monthly data.

⁵Preliminary.



A DIET FOR THE MIND

Lesson for August 3, 1975

Background Scripture: Philippians 4:4-9; Colossians 3:1-17.

Devotional Reading: Psalms 40:1-8.

Several years ago the administrators of one of our national parks decided that one of its areas had suffered so much from campers, picnickers, and sightseers that it should be closed down several years so that it could rejuvenate.

Soon, however, they had a problem: what would they do about the bears in that area of the park? The bears had become so dependent upon the hand-outs of campers and picnickers that they had forgotten how to hunt for themselves.

Following Their Food

Obviously the bears would have to be moved to another part of the park, but that would be expensive, time-consuming and even dangerous. The higher echelon of the park management worked on this problem with no solution.

At last a park ranger came up with a simple solution: they would move the bears into other areas by using trails of food. Since there would be no tourists in this area for a while, the bears would hungrily follow the trails of food from one section to another.

Now, this shaggy-bear story is a kind of a parable for us: there is a principle in life that living creatures always follow their food. Anyone who's ever tried to picnic outdoors knows that. Put down your blanket and food and you will suddenly discover all kinds of animal and insect life!

The same thing applies also to events and experiences. In a sense, they too are living things and they also follow their food. It is out thoughts that are the food upon which feed many of the experiences and events of our lives. Unwittingly, many of us attract negative experiences because we leave behind a trail of food upon which these experience can feed.

Just as some people seem to be "accident-prone," some people are "unhappiness-prone." There is something about their whole atmosphere of thought that continually draws them into unhappiness. There are others who are "failure-prone," people who seem to have some uncanny knack of always turning every good opportunity into disaster. Others are "fear-prone," "pessimistic prone," "tragedy-prone," etc.

Think about these things!

As the late Emmet Fox said, "Fear thoughts, gloomy and critical thoughts, selfish thoughts, are the food of unhappiness, sickness, and failure." When you supply this kind of food in abundance, you can be sure that these things will come into your lives because they seek their food.

What we need to do, says Fox, is to try what he calls a



NOW IS THE TIME...

Max Smith
County Agr. Agent
Telephone 394-6851

To Insulate Buildings

Due to the energy situation, both in relation to supply and cost, it has never been more important to consider ample insulation in all types of homes and farm buildings. More often we think of good insulation to keep the building warm in the winter months; however, this same insulation will help keep the building cooler in the hot summer months. There are many types of insulation and many folks consider the thickness of the material in proportion to the insulation value; however, it is the "R" value that is important — the ability to reduce the passage of either hot or cold. Finally, don't cut corners on insulation because the energy saved will more than pay for the material in a few years.

To Be Careful

When Grazing Legumes
Some livestock and dairy producers may pasture their later cuttings of alfalfa or clover instead of making it into hay. This type of forage makes good grazing but there is danger of bloating from the legumes if consumed when they are wet. This is especially true with alfalfa. I'd suggest that animals be controlled on these areas and not be allowed to graze when the forage is wet, and also, be given other forage or dry matter before going to the legume pasture. We have known of herds that have gotten along fine for a while, then all of a sudden a number of the animals are found severely bloated. Careful herd management is needed when grazing straight legume pastures.

To Flush the Ewe Flock

The practice of giving the ewe flock some extra grain, or turn them to very good pasture, several weeks before the breeding season is known as "flushing" and is strongly recommended. A ewe that is in a gaining condition at the time of service is more likely to have twin lambs than one not in good physical condition. Also, experience shows that straight grass pastures are more desirable for the breeding flock than one high in legume content. The extra grain ration may contain only corn and oats in order to improve the health of the flock. Ewes that have not been treated for stomach worms this year should get this treatment prior to the breeding season. Healthy ewes will usually give more lambs per ewe and return higher profits.

To Not Buy Trouble

There is always danger of buying disease or infection along with new livestock. Regulations and inspectors are designed to help prevent the spread of disease but they cannot be everywhere and there is always a person that is trying to get around these regulations. All buyers should insist on authorized health certificates with every animal. Also, the practice of segregating the animal for 30 days to permit time for test to be made, is strongly recommended. Verbal statements that animals are clean and healthy are not sufficient. Extreme care when buying new animals to be sure they are disease free is only good management and will prevent serious losses.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, August 2
Chester-Delaware Sheep Show at the Goshen Fair Grounds 10.00 a.m.

Tuesday, August 5
Lancaster County Guernsey Field Day at the Fred Kreider farm in Nottingham beginning at 10:30 a.m. A chicken barbeque dinner will be held at noon with meals at \$2.00 per person.

Wednesday, August 6
Lancaster County Con-

servation District meeting at the Farm and Home Center 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, August 7
Ephrata Young Farmers fishing trip to Rock Hall Lancaster County Holstein Field Day at the farm of Shelley Shellenbergers Mt. Joy R1. A chicken barbeque will be held at noon.

Saturday, August 9
Ephrata Young Farmers Peach Ice Cream Social at the Glenn Wissler farm at 6:30 p.m.

E-Town Young farmers trip to a baseball game in Philadelphia leaving at 5:30 p.m.

Youth Calendar

Wednesday, August 6
Annual Tour in the Ephrata Area for the Lancaster Red Rose Baby Beef Club Will also be touring the New Holland area.

Monday, August 11
Entrees due for the 4-H Queen Contest.

Beginning of State 4-H Days whole life!