

Farm Commentary

Food for thought

When nearly 1,300 leaders of the fertilizer industry met in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia earlier this summer, the point was made that "it is truly an international industry . . . and what happens on the world production and marketing scene has much more than a passing effect on each and every person concerned with the U.S. fertilizer industry . . . literally all the way to the farmer customer."

A number of key leaders spoke at the conference, and what follows are excerpts from their talks:

Edwin Wheeler, president of the Fertilizer Institute, announced that "we are in a slowdown period."

"Material is building up at most production facilities both in the fully developed areas as well as in emerging nations," he continued. According to his report, "we will not have the frantic pleading for material we had this last year. We are no longer order takers. The magic spell is not broken — we simply have to go to work. We have to encourage use. We have to sell quality materials commensurate with the farmers' (wherever located) ability to pay. We have to honor our contracts."

In assessing the over-all situation, Wheeler expressed optimism for 1976, stating that it would be a good year, but maybe not a "sensational" year. In going into detail somewhat with that viewpoint, the fertilizer executive remarked he did not think the fertilizer industry can count on the near future being financially comparable to the near past. "On the other hand, I do not foresee it being comparable to 1968, 69, and 70. We have reached a plateau; we may get some slippage, but over a year from now I think we will agree that the results have been satisfactorily measured by return on investment."

In addressing his audience of more than a thousand fertilizer industry leaders, Wheeler added: "I would only urge you to bear in mind that these results will be commensurate with the economic health enjoyed by farmers around the world. None of us will do well if our farmer customers are doing marginally well or poor.

Contrarywise, all of us will prosper if world agriculture and our farmers do well. Within reason, modest down turns from current price levels could well permit both increased consumption and at the same time permit satisfactory returns."

Mark Andrews, congressman from North Dakota, said in his speech that: "the United States must continue to look abroad for supplies of raw materials as its domestic resources are consumed — and that means more than just oil."

By comparison to other nation's dependency, this country is relatively well off, Andrews noted. A recent study shows that we import only about 15 per cent of our raw materials used in making fertilizer, compared to 75 per cent for Europe and 90 per cent for Japan.

Andrews pointed to our enormous food production potential as a "diplomatic blue chip," in dealing with foreign nations at the bargaining table. "While the oil exporting nations now have the industrialized nations literally over a barrel," he stated, "let's remember the United States has a higher proportion of the world's exportable food than the Arab countries have of the world's exportable oil."

The president of a Mexican fertilizer concern, Jacinto Avalos, pointed out that last year fertilizer importing countries paid 80 per cent higher prices for fertilizer than did U.S. farmers, without considering freight and insurance charges. But their export prices for agricultural commodities are keyed to U.S. production costs and selling prices. He indicated that the industry and government must deal more effectively with such disturbing influences as inflation, world currency supplies, trade balances, and the cost price squeeze faced by farmers.

"There are no easy solutions to the problems and uncertain ties facing our industry. There never have been. However, with a greater effort by each of us to better understand the needs of others I believe we can create order out of chaos," he concluded.

Life on the farm

By Dieter Krieg

The shrill ringing of the phone sounded like an alarm, and within seconds three of us were on our way to answer it. Awakened by the unwelcome sound as though it were a cold bucket of water thrown at us, we knew something was wrong. The conversation only lasted for a few seconds and before Dad had hung up the phone we knew what the problem was.

Grumbling all the while, we put our boots on and stepped into the dark and rainy night. Flashes of lightning sporadically illuminated the sky as we ran across the saturated pasture, slipping occasionally on the wet grass. The rain fell steadily but not hard. Our footsteps sounded as though we were wearing wet sponges on our feet.

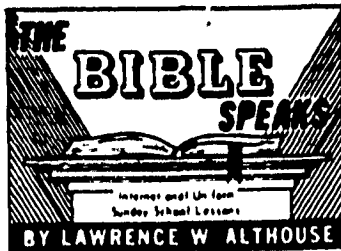
Aiming his big flashlight towards

the fence and cornfield, Dad looked for the villains as well as evidence of broken wires. Meanwhile my brother, Ingo, and I ran ahead to within 50 yards of the rascals who were causing all the commotion. From here on the situation was critical.

The last thing we wanted to do was startle the cows into a stampede through the neighbor's garden, our corn field, or the woods and briars — especially during the middle of a rain-soaked night. Inevitably, however, one or two of the young, rambunctious ones would fling their tails straight up in the air and "high-tail it" in a spirited manner that would often cause others to do likewise.

As the first cow took notice of our slow, cautious approach from three directions, she raised her head and stared at us motionlessly. Moments

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MONUMENTAL TENSIONS

Lesson for August 10, 1975

Background Scripture: Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 6:10-20; James 1.

Devotional Reading: Ephesians 6:10-20.

One of the greatest health hazards in our culture today is tension. Many diseases of both mind and body are either directly or indirectly attributable to tension. Dr. Arnold Hutschnecker, in his book *THE WILL TO LIVE* (Cornerstone Library, N.Y.), says: "We are moving toward the recognition that in illness of any kind, from the common cold to cancer, emotional stress plays a part." In fact, he says, "Illness is the outer expression of a deep and possibly dangerous struggle going on within."

"Down with tension"

If tension and stress take such a great toll of human energy and life, it would appear that the elimination of tension and stress should be given high priority. Yet, that solution is more apparent than real.

For one thing, there are many tensions and stresses that we can totally isolate themselves from these factors. A man may run away to a desert island to escape the hurly-burly of daily life in society, but in his "island paradise" he finds there are a whole new set of tensions and causes of stress. At the very least, this means that there are some tensions we cannot avoid and must face as best we can.

Furthermore, there are many stressful factors in life that we ought not to eliminate, even if we could. Stress is a necessary ingredient of human existence. By itself it is neither good nor bad. There would be no human achievements without some stress and many tensions may be creative.

This is true in our spiritual lives, too. The writer of the Epistle of James counsels his readers: "Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness."

So, acknowledging that tensions and stress must be kept within some kind of limitations and control, we nevertheless must understand that the key is to be found, not in insulating ourselves from these forces, but in how we adjust and respond to them. We can let them get us down, or we can respond in a creative manner. This is what Paul is saying in Romans 12 when he counsels: "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind . . ." (v. 2). Do not be the victims of stress and tension; be, rather, their masters. Turn these "lemons into lemonade!"

First crosses, then crowns

Stress, tensions, and crosses come to everyone — we cannot ever completely escape them — but if we respond to these challenges in a creative way, there are great rewards. As James put it, "Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the trial, he will



NOW IS THE TIME . . .

Max Smith
County Agr. Agent
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To Control Fall Webworm

Many property owners are concerned about the silk-looking web on some of their favorite shade trees. With closer examination hundreds of small worms will be found inside these webs, and they will be feeding upon the leaves of the tree. Under forest or woodlot conditions these worms will not be too serious or kill the tree; however, to the average home owner with shade trees, I'd suggest that the web be treated with Sevin, or Malathion spray; another treatment is to burn them off with a torch on a long stick or pipe.

To Beware of Wasps or Hornets

This is the season when many property owners find they have visitors in their shrubs or garden in the form of wasps, hornets, or yellow jacket nests. All of these insects can sting severely and should be eradicated. We suggest the exact location of the nest be marked and then at night, when all of the insects are in the nest, spray with a strong solution of Chlordane or Sevin. If the nest is above ground and away from buildings, a blow torch might be used to burn the entire nest or bag in which they are reproducing. Folks allergic to stings should stay away from this type of insect.

To Order Winter Grain for Seeding

It's not too early to be ordering the needs for winter barley or wheat. The supplies of Certified seeds of the variety wanted may not be there by early October. Since varieties of barley and wheat perform differently on various farms, we urge growers to order soon the variety wanted. Certified seed is strongly recommended for best performance. Home-grown seed will need to be cleaned and treated for disease, if growers do not want to buy top quality seed. The cost of inputs is too great to plant poor quality seeds.

To Control Weeds in New Seeding

Many farmers are interested in more good stands of alfalfa; we encourage all farmers to recognize the merits of this great forage

crop. Good alfalfa stands are a great asset to any livestock feeding program; however, too many stands are being hurt by weeds and unwanted grasses. When alfalfa is seeded without a nurse crop, the area must be treated for weeds. Too many growers fail to see the small weeds when they are 1 to 2 inches high, a time when they should be sprayed for easier killing, and finally decide to do something when the weeds are too big to kill without harming the alfalfa. For grassy-type weeds use Eptam before the alfalfa is seeded; for broad-leaf weeds use 2, 4-D, B when the weeds are 1 to 2 inches high. Don't try new seedings without weed control.

Editor's Quote Book

Editors Quote Book

To be happy, one must have a good stomach and a bad heart

Bernard De Fontenelle

Farm Calendar

Saturday, August 9

Ephrata Young Farmers 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 5:30 p.m.

Monday, August 11

11-15 Lebanon County Fair at the Lebanon Fairgrounds off Rt. 72 North.

Swine producers panel discussion meeting on marketing hogs. Farm and Home Center at 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 12

State 4-H Meats and Livestock contest at Penn State.

Lancaster Co. Farm and Home Center board meeting 8:00 p.m.

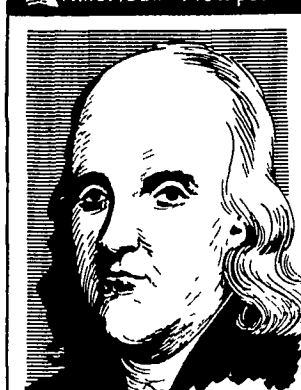
Saturday, August 16

Pa. Cattlemen's Association Summer Tour at Doverspike Bros. Dora, Pa.

Tuesday, August 19

Horse Field Day at Penn State.

American Viewpoints



I have experienced many instances of being obliged, by better information or fuller consideration, to change opinions, even on important subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise

Ben Franklin