



This being the time of year for farm banquets and dinner meetings, it seems appropriate enough to describe that aspect of life on the farm.

Work in the barn proceeds with anticipation of a big meal and lots of neighborly talking. There's no time to be wasted — we have 20 minutes left to wash the milking machines, make sure the cows have enough feed in front of them, give the cats their milk, bed the cows, and get into the shower.

Then there's a half-hour drive to the fire hall, where the ladies auxiliary will serve a meal fit for a farmer's appetite. The parking lot is just about full by the time I and a few other late-comers get there. As it turned out, we weren't really late, hardly anyone had sat down yet and the hall rumbled with conversations as though a waterfall was directly beneath us.

A few nods, hellos, and handshakes took care of greetings. Most of the talk centered around the fact that we were hungry. And few people get as hungry as farmers — if they do, they seldom have the appetite to prove it.

Sitting at one of the long tables after a prayer of thanks was spoken, each person begins to help himself to one bowl of goodies after another, until his plate can hold no more.

Food stores slowing down

Editor's Note: The stories below were prepared by the agricultural extension staff at Penn State University.

Food distribution (wholesaling and retailing) has been disrupted over the past three years by a slowdown in real growth, rapid cost inflation, product shortages, and consumer discontent. These factors have contributed to a sharply varying profitability and a few bankruptcies among supermarket firms.

Net earnings of 53 supermarket chains averaged two thirds of one percent (0.67) between March 1974 and March 1975, according to Cornell University's annual study. The average return on net worth (stockholder's equity) during that period averaged 9.61 percent, the highest level in six years. However, chains have been unable to obtain new capital through the sale of stock. Creditors now own a larger prop-

Critical factors listed

Through mid-1976 the outlook for U.S. agriculture looks strong, although major uncertainties remain. Agricultural adjustments, particularly in domestic livestock feeding, continue to be tied to developments in foreign markets and the U.S. economy. Expanded foreign markets mean favorable returns for grain producers, but the livestock feeding industry is based on expectations of consumer demand to support livestock prices.

For 1975 as a whole, total cash receipts from farming may be only slightly higher with gross income about \$102 billion. Expenses will be up 3- or 4-billion dollars. The resulting net farm income in 1975 may total \$25 billion — down

"Help yourself to some more," is a phrase which rings out again and again, because everyone knows there's plenty more to come and no one will go hungry. Hands are kept busy between "shoveling" food into hungry mouths and passing plates, bowls, and pitchers to someone at the other end of the table.

"How much have you eaten so far?" my neighbor asked me, as I reached for the mashed potatoes to fill my plate for the third time. "I'm on thirds of everything," I answered briefly. His wife cautioned me not to forget about dessert, an unlikely possibility.

It takes at least 30 minutes before a few of the fellows reach the capacity of their stomachs and begin focusing their attention on the surroundings.

"Isn't that a cute waitress over there, Dale?" one fellow is heard to say.

The young man next to him keeps on chewing on his drumstick, glances in the direction of the waitress, and silently signals his approval to the first fellow by wiggling his thick, black eyebrows. His eyes gleamed and a sheepish grin spread from ear to ear.

I was about to ask him if he always dipped his drumstick into his glass of milk, but then I discovered I had put sugar on my mashed potatoes.

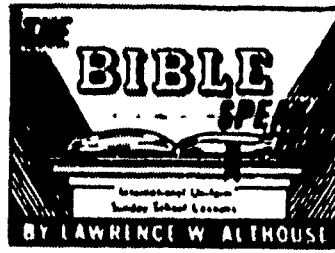
portion of chain assets — 56 percent — than stockholders.

Convenience stores continue to show a better return on investment than supermarkets, but higher prices caused by increasing operating costs are expected to reduce their customer appeal and slow down new convenience store openings.

A recent projection of food distribution industry trends for the next five years estimates a real annual increase in national grocery store sales of only 1 1/2 percent. Little or no growth is expected in the Middle Atlantic states during these years because most of the population increase will be concentrated in other regions. Food-price inflation is expected to range from five to eight percent. The proportion of the total food dollar spent away from home will continue to increase, reaching 30 percent by 1980.

from 1974's \$27 billion, but a net income figure still the third largest on record.

Appraising the agricultural outlook through mid-1976, the critical factors are grain export levels and the response of domestic livestock producers to expected feed-product price relationships. The best judgment is for a substantially larger export volume from last year and a pickup in livestock feeding, greatly improving farm income prospects through the first half of 1976 from a year earlier. The livestock sector will then continue to gain and crop prices will ease somewhat in the face of record output



UNTIL THE ANGELS COME

Lesson for December 28, 1975

Background Scripture: Matthew 3 through 4.

Devotional Reading: Psalms 18:1-6.

A movie fan once asked John Wayne whether he hadn't been scared in one of his films when it appeared the wagon train was about to be wiped out by Indians. "Naw," replied the star, "I'd read the script and I knew how it came out!"

Christians are sometimes encouraged to "hold on" in times of trial and temptation because, as it was demonstrated in Jesus' own life, if we persevere, we need not fear the outcome. When Jesus had successfully resisted the temptations of the devil, Matthew tells us that "angels came and ministered to him" (Matthew 4:11).

That's comforting, of course, but some of us would like to know what to do until the angels come? While the devil is tempting us with his whole arsenal of lures, what do we do even if we have read the script and know how it will come out?

Know who you are!

We can learn much from the manner in which Jesus met his temptor.

First of all, he knew who he was. And that was important because that was the first place the temptor made his assault. Many people miss the subtlety with which the devil approached Jesus: "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread" (4:3). Thus, he begins by calling into question Jesus' identity: "If you are the Son of God..." There is a faintly-veiled challenge to Jesus to prove that he is the Messiah.

The devil still uses this tactic. He comes to us calling into question our identity, saying, "If you're really the Christian you think you are then..." There is nothing he delights in more than causing us to doubt our own identity as Christ's disciples. As soon as we say to ourselves, "Maybe I'm not good enough a disciple of Jesus?", he's got his foot in the door.

We are not of much use to God if we are not sure who we are. Unless we know that we are disciples of Jesus Christ, not because we are worthy but because of God's grace, the devil can very easily lead us down the garden path... and out of the garden!

Know who God is

Jesus was also able to hold out until the angels came because he knew Who or What God is. So, when the devil tries to tempt Jesus to using the power of God to change stones into bread, Jesus remembers that it is God upon whom he is dependent, not himself.

"Man shall not live by bread alone," he repeats from scripture, "but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God" (4:4). He is in God's hands, not his own.

Once again the devil challenges him: "... throw



NOW IS THE TIME...

Max Smith
 County Agr Agent
 Telephone 391-6831

To Buy Herd Replacements Carefully

Too many livestock and dairy producers may be guilty of buying some of their disease problems; extreme care should be used when buying new animals for the herd or flock. Out of State infected cattle have been the sole source of Pennsylvania's recent brucellosis problems. We are told of the arrest of several dealers in southern states that have been guilty of trying to sell infected cattle in this part of the country. Those who buy cattle should keep the new animals segregated from the home herd until the new animals are tested and negative for brucellosis and tuberculosis. Insist on approved health papers and follow these strict precautions in order to keep down disease problems.

To Prevent Fires

Most fires could have been prevented, if certain practices would have been done. During this holiday season it is very important for all members of the family and farm employees to pay strict attention to fire hazards and remove them at once. The over-loading of electric lines is a very common problem at this time of the year. The drying out of Christmas trees and other evergreen decorations should be prevented. Fire extinguishers should be in good working condition and every member of the family should know how to operate them. Fires do not take holidays and everyone should be alert to the possible causes.

To Prevent Tree and Shrub Damage

Wild animals such as mice and rabbits will feed upon the bark of young and tender fruit trees, and ornamental shrubs, when we get snow cover for any length of time. This damage can be prevented by wrapping the tree trunk for a height of at least 30 inches with hardware cloth or aluminum foil; orchard men have a solution of 5 pounds of powdered rosin mixed with a gallon of ordinary alcohol painted on the trunks of trees and shrubs; this will keep the animals from eating the bark. If the tree or shrub is completely girdled by

yourself down..." (4:5). But again, Jesus remembers who God is: the One who is in charge. If Jesus were to "throw" himself down, he would be challenging God to help him, rather than waiting for God to work out his own purposes.

Finally, when all else has failed, the devil makes an appeal to Jesus' sense of mission: if Jesus will worship him, the devil will give him all the power he needs to accomplish his purpose. But, once again, Jesus remembers that there can be but one master.

Then the angels came and "ministered to him."

And so they will come to us, if until they come we, like Jesus, persevere.

having the bark eaten, it will not survive during the following summer. Poison bait stations for the mice may also be used in the orchard or around buildings.

To Use The "Buddy System"

Don't participate in winter sports alone is the advice of our recreational specialist, Joe Cardenuto, at Penn State University. He gives this advice for two reasons: first, it will save fuel and energy if a group go together in a car or bus, and secondly, in case of injury there will be someone there to help rescue the victim. In the case of snowmobiling or skiing, mechanical failure or an accident might occur in a very remote area, and the person may freeze before being found. In the case of ice skating, a person may fall through the ice and need immediate help to prevent drowning. We've often used the "buddy system" in swimming instruction, but now it is just as important in winter sports. Enjoy the great outdoors this winter, but be prepared for emergencies; they could happen to you.

Farm Calendar

January 5-9

Pa. State Farm Show 60th edition - Harrisburg.

Tuesday, January 6

Pa. Guernsey Breeders Association meeting at Schindler's Restaurant

Camp Hill 10:30 a.m.

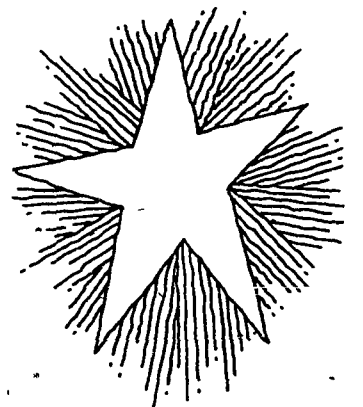
Tuesday, January 13

Ephrata Young Farmers meeting on dairy herd management

Ephrata Senior High School 7:45 p.m.

Wednesday, January 14

Milking School at the Farm and Home Center.



Wishing... doesn't make it so!
 Birth defects are forever.
 Unless you help.

March of Dimes

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