

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

By Dieter Krieg, Editor

Unsung heroes of agriculture

The real experts in farming have always been the fellows who have had to scratch a living from the soil or squeeze a profit out of a feed bunk. That's a conviction I've had for years, and one which grows a little stronger as time marches on.

There are a number of people and organizations, however, who are not directly involved in agriculture, and yet have excellent records in serving industry. The capacity as evaluators,

advisors, and educators is most admirable. Anyone who is at least willing to listen to advice or hear about new techniques would agree with that assessment.

Examples of organizations and individuals who contribute greatly to the prosperity of agriculture are the Extension Service, vo-ag teachers, Young Farmer associations, and private businesses.

Any farmer anywhere in the United

States, for example, has access to the knowledge contained in the college of agriculture within his state. Without spending more than the price of a little gasoline to drive to a meeting place, he can hear presentations by Extension personnel who bring him the latest in research findings that can often be valuable information.

Teachers of vocational agriculture have gone far beyond the call of duty by making themselves available for adult educational programs. Again, a farmer can learn an awful lot while investing precious little of his time or money.

One might be able to think of several fine mottos which would fit well into this editorial, but the one that comes to mind now is used as the definition of a Young Farmer: He's anyone willing to learn - regardless of his age in years. That organization, an outgrowth of the FFA, has dedicated itself to furthering education among adult farmers.

Often contributing to these school or Extension sponsored programs are specialists from either universities or private businesses. Some of them spend many of their evenings hundreds of miles away from their

families in order to make their presentations at hours when the farmer is free. True, these specialists are being paid for their services, but it's nevertheless a sacrifice to some extent, and all would certainly agree that some fellows are more dedicated to their jobs than others. Hence we have even greater contributions.

Drawing my conclusions from a background which includes Penn State's College of Agriculture and on-the-farm experiences until 2½ years ago, I appreciate very much the efforts that are being made by hundreds of individuals to keep the knowledge flowing.

Experience always has been the best teacher, and that by itself is worth more than other educational factors combined. But it doesn't hold the best, most economical answer for every situation. Nor does experience alone open doors to the technologies of the future as quickly as a combination of experience and frequent updates on accumulated information. So my hat is off to these unsung heroes of agriculture, and I hope farmers will give support to educational programs by boosting attendance figures.

LIFE on the farm

By DIETER KRIEG

Cold air is flowing through the countryside, chilling everything in its path. Mother Nature has arrived to offer some rest to the soil, and comparatively easy working days for the farmer.

Hay fields and the soil lay dormant. The machinery shed offers shelter to the mower, rake, baler, forage chopper and wagons. The vibrating belts, twirling knives and spinning axles will be motionless for the next six months. Gone is the dust and noise of the roaring, grain-swallowing combines. Like the powerful, growling bear — the largest of the three

tractors is in hibernation for the season. Only occasionally will it be put to use to keep it 'in shape'.

Gone, too, are the sounds of crickets, birds, and frogs, and the soft rustle of corn and grain in the wind.

All of the crops have been harvested. The last of the golden ears of corn were put in the crib a few days ago and the noisy, clanking elevator which conveyed the corn, is already beginning to collect dust and cobwebs.

Walking into the upper part of the barn now is like walking into a canyon. Thousands of hay bales form

straight walls on either side, and at the far end are layers and layers of straw bales — placed as neatly as a mason would lay bricks. By early summer most of this will be used up and the barn will seem like an empty, drafty cavern.

Yes, the countryside is going to sleep. Before too long we'll occasionally see a white blanket of snow covering the productive lands, and watching silently as it happens are the plow, corn picker and weather vane.



NOW IS THE TIME ...

Max Smith
County Agr. Agent
Telephone 394-6851

TO CONTROL WEEDS IN ALFALFA

Late fall and early winter are very good times to control weeds in alfalfa stands. I'm referring to winter-time weeds such as chickweed, shepherdspurse, and peppergrass. Many local alfalfa stands are injured each year by too many of these weeds. Herbicides will work much better on these weeds if applied when the

weeds are young and tender, rather than next spring when they are more mature. Materials to be used depends upon the age of the stand, and whether or not any grasses are with the alfalfa; we suggest growers refer to the 1976 Agronomy Guide for additional information. Herbicides such as Chloro IPC, Karmex, Princep, are effective when used properly. The big thing is to

eradicate the weeds now rather than wait until next spring.

TO CORRECT SOIL ACIDITY

This is a very old recommendation for any County Agent to be making, but is still a very good one. Years ago we made this suggestion in order to get greater yields and to permit

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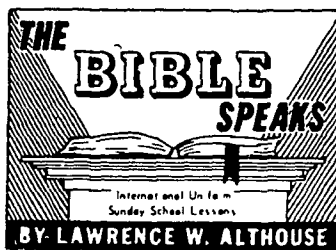
Farm Calendar

Tuesday, Dec. 21

Adult farmer family Christmas program, 7:30 p.m. at the Ephrata Junior-Senior High School.

Dairy cow clinic sponsored by the New Jersey Holstein Association and New Jersey Cooperative

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THE RETURN TRIP

Lesson for December 19, 1976

Background Scripture:
Luke 2:1-20

Devotional Reading:
Isaiah 52:7-10.

Bethlehem is a hill town. Surrounding it are fields where for thousands of years shepherds have kept "watch over their flocks by night" — even today. As you read this there are shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem and they look very much as they did that night when the Christ was born.

Near Bethlehem there is another hill and on it the ruins of what was once one of King Herod's proudest

monuments, the Herodion. One of a string of fortresses built in Judea by Herod, it would later be one of the last Jewish strongholds to fall to the Romans in the Jewish uprising of 66-70 A.D. The massive fortress where Herod himself was buried was built on a hill 2,500 feet above sea level and commanded the Wilderness of Judah and the approach to the Dead Sea.

Yet, despite all its

splendor, it is one of the least-visited historic monuments in Israel today. It is not that the Herodion is that far "off-the-beaten-track." It is but a few miles from Bethlehem, 30 minutes at the most from the center of Jerusalem. The problem with the Herodion is simply that it is so overshadowed by Bethlehem and the quaint church that marks the site where Jesus was born in a stable-cave two thousand

years ago. How ironic that this splendid monument should be so eclipsed by a humble stable!

Yet, history is shot-through with that kind of irony and nowhere is this more manifest than in the Christmas story. The Messiah was born not in Herod's royal bed, but in a manger - not in his palace, but in a stable. His parents were not the royalty of the land, nor even of the priestly

cast, but common people from an obscure Galilean town. And, though the Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world was born on that starry night, how ironic that God sent his "Good News," not to the powerful and the wise men of the land, but to poor, humble workingmen tending flocks on a cold, dark hillside.

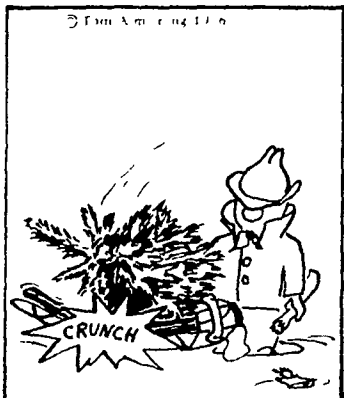
Let us go to Bethlehem

Yet, despite their fear

and amazement, there was something compelling about this experience and overcoming their own emotions they said to one another "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing - which the Lord has made known to us." That was the beginning of a celebration that has never ended. Because they were willing to respond, to their vision, they "went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger."

That's what Christmas is a willingness to respond to our vision, God's revelation and "go over to Bethlehem" so that we may "see this thing..." with our own eyes. But that's not the end of the journey to Bethlehem, even more important is the return trip: "And the shepherds returned..." not just to muse silently with their flocks, but they returned celebrating "glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them."

RURAL ROUTE



By Tom Armstrong