

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Grain storage advocated

Editor, Lancaster Farming: This coming week the U.S. House of Representatives will vote on legislation that seeks to establish a farmer-held domestic grain reserve and a smaller government-held emergency grain reserve. The House bill (H.R. 7871) was introduced on June 17 by Rep. James Weaver of Oregon after being rejected by the House Agriculture Committee for inclusion in the Omnibus Farm Bill. It will now be offered as an amendment to the House farm bill from the floor. Debate on the matter took place yesterday, July 15, according to Congressman Robert Walker's office in Washington, D.C.

This is a year of crop surpluses, and the need to establish a grain reserve system is urgent. The world food situation has changed from conditions of scarcity four years ago to conditions of global surplus this year. We have had three years of good harvests in almost all countries, but it is highly unlikely that this condition will last for long. God has blessed our fields and it is our Christian obligation to deal responsibly with these God-given surpluses. As in the days of Joseph, we must be prudent enough to store up food in the fat years and be prepared to come to the aid of the hungry in the coming lean years which are sure to follow.

The temptation during this time of bulging wheat elevators and depressed prices is to aggressively seek increased shipments of food aid and expanded foreign markets. But cheap U.S. surplus grain shipped overseas can hurt developing countries as much as grain shortages did in the past by depressing their prices and glutting limited storage facilities. Rather we should establish a national grain reserve that avoids the extremes of shortage and surplus.

Mennonite Central Committee seeks to respond to the hunger problem through agricultural development programs among small farmers to produce more food. Dumping our surpluses now in the form of increased aid would create a disincentive to small farmers overseas, the very farmers that MCC is seeking to help. Storing our surpluses in a national grain reserve would thus benefit both North American far-

merners and the small farmers in developing countries.

The Weaver amendment being introduced in the House would establish a 25 to 35-million ton reserve of wheat and feed grain. The entire reserve would be held and owned by farmers, using the existing commodity loan program administered by the secretary of agriculture. Reserve stocks would be built up when prices are low and grain surpluses exist and would be released when prices rise above a specified limit.

The legislation provides for a separate two-million ton International Emergency Reserve of government-owned stocks, held off the market, which could be expanded to six million tons following the establishment of an international cost-sharing agreement on grain reserves.

The Senate has already passed a farm bill that includes provisions for a similar grain reserve. Called the Humphrey amendment, it passed on May 24. It set the farmer-owned reserve size at eight to 18 million tons and the government-owned emergency reserve at two million tons, expandable to six million tons after an international agreement is reached. It is important that the House farm bill be amended to include grain reserve provisions so that the final joint bill that is sent to President Carter will include a strong grain reserve proposal.

Some farmers have a legitimate concern about a grain reserve, fearing that reserve stocks would be dumped on the market to depress prices during a

beneficial price rise. But the Weaver bill is designed to prevent a flooded market and to protect both producers and consumers. It allows for normal price fluctuations within a reasonable range but would eliminate abnormal price rises. Release levels would assure U.S. producers a fair return but not rise so high as to hurt consumers.

The bill specifies that grain would be taken into the reserve when prices drop to 20 per cent below a three-year-average market price and would be released only when prices rise to more than 40 per cent above the three-year-average floating market price. This would prevent the kind of price rises that induce farmers to all-out production and generate surpluses which eventually hurt farmers by causing the price to fall.

The cost of the storage program would be shared by farmers and the government. Although storage would be on individual farms, the farm bill already authorizes low-interest government loans for building storage facilities, thus taking the burden of storing reserves off farmers alone.

Persons interested in supporting grain reserves should be in touch with their agricultural organizations or speak to their members of Congress.

Further information on this legislation can be obtained from Delton Franz, MCC Peace Section Washington Office, 100 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, (202) 544-6564.

Sincerely,  
Jon Jantzen  
Akron, Pa.

## Farm Calendar

Today, July 16  
Flemington Farmers Market opens, Turntable Junction, near Black River and Western Railroad.

Sunday, July 17  
Loganville 4-H Fun Day, at the Codorus Church of the Brethren  
Elizabethtown Young Farmers Picnic, 12:30 p.m. at the Sico Park in Mount Joy.

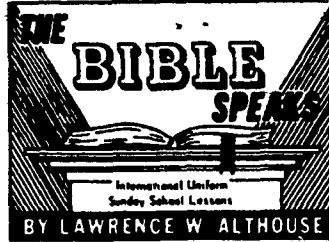
Monday, July 18  
York County Junior Holstein Club fitting and showing day, at the Tom Boyer farm, Biesecker Road, York, Pa. State dairy princess

seminar, York College, York.

Tuesday, July 19  
Lancaster County Conservation District Field Day, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Ken Kreider farm near Strasburg. See details in separate announcement on page 100.

Hunterdon County (N.J.) Farmland Assessment Workshops, 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the Hunterdon County Extension Center.

Board of directors meeting of the Lancaster Farm and Home Foundation, 8 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Farm and Home Center.



## GRASSHOPPER COMPLEX

Lesson for July 17, 1977

Background Scripture: Numbers 13 through 14.

Devotional Reading: Psalms 77:1-15

One of the things that often strengthens the authority of the Bible for me is, not the record of wonderful things that it holds, but the tragedies and failures it is willing to acknowledge. If the Bible were no more than a book produced by a people, one would expect that the negative parts would be edited out of it. We would have a record of wonderful events, beautiful teachings, and dramatic oracles, but we would hardly record the adultery of King David, the depression of Elijah, the thrice denial of Christ by the Apostle Peter, nor the cry of Jesus from the cross—"My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?"

### An evil report

Among those passages we would be sure to eliminate would be chapters 13 and 14 of the Book of Numbers. No proud people would want any record to remain of such an appalling chapter in their history, for in these passages the behaviour of the people of Israel is almost incomprehensible.

Think of it this way. For a long time the people of Israel have been wandering the desert, sustained by the hope of the Promised Land. Now, at last, they are ready to leave the wilderness and claim their heritage and they send out a reconnaissance party to reconnoiter Canaan. And, although God caused them to escape the might of Egypt, fed them, led them, and sustained them in the wilderness with many marvelous acts, when the scouting party returns there is, with the exception of

**NOW IS THE TIME...**  
Max Smith  
County Agr. Agent  
Telephone 394-6851

### TO INVEST IN A RESPIRATOR

It is getting more important for farmers and farm workers to wear respirators for certain chores. Jobs such as handling or applying chemicals, cleaning and maintaining manure storage tanks or pits, and silos; working in

dusty places or where molds are present; and using solvents that give off toxic fumes. As farmers get more of these jobs to do, it is important to have protection. We have known of farmers who were overcome by gases from a silo, or got infections from breathing air from dusty or moldy silage. Certain spray materials, such as parathion, should be used only with a respirator. Various types are available depending upon the protection needed. Farmers are urged to give some attention to this protection.

### TO LEAVE WILD ANIMALS TO NATURE

Many youngsters would like to make pets out of baby wild animals that are captured or left motherless. This is often done with skunks, raccoons, squirrels, etc. The temptation is strong to bring these small animals into the home and domesticate them. For several reasons this is not a good idea. In the first place, they may be rabid, and if the youngster is bitten, it could cause rabies in the child. Secondly, it is hard to match the care and climate of the great outdoors; most of them will be better off to "make it on their own" rather than try to raise them by hand.

### TO ROTATE SHEEP PASTURES

Most Shepherds like to have their flock out on pasture during the Summer months. In this part of the state internal parasites are a problem, and the moving of the flock to a fresh pasture every three to four weeks is a very good practice; this period will permit the sun and weather time to kill the worm spores that have been dropped by the sheep; it also gives time for the forage to grow back again. Rotation in addition to a drenching or a worm treatment program should get rid of all the stomach worms. Young lambs should be treated every four to six weeks during the Summer months.

### TO FEED NEW GRAINS CAREFULLY

The Winter barley and wheat crop is now in the bin on some farms; if these grains are to be fed, it is suggested that the feeder go easy at first in order to prevent scours or bloating in animals. If the grain is allowed to "cure" or go through a sweat for two to three weeks, it will be more safe to use. A small percentage of the feed mixture (10 to 20 per cent) would be the starting place and then gradually increase the amount. In the case of wheat, we suggest the smaller amounts because of the nature of the cracked grains and the danger of digestive trouble. Wheat should be getting more attention this Summer as a feed grain because of the lower market value. Rations may contain up to 25 per cent wheat in the case of dairy or beef cattle, and higher with hog rations. Make changes in rations gradually for the best results.

Joshua and Caleb, a desperate report given to them: "We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we" (Numbers 13:31).

Not only did the spies bring back a negative report, but they let their emotions get the best of them and greatly magnified the dangers:

The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature...and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them (13:32-33).

The problem with the spies was not that they saw danger in Canaan, but that they greatly magnified the danger and discounted or minimized the power of God.

### Back to slavery!

Then, an absolutely incredible thing happened. Not only were the people of Israel discouraged by the hysterical report, but suddenly they wanted to throw in the towel and go back to the slavery they had known in Egypt! You and I can hardly comprehend what made them say this, yet, when we are honest, we would have to admit that human nature would often prefer to return to a known bondage than take the risk of future freedom.

The truly tragic aspect of this whole incident in Numbers 13 and 14 is that it indicates that, despite all that he has done for them, the people of Israel still have not learned to put their dependence upon him. Each one of us is created in God's image, therefore none of us should ever look upon ourselves as "grasshoppers," literally or figuratively.

p.m. Tour includes the USDA Research Center at Beltsville, Md. and the Goddard Space Flight Center.

Dover Young Farmers Summer Bus Trip to Canton Elevator in Baltimore harbor.

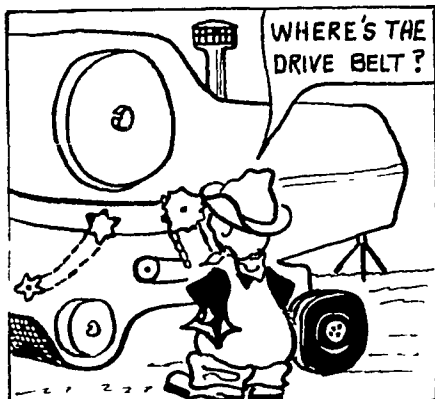
Friday, July 22  
York County 4-H family movie, 4-H Center, 7:30 to 9:30. "Snowball Express" by Walt Disney, donation admittance.

Saturday, July 23  
New Jersey Beef Field Day, Colonel and Mrs. James Horn's farm, Federal Twist Road, Stockton.

Pa. Natural Food Convention, today and tomorrow at Susquehanna University campus, Selinsgrove. See details on page 89.

Lancaster County 4-H horse show, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster County Riding Club, 2615 Columbia Ave.

## RURAL ROUTE



By Tom Armstrong