

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

By DIETER KRIEG, EDITOR



A farmer's strike is a dilemma in itself

The threat of a farmers strike is very real even though we aren't likely to see any milk dumped, calves shot to death, or baby chicks drowned, as was the case in 1974 when large

groups of farmers protested high feed and grain prices. That dilemma had the potential of generating support from Pennsylvania farmers, who raise beef, produce milk, and

hatch chickens. But such drastic measures for publicity turned them off and rather than join the cause, most Pennsylvania farmers tightened their belts a little more and endured the pressures of the markets

produce meat, eggs and milk can hardly be expected to jump on a bandwagon will deliver higher feed costs. But they can, and are, expressing sympathy to a financial situation they can identify with just the same.

Furthermore, farmers and farming in this part of the country are vastly different from the kind to be found out west or down south.

Farmers here won't support a strike, which is the latest contrived weapon for higher prices -- notably wheat prices.

Be that as it may, it should be pointed out that there is an awful lot of sympathy towards those who experienced financial disasters this year or even the last few years. Their cries for help are justified; their immediate results in bringing agriculture into the forefront of news coverage are noble, and thus far their methods for doing so are at least a big improvement over the

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COMMENTS FROM READERS

OSHA puts squeeze on

Editor, Lancaster Farming:
How much power should OSHA have?

Currently OSHA is allowed to inspect any business at any time and in any way it sees fit. I have witnessed a few OSHA inspections and applications myself, and I find its inspection to be quite arbitrary. The inspections are undefined in what, where when and how stiff the fines are.

In a feed mill in Boonton, New Jersey, two 11-inch intermeshing gears were left exposed on a Howe roller mill. The roller mill was driven by a 15 horse power motor. In the same building a grinder in the shop had an

exposed V-belt driven by a 1/5 horse power motor. The roller mill drew a \$15 fine and the V-belt drew a \$50 fine, although it was less dangerous. At the time of inspection (which was unannounced), the tenant who owned the roller mill, was unloading by hand a pickup truck full of bulk shelled corn. Perhaps the scene hit a soft spot in the inspector's heart because each of the tenant's fines were less than \$20. However, the total fines were enough to cause the feed business to fold. In contrast, fines assessed to the landlord for violations with the V-belt were higher than \$50. Why should OSHA have

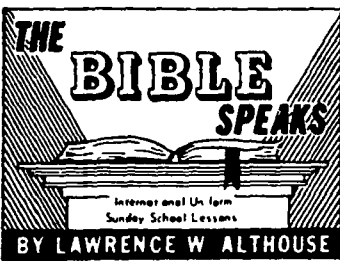
the right to inspect private garages and sheds on farms? The constitution expressly protects American citizens from "search and seizure." Private residences are protected. Yet the privacy of a farmer is invaded when inspectors, without search warrants, enter sheds or buildings on farms which house personal property.

If OSHA can put that feed mill out of business, why not small farms? I feel that this bureaucracy has too much power and it is using it, unintentionally, in a destructive manner.

Yours truly,
Stephen Blethen
Towaco, N.J.

This year agriculture is faced with a severe dilemma which is similar to the one of three years ago, and yet totally opposite: low grain prices. Pennsylvania farmers, due to their generally conservative and independent nature, will in all likelihood let this issue go by as well. They can sympathize with the plight of grain farmers because they know what it's like to sell corn, wheat, eggs, cattle, milk, and other farm products for low prices. But most of these farmers won't join in a concerted effort for higher grain prices because they can't afford to and such actions don't fit their behavior and business patterns.

The fact that eastern agriculture is largely grain consuming, rather than grain producing, is also significant in the strike issue. It's a case of one man's gain being the other fellow's loss. Farmers who utilize grain to



WHEN WE WONDER "WHY?"

Lesson for December 4, 1977

Background Scripture:
Job 1 through 3;
12 through 13.
Devotional Reading:
Psalms 143.

Although the story of Job may find its origins in the times of patriarchs, it is likely that the Book of Job, as we now know it, was written in the 7th century B.C., approximately 2,300 years ago. It is ironic that the concept the writer was attempting to destroy is one that is still so prevalent today. In 2,300 years we have not succeeded in putting that concept to rest.

Blameless and upright
The writer of the Book of Job was primarily concerned with attacking a popular belief which he was convinced to be quite erroneous. It was the belief

that, if a person suffered in any way, it was a punishment from God. Correspondingly, if a man prospered, it was assumed that prosperity was a reward for righteousness. In the story of Job his three friends seem to assume without question that Job's suffering must be the result of some iniquity on his part.

The writer of Job was intent in demonstrating that concept as quite false. There must be some better answer for human suffering than God's punishment.

The writer of Job makes this abundantly clear in Job 1. In the very beginning of

the story he is described as a man who "was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil" (1:1). The writer describes him as a very prosperous man, even calling him "the greatest of all the people of the east" (1:3). When God speaks with Satan about Job, his description is glowing: "...there is none like him on the earth" (1:8). When, in Job 2, we see this prosperous and happy man in the midst of abject suffering, we cannot claim that it is God's punishment for Job's sin.

Curse God and die
Nor can his tragedy be

ascribed to his response to his troubles. Satan is confident that, although Job's faith in God remains constant in the face of his tragedies, if his health is taken from him, he will finally turn against God. So, Satan orders terrible physical ordeals for Job to make him abandon God. Although Job is subjected to cynicism by his friends, it was the words of his wife that must have wounded him most deeply of all: "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God, and die" (2:9).

Yet, despite these extreme provocations, we are told: "In all this Job did not sin

with his lips" (2:10). So the writer has illustrated forcefully that Job's suffering must have some other answer than sin and punishment. But few learned what the writer was trying to say and seven centuries later Jesus' disciples would look at a blind man and ask: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2). And today, thousands of years later we are still wondering "why?" and settling on the wrong answer.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Max Smith, Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

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TO BE CAREFUL WITH SPACE HEATERS

Colder weather will soon arrive when many types of stoves and space heaters will be placed into action. Each year in our country several thousand people receive emergency treatment for injuries associated with oil, gas, kerosene, electric, and wood-burning stoves and space heaters. There is no doubt these are needed to provide comfort, but effort should be made to see that they are properly installed and well vented to the outside. Too many people still try to build up a fire by

pouring gasoline or kerosene on the hot coals; these vapors will usually explode and cause injury. Too many temporary space heaters are not vented to the outside and the deadly carbon monoxide gas causes death. All stoves and heater should be firmly installed and protected from being knocked over in the building. Potential fire hazards should be recognized and removed at all times.

TO SNOWMOBILE SAFELY

Snowmobiling is a very popular winter-time sport

but some attention should be given to the safety factor and to the property rights of others. To assure that all youth under sixteen years of age will have proper training in snowmobile safety, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources Snowmobile Unit has been arranging for safety courses across the state. Current laws state that no owner of a snowmobile shall permit its operation by any person under the age of sixteen, unless the operator is the holder of a valid snowmobile safety certificate. Those interested should be alert to

the time and place of these courses in their area.

TO SECURE AGRONOMY GUIDE

The 1978 Agronomy Guides have arrived from Penn State and we urge every local crop producer to get one of these publications. This guide covers all of the major crops in this part of the country and gives many details and suggestions. Many farmers have benefited from this publication in recent years and feel that it is one of the most important Extension publications available. A committee of Extension

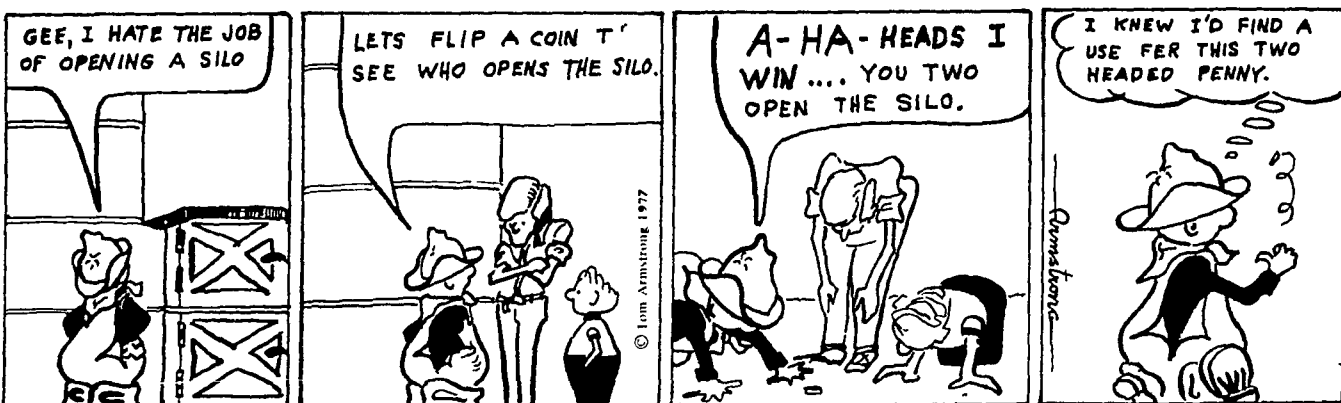
Specialists and Penn State staff members prepare the guide each year for the benefit of Pennsylvania farmers. Don't make your 1978 crop plans without the Agronomy Guide.

TO PREPARE FOR NEW ARRIVALS

The birth of a new farm animal is very important and reflects the future of the herd or flock. The sanitary conditions into which this new animal arrives is very important; I fear that many times this practice is neglected, in that the little animal is born into filth and undesirable quarters. We

urge all producers to make an effort to have their young animals born into clean, sanitary conditions that are warm and helpful. This might require special cleaning and disinfecting during the winter months for cattle herds, but at all times for swine producers. Supplemental heat is required for baby pigs and lambs born during cold weather. Be sure your new arrival gets to a good start, and not become infected because of neglect and filth.

RURAL ROUTE



By Tom Armstrong

Farm Calendar

Today, Dec. 3
Thomasville 4-H Community Club will hold covered dish achievement night, 7 p.m. at the 4-H Center near Bair. For members and their families. Awards will be presented. Lancaster County Annual 4-H horse and pony club member recognition banquet, 6:30 p.m. at the Farm and Home Center
Monday, Dec. 5
Workshop on home energy

savings, sponsored by the Extension Service, 7:30 p.m. at the Norristown Library.

Tuesday, Dec. 6
Ephrata Area Young Farmers hold beef cattle management meeting, specifically feeding and handling facilities, 7:45 p.m. at the Ephrata High School vo-ag department. Lancaster County DHIA banquet, 11:45 a.m. at the

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