

**EDITORIAL COMMENTS** By DIETER KRIEG, EDITOR



**The market that is - and isn't**

The little girl and her mother walked up to the concession stand before the start of the current popular movie, Walt Disney's "Pete's

Dragon." She wanted a drink Bless her heart, nothing but milk would do. But the elderly lady behind the counter had to tell the girl that the

theater did not offer milk. The girl's mother bent down to the girl's height and attempted to persuade the child to make another choice. Having no success at all with her sales pitches, she erected herself, smiled politely and announced that her daughter really really didn't like any drink but milk. I was wishing I had my camera handy.

That was a lost sale for the theater, and a lost sale for the dairy farmer. It makes a person wonder how many other similar situations arise each day where a competing product wins out over the farm fresh food simply because the farmer's product wasn't even offered.

Although milk is the example here, the circumstances can be applied to other commodities as well.

Another example of lost markets centers around the allegations of inferior quality eggs being shipped to New York City. The excuse behind that scheme is that the consumers in

New York don't know what a good egg tastes like, anyway. What practitioners of such marketing schemes tend to forget is that only top quality, good tasting products will increase the consumer's appetite for eggs, milk, meat, fruit, vegetables, etc.

It's no secret that packing houses have sent inferior meat through their marketing channels. And while we can't blame either the packing house or the farmer for wanting to make a sale, sending something irregular through the market isn't really a good idea. But we do it, and I've been on that side of the fence myself, as a matter of fact.

And then there's another example involving milk -- another personal experience. The scene of the bad publicity was a Centre County supermarket. The gallon of milk I had

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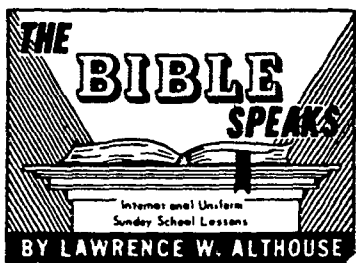
**The squeeze spreads**

During the course of a dinner conversation this week, I learned that a Lancaster County new and used car dealership saw its costs rise by 40 per cent during the past two years. A monthly insurance premium alone was taking a phenomenal \$1500 per month out of the budget. It should be noted here that the dealership referred to is of modest size. No big show room and no fancy location. It might even be said that the business is small by Lancaster County standards.

Why the lines about an automobile retailing business? Simply, to serve as a reminder that the farmer is not alone when he takes notice of his

rising expenses. A 40 per cent increase in costs over a two year period isn't easy to work with. New car prices haven't gone up by quite that much to make up for it. So the car dealer, like the farmer, has had to tighten his belt. Like the farmer, he's faced with government regulations, including minimum wage standards and safety rulings.

It shouldn't surprise anyone that a lot of businesses are caught in the cost-price squeeze. Not just farms and car dealerships. The grass isn't necessarily greener on the other side of the fence, even though most of us are often tempted to believe so.



**NO ABSENT GOD**

Lesson for February 5, 1978

Background Scripture: Psalms 78; 105; 136.

Devotional Reading: Psalms 77:11-20

One of the most unique

aspects of the religion of Israel was the conviction that God is present and active in human affairs, both individual and collective in many religions and philosophies. God is seen as a kind of Absentee Landlord who owns the premises but rarely pays them a visit. It is the remoteness and unapproachability of God that dominates much religious thinking today. Appalled by those who seem to create God in man's image, many people shudder at any concept of God which sees him acting in a human manner. A God of deeds

Yet, it does not follow that, if God is not human in his nature, he is necessarily "out of this world" either. If it is immature to think of God as "the Big Man up in the sky," that does not mean that God cannot act within the world he created. There is nothing simplistic in believing that God is at work in the affairs of his creation and his creatures.

This is the way that the people of Israel usually thought of him: as the Divine Being Who-Has-Done-Something. If you work your way through the Old Testament, you will find few, if any, abstract ideas about God.

You will find few speculations about God's nature and being. What you will find in great abundance are accounts of what God has done in his world. Thus, the writers of the Old Testament, instead of trying to tell people what God is like, concentrate on telling them what God has done and is doing.

As we saw last week, sometimes the Psalmist saw God revealed in the awesomeness of nature or in the holiness of God's moral order. But more often he found him in acts which could be pinpointed in history:

O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples! Sing to him, sing praises to him, tell of his wonderful works!

The people of Israel regarded their history as sacred history because they could see the hand of God moving within it. Things didn't "just happen" -- God made them happen!

A God who leads... Furthermore, not only did God act in history, but he also revealed himself to them as a Presence. When they spoke of the "covenant," they were speaking of the relationship

between God and his people. Thus Israel felt and saw his presence in their national affairs. They saw him not as a Celestial Cheerleader urging them on from afar, but as The Leader in their midst: "So he led forth his people with joy, his chosen ones with singing" (Psalms 105:43). Thus, when the Psalmist proclaimed, "Praise the Lord!" he was celebrating not an abstract idea, not a theological speculation nor a philosophic ideal, but a God who was known because of a Presence which could not be denied.

**NOW IS THE TIME**

By Max Smith, Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

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**TO CONSIDER MORE ALFALFA**

With good alfalfa hay at \$100.00 per ton and corn around \$2.25 per bushel, it appears that many farmers might benefit from having more hay to sell. I realize that some soils may not be able to produce legumes such as alfalfa, but most of them can be put into shape to produce alfalfa and clover. Liberal applications of lime are very important. The most recent crop averages show that 3.26 tons of alfalfa is average for Lancaster County and 94.3 bushels of corn. The economics of these averages at going prices shows a greater gross in-

come from alfalfa hay. In addition, there is great possibility that alfalfa hay yields will increase in the next few years. Some growers are already getting 6 to 8 tons per acre. Good soil conservation favors the growing of more hay crops in comparison to all corn. I firmly believe that more acres of alfalfa will benefit farmers at this time.

**TO PLAN FOR TOPDRESSING WHEAT**  
The practice of applying extra nitrogen to winter wheat early in the spring is a good one; this treatment is usually made about the middle of March when vegetative growth begins.

This year, considering the very high market price of straw, it should be more beneficial to add nitrogen to obtain higher yields of straw. In fact, a high yield of straw might be more valuable than high grain yields. Applications of from 30 to 60 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre has given increased yields of both grain and straw. When the field is under-seeded to a new stand of alfalfa or clover, then the nitrogen applications should be kept to the lower amounts. Every effort should be made to harvest maximum amounts of straw this coming year.

**TO SERVICE EQUIPMENT**

The growing season is rapidly approaching when all kinds of equipment and machinery will be needed. No doubt many of these items need some repair or adjustments. Now is the good time to get that work started. Your local service man will appreciate the business before the spring rush starts. Many local farmers may want to do their own repairing and servicing. The important thing is to get this done before the day the equipment is needed. For the non-farm folks this refers to the lawn mower and the garden

tractor. Equipment kept in good condition will give more satisfying service, and will last much longer.

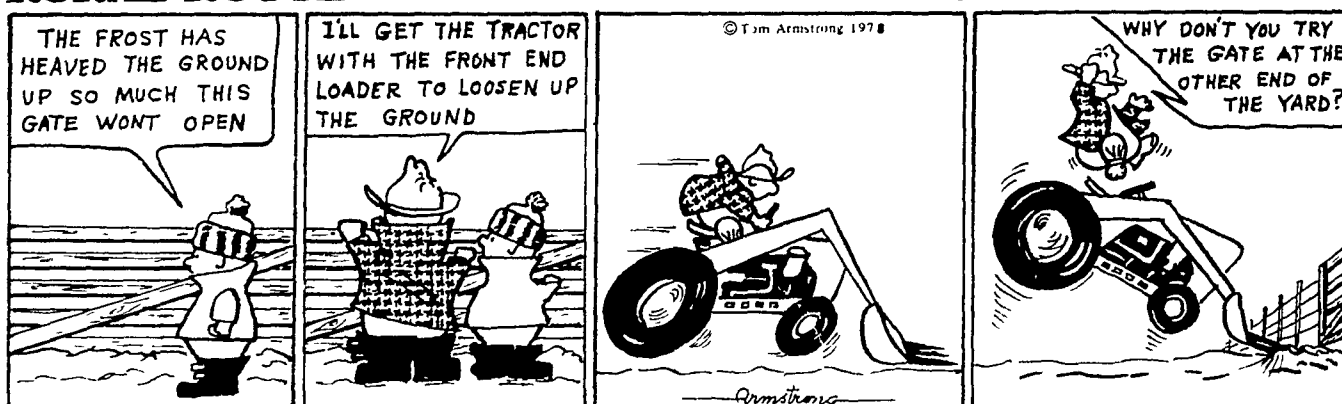
**TO MARKET CATTLE ON GRADE**

One point that was stressed several times at our recent cattle feeders day, referred to the fact that too many of our local feeders feed their cattle too long; they are sold when over-finished and are dropped into a lower yield grade. It is suggested that producers try to sell their cattle when they will grade choice, rather than keep them until they go into the prime grade. This

costs more money per pound of gain and has a limited market. Weight is not a good indication of when to sell because small-framed cattle will reach the choice grade at much lighter weights than some of the larger-framed crossbreds. Feeders are urged to become more familiar with what it takes to grade choice, and then move the cattle before they get over-finished.

**RURAL ROUTE**

By Tom Armstrong



**Farm Calendar**

Today, Feb. 4  
Ephrata Young Farmers annual banquet, Mt. Airy Fire Hall, 6:45 p.m.  
York County 4-H Baby Beef banquet, 7 p.m. at the Shrewsbury Fire Hall; speaker: Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh, special assistant to the president of Kansas State University.

Tuesday, Feb. 7  
Maryland Holstein Convention at Kent County's Great Oak Resort.  
Southeastern Pennsylvania corn and soybean clinic and trade show, Westover Inn and Golf Club, Jeffersonville, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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