

EDITORIAL COMMENTS By DIETER KRIEG, EDITOR



Read the label or face the horror

Farming has always had its dangers, but some situations are such that they threaten more than one livelihood. The problem is of a chemical nature, and the dangers lurk on nearly every farm in the country.

Oftentimes the farmer may not be able to do a thing about lightening his burden in this regard, but then again, there's a lot he can do. It begins with paying attention to directions on pesticide containers and animal medications.

Consider recent publicity in major national magazines and on television to understand the severity of the problem. In Michigan, for example, some dairy farmers found that their feeds had been contaminated with a highly toxic chemical known as polybrominated biphenyl or PBB. The result was sickness, fatigue and frustration for the cows, the family that owned them, and consumers who were exposed to products from affected farms. The unfortunate answer for the cattle was death by bullet. Thousands of cattle were rounded up and shot, then buried

There shouldn't be any need to comment on the mental horror a farmer would experience in such a situation.

According to an article published in the Feb 13 issue of *U.S. News and World Report*, the incidents involving Michigan dairy farmers is one of the largest and most costliest poisoning cases in U.S. history. More than 23,000 head of dairy cattle had to meet their executioner. Their value was pegged at \$12 million. Millions more dollars were lost when 4600 head of swine, 1400 sheep, 2 million chickens, 18,000 pounds of cheese, 2600 pounds of butter, 34,000 pounds of dry milk powder, and nearly 5 million eggs had to be destroyed.

Michigan taxpayers are spending more than \$16.6 million this year to clean up the chemical poisoning mess. It should be realized that the consequences hit the farmer the hardest, but the effects were felt all the way to the dinner table in town. Poisonings are a serious situation.

NBC News reported on television last week that the case in Michigan

has the federal government involved now. Hundreds of farmers have filed damage claims against the feed supplier. The government is charging that there was criminal neglect involved. More than \$140 million in claims have already been paid by the firms and their insurance underwriters. Meanwhile, the frustration continues and even the FBI is on the trail to find reasons and circumstances for the poisoning.

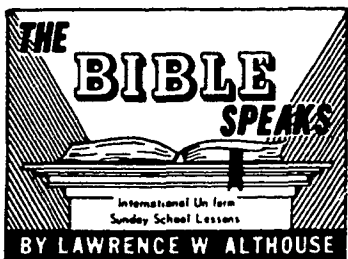
Although modern farming is heavily dependent on chemicals and medications of all sorts, it can't be overemphasized that they be used with caution. The case in Michigan left the farmers without blame, as far as has been determined. But there are plenty of other situations which could arise which will leave the farmer faced with the charges as well as the mental anguish.

The day is coming, we're continually being warned, when a trace of medication in meat, eggs or milk will be detected early enough to place blame. It's already being done now, in fact, although the legal aspects haven't been worked out to

place charges. Imagine being faced with a \$20,000 bill to replace a silo full of milk just because the dairyman failed to keep a cow's milk out of the tank for the required number of hours. Experts urge farmers to read labels and to not allow a veterinarian to modify what it says on the label. That happens from time to time, and can jeopardize the flow of food products. Unfavorable publicity of the worst magnitude could result and does result when poisonous materials find their way to the dinner table. It happened on a wide-spread scale in Michigan. It can happen in a number of different ways anywhere in the country.

Such poisonings have already been publicized on television, radio, newspapers, women's publications, and news magazines. The impression can't be good.

It's vital to the agricultural economy that everyone in agriculture — the man at the feed mill, the veterinarian, the farmer, and the hauler, among others — take their job very seriously.



ARE YOU HAPPY?

Lesson for February 12, 1978

Background Scripture:
Psalms 34: 57; 146.
Devotional Reading:
Psalms 34:1-10

It seems a simple enough question: Are you happy?

But try asking any number of people — friends, neighbors, fellow employees, even strangers — and you are likely to get very few direct affirmative answers. Of course, you'll probably not get many direct negative answers either (few people like to come right out and admit it in so many words), but the evasions and equivocations, the discussions of "What do you mean 'happy'?", and the long drawn out circuitous responses will lead you into a negative atmosphere. Singing praises

One rather candid man replied with surprising directness, saying: "No, but then I never expected to be happy either." I rather think that many people would agree with that statement if they were honest with themselves. Whatever it is that they expect of life, they are not looking for happiness. Despite how much our society talks about happiness, many people go through life without ever expecting to experience it on a long term basis. Happiness, they think, is something one knows in rare moments — a promotion on the job, winning the lottery,

feeling "good" on a birthday or anniversary, the birth of a child — but it not likely to be sustained beyond those special events.

Thus, many people are comfortable, successful, satisfied, resigned, adjusted, "more or less o.k.," but not happy. Even having fun and being able to laugh and "cut up" are not to be equated with happiness. Some of the most miserable people I have ever met are those who nevertheless manage to be "the life of the party". It is not unusual to find that the ever-genial, always-joking and laughing extrovert

leaving a suicide note confessing deep despair.

Part of our problem may well be that people don't know what happiness is and therefore, not knowing, they cannot know how to find it. What is a happy person? The psalmist gives us a good picture:

Praise the Lord, O my soul! I will praise the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praises to my God while I have being. (146:2)

Happy is the man

The happy person is a person who praises God throughout his life. Let's make sure we understand the chronology. It is not so

much a matter of one praising God because he or she is happy, but of being happy because one is able to praise God. What this means is that when we approach life thankfully, when we find the capacity to be in awe of something greater than ourselves, happiness is the likely result. So it is not a matter of focusing our life on the search for happiness, but of focusing it upon the goodness of God and finding happiness thrown-in!

Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose help is in the Lord his God (146:5).

So, are you happy?

NOW IS THE TIME

By Max Smith, Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

Phone 394-6851



TO PROTECT SMALL FEEDER PIGS

Last winter many feeders had trouble with their small pigs due to the extremely cold weather. In recent weeks we have had continued cold weather that might be harming these small pigs in un-heated buildings. When the pigs pile up in a corner of the pen and their hair is standing on end, they are cold and are not doing well. Often this is the start of colds and other infections. We urge feeders to

add hovers over their sleeping quarters, tighten up the building, add more insulation, or some bedding; any of these will add comfort during long periods of cold weather. Extra care the first few weeks of the feeding period will increase gains and net returns.

TO EVALUATE WINDBREAKS

The recent heavy snow with strong northwest winds might be a good time to consider the planting or building of a windbreak for

the farm homestead, or for certain places that drifted badly. Evergreen tree plantings make excellent windbreaks in addition to adding landscape beauty to the premises. In addition, these windbreaks will protect heated buildings and cut down on the fuel costs. Many farm homesteads in the west and midwest have permanent plantings that render comfort and protection. The windbreak should be about 75 feet into the direction of the prevailing winds in order to

provide space for drifting snow. Additional information is available from any Extension Office.

TO MAINTAIN BATTERIES

This is the time of the year when car, truck, and tractor batteries bear a heavy load. Cold mornings require good batteries in good condition. We urge owners to keep up the water level in the battery, keep the terminals clean, and don't permit lights or heaters to operate when the engine is not running. A strong battery is

a definite asset these cold mornings, and especially during one of our quite common snow storms or blizzards. Give your battery attention and it will perform at all times.

TO PRUNE FRUIT TREES

Orchard men are busy pruning at this time of the year. Apple trees are the place to start during the winter and ending up with the peaches by the middle of March. Trees should be pruned to control size, get desired shape, and open

them up for good sunlight and good fruit coloring. Most Extension offices have publications that will give suggestions on pruning all kinds of trees. Deciduous trees such as oak may also be pruned now before spring growth gets started. A good pruning job makes it easier to spray the trees and to pick the fruit.

RURAL ROUTE



By Tom Armstrong

Farm Calendar

Monday, Feb. 13
DeKalb Yieldmaster's meeting, today and tomorrow at the Hunt Valley Inn, Cockeysville, Md. There will be a program at 8 p.m. this evening about the world corn record — 352.64 bushels per acre.
Pennsylvania-Maryland Roadside Marketing Conference, Sheraton

Inn, Gettysburg. All day, and more tomorrow.
Tuesday, Feb. 14
Lebanon County 4-H Baby Beef banquet, Schaeferstown Fire Hall, 7 p.m.
Cattlemen's Winter Seminar for Maryland and nearby areas, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Holly Hills Country.

(Turn to Page 35)