

# LIFE on the farm

By Dieter Krieg



One extremely hard jolt, which could have damaged the tractor and broken my bones, was enough to send me straight to the gun counter of a nearby store

I considered myself very fortunate in not having been thrown off the tractor when the front end dropped into a groundhog hole, popped back out, and then bounced along for the next several yards I had hung on for dear life. The experience had caught me off guard and it positively amounted to the last straw.

With revenge brewing in my mind, I wanted nothing more than to fill some fat groundhog with bullets. I was determined to hunt down every groundhog on the farm.

Not knowing anything at all about firearms and ammunition, I inspected several models, finally deciding on a .22 calibre rifle. A couple of boxes of bullets completed the purchase.

This being the first time that I had ever handled such a weapon, I was a little nervous about what might happen when I pulled the trigger. It didn't seem too bad. Before long, I had bullets piercing tin cans and boards. If those groundhogs knew what was good for them, they'd dig their way to China and never come back. It was a satisfying thought.

It was a day or two later before I ventured across the fields with gun in hand. The sun's warmth had

dried the top layer of recently plowed ground and my steps kicked up just a bit of dust as I walked along. It was a beautiful, warm day in early Spring. The birds were singing and there wasn't a cloud in the sky. Groundhogs weren't easily spotted on the light-brown soil, however.

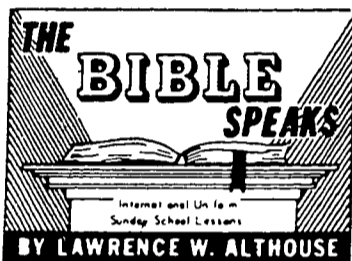
But I found one. He was poking around outside his home. Not moving much at all, he made an easy target.

I raised my gun and got that fat rascal centered in the sights. I watched him as he stood on his hind legs and looked curiously in my direction. I continued to size him up and that furry creature just stood there all the while. I knew he was paying attention to me, but he didn't seem at all worried. Maybe he was a friendly sort of a groundhog. He certainly didn't look like the type who would deliberately harm anything.

I kept him in my sights.

Finally, I swung my rifle off to the side, aimed for a distant rock, and pulled the trigger. Mr. Groundhog scrambled into his underground chambers and Mr. Chicken walked back to the house.

I guess if I ever wanted to display a "hunting trophy," it would have to be the jagged remains of a bullet-punctured tin can. With a set of paper antlers it would look really sharp.



BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE  
**PLAY IT!**  
Lesson for February 4, 1979

**Background Scripture:**  
John 3:16,17; 17:14-26;  
James 1:22-27;  
1 Peter 3:8-16.

**Devotional Reading:**  
Ephesians 2:1-10.

A friend called today and she was in tears. The reason: her boss, who recently "discovered Christ," she said, had stopped by her house to tell her that her religious life and beliefs were all wrong. He even went so far as to suggest that she was unwittingly being "used as a tool of Satan." Although she had not observed that "finding the Lord" had markedly affected the way he conducted his business, her boss did seem to take great satisfaction in his new

role as one of God's zealous defenders.

**Rendition, Not Defense**

I suspect that her boss' role is self-appointed rather than the result of a divine calling. My reason is simply that I do not believe God often calls us to be his defenders. To presume to defend God carries a certain air of blasphemous arrogance. The Bible does not indicate that God is in need of defense. Servants, yes. Witnesses, yes. Worshipers, yes. But seldom, if ever, defenders.

I recall those marvelous words of Harry Emerson Fosdick:

We defend religion too much. Vital religion, like good music, needs no defense but rendition. A wrangling controversy in support of religion is precisely as if the members of an orchestra should beat folks over the head with their violins to prove that music is beautiful. But such procedure is no way to prove that music is beautiful. Play it.

One can read pages of commentary on beautiful music, but there is no substitute for hearing it rendered. If music had to rely on argument, it would not

affect us very much. The only thing to do with music is to "Play it!"

**Doing, Not Hearing**

That's the way James looked at the gospel: "...be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22). People in his day, as now, were concerned to follow the "pure and undefiled" spiritual path. Well, if that's your concern, said James, you won't find it in words:

**Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their**

**affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. (1:27).**

Before taking leave of the disciples, Jesus prayed to God, asking, "Sanctify them in the truth" (John 17:17). But the "truth" of which Jesus prayed was not a truth to be argued, but demonstrated in their lives as it has been in his: "... that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (17:26).

If you have "the truth" the call of God is still what it has always been: **PLAY IT!**

## NOW IS THE TIME

By Max Smith, Lancaster County Agricultural Agent,  
Phone 394-6851



chasing and killing their sheep. We urge all dog owners to keep them on their own property. If they get on other farms or premises, then both the dog and the owner could be in big trouble.

**TO TRANSFER SILAGE**

At the recent Cattle Feeder's Day, Dr. John Baylor, agronomy specialist from Penn State, told the group that any silage to be moved from a temporary storage to an upright storage, should be done in cold weather. When moved in warm weather (over 40 degrees) there will be more danger of heating and molding. Make the transfer in cold weather and do it as rapidly as possible. No additives or preservatives should be needed in this process. Many producers

will transfer the silage in order to utilize their mechanical feeding equipment.

**TO USE BEDDING MATERIALS**

The price of straw, hay, and corn fodder is much less than a year ago. A quick look at straw prices this time last year shows an average price of \$140.00 per ton; at the moment straw is selling around \$70.00 per ton. Corn fodder last Spring was bringing around \$75.00 per ton, and at this time is worth about \$50.00 per ton.

This is quite a change in prices and makes bedding materials more in line with other farm prices. I don't know of many livestock or dairy producers that bought large amounts last spring. The livestock existed

without bedding. This Winter is different and we hope that more producers will use more bedding. "Well bedded is half fed" is an old saying among Scotchmen that like to see livestock comfortable.

**TO EVALUATE HOMESTEAD DRAINAGE**

The recent heavy rains provided a good chance to observe the water drainage problems around many barns and farmsteads. If the surface water got into farm buildings, or into homes, then something should be done about it in the next few months. Surface water should be turned away from buildings by way of terraces or diversion ditches.

Water should not be permitted to come down against any building from upgrade. This will weaken

the structure and wash soil away from the foundation. Water that seeps into a building from underground is a different problem and more difficult to control.

However, the surface water can be directed around and away from farm

buildings. Also, the area around wells should be protected from surface water. Water feedlots and barnyards should not be allowed to flow directly into public streams; pasture areas or holding areas will prevent pollution possibilities.

## Farm Calendar

**Today, Feb. 3**

Ephrata Area Young Farmers annual banquet at Mt. Ary Fire Hall, 6:45 p.m.

York County Baby Beef banquet, 7 p.m. at Shrewsbury Fire Hall.

Delaware Holstein Association annual meeting.

Maryland State Beekeepers Association annual meeting, Adult Education Center, College Park

**Monday, Feb. 5**

Milk Marketing Board hearing for Southeastern Pennsylvania milk marketing area 1, zones 1 and 2, Holiday Inn, Fourth and Arch Streets, Philadelphia, 10 a.m. Testimony on pricing to be received.

**Tuesday, Feb. 6**

Garden Spot Young Farmers meeting on dairy feeding, 7:30 p.m. at the high school.

Solanco Young Farmers meeting on dairy nutrition, at Solanco High School, 7:30 p.m.

Ephrata Area Young Farmers meeting on corn management program and crop cost analysis, 7:45 at Ephrata High School.

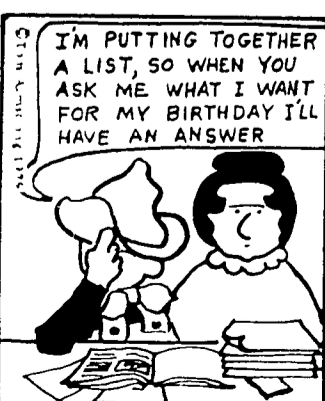
Vegetable and fruit conference, in conjunction with horticulture meetings, all at the Hershey Convention Center, today through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

**Wednesday, Feb. 7**  
Pennsylvania Young Farmers Convention begins at the Lycoming Hotel, Williamsport. Programs continue through Friday.

Monthly meeting of the Lancaster County Conservation District, board meeting, 7:30 p.m. at the Farm and Home Center.

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## RURAL ROUTE



By Tom Armstrong