

A pen of clean, well taken care of calves is a joy to see. Warm, friendly, soft, and cuddly, the little ones reach out for love. Their entry into the world isn't always without problems, however.

Lancaster Farming photo by Dieter Krieger

Life on the farm

A loud, high-pitched sound shot through the dark of the night, and into ears which had been in bed for only a couple of hours. Feet hit the floor, and hands fumbled in the darkness for clothes. Then the hall light came on and we made our way down the stairs, which always creaked a little from the weight.

The whistling was a familiar call for "help" — it was our father's way of getting a quick response for whatever problem arose. Tonight it was a first-calf heifer coming fresh. She was a young animal and could not get her calf without assistance. Dad had been with her for nearly 45 minutes. Now the time had come for pulling the calf

out. The bale strings were already attached to the feet. My brother, Ingo, and I stood around the corner, being careful not to scare the frightened animal.

Assisting a heifer when she has her calf is routine on most farms. It's something that has to be done, regardless of the hour. Failing to do so may result in a dead calf, and unnecessary suffering for the heifer or cow. Some animals have been ruined for life because of this type of negligence.

Sometimes it takes all the strength of two, three, and even four men, to remove the calf from its mother's

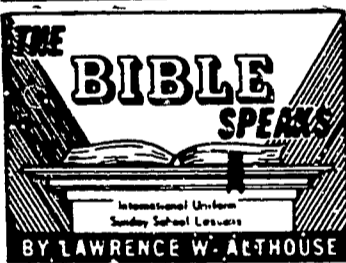
womb. It's a tough job, not only physically, but also emotionally, because you know that every second counts. It has to be a steady, and even pull, especially when the animal is cooperating and doing her part — which they often can't because of exhaustion. There is no opportunity for a quick rest once the calf has partially emerged into the world.

We were all exhausted when it was over. The new-born heifer calf and her mother continued to get our attention. "Laura" was offered a bucket of water and her calf was cleaned and rubbed. Mucous was removed from around her nostrils,

especially, so that her breathing is as unobstructed as possible.

"Laura" got up before too long. Sometimes a young heifer is paralyzed for a day or two — or even a week — after giving birth. The calf, too, appeared in good shape and she stumbled along on strong, but still uncoordinated legs. In another half hour she'd be walking well.

It was a quarter to three when we returned to the house. The night air was cool and crisp, and complete silence enveloped the farm. It shouldn't be tough to get back to sleep, although all of us were now wide awake because of the excitement and fresh air around us.



THE BEST OF TIMES

Lesson for August 12, 1979

Background Scripture:

2 Chronicles 26;
Isaiah 1:6

Devotional Reading:
Psalms 26

"It was the worst of times; it was the best of times." So Charles Dickens began his great novel, *A Tale Of Two Cities*. If you read the book or saw one of its motion picture versions, you know that whether it was the "worst" or "best of times" depended entirely upon one's point of view. One person's "golden age" is likely to be someone else's "dark age." Even today we might just as easily agree with Dickens: "It is the worst of times; it is the best of times."

And so it was for young Isaiah, who one day, in what

seemed the darkest of times, had a life-changing experience while worshipping in the temple at Jerusalem. It was in "the year that King Uzziah died," a time of great gloom and anxiety. Uzziah had reigned in Jerusalem for 52 years, having taken the throne at the age of 16 when Amaziah, his father, died. It was a reign that had begun with high hopes for as the writer tells us, "he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord...He set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God; and as long as he sought the

Lord, God made him prosper" (2 Chronicles 26: 4,5)

When Uzziah Died

So Uzziah had become a strong and popular king, but with his success, "he grew proud, to his destruction" (26:16). At last the king's growing arrogance caught up with him and he became afflicted with leprosy, a blight that remained upon him for the rest of his life. So, when he died, the nation was in turmoil and many were certain that it was "the worst of times."

High And Lifted Up

Yet, it was in the midst of

such fear and apprehension that Isaiah found himself caught up in an experience of God's presence so mighty and divine that mere words could never define or convey it. "I saw the Lord, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up" (Isaiah 6:1), cried Isaiah, and in that hour of national tragedy, Isaiah caught a vision of God in all of his power and majesty. And the sadness and anxiety of those times were obliterated with the awesome light that filled his soul.

Isaiah could never be the same man again, for here, in

these "worst of times," he heard God calling for someone to be his prophet, to speak to the nation of Judah as God's spokesman and the glory of that experience caused his heart to overflow with a desire to give his life to God. To God's "Who shall I send and who will go for us?" Isaiah found himself crying, "Here I am! Send me." (6:8).

So it is that, often in what seem to be the "worst of times," God reveals to those who will listen that, by his power, these same dark days may be, in fact, "the best of times."



NOW IS THE TIME

By Max Smith Lancaster County Agricultural Agent
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TO PREVENT HEAT LOSSES

Livestock suffer from high temperatures and high humidity the same as human beings. We urge producers to make special effort to keep the animals cool and comfortable. One important thing is to keep air moving over the animals; this can be done with exhaust fans pulling air through the barn

or stalls, or by using fans to force air into the area. In many cases ducts are needed to help distribute this air.

Hogs need a misting or fogging device to add water to the air because they do not have sweat glands. Livestock should be kept as quiet as possible during extremely hot weather. If they have to be moved, it should be done quietly and preferably at night or early morning. Livestock comfort is important in order to prevent serious losses.

TO CONTROL WASPS AND HORNETS

Several inquiries at our Extension Office relate to the control of wasp, hornet, or yellow jacket nests. These insects can be declared as beneficial to the general ecology unless they are near to doors, walks, and other inhabited areas. All of them can inflict serious stings when disturbed.

Control may be realized by the use of hornet and wasp aerosol sprays available at most home and garden centers; Sevin is also used to kill the insects, especially when the nest is in the

ground. We suggest that sprays be applied at night when all of the insects are in the nest, and in addition, less danger of getting stung.

TO REVIEW INSURANCE COVERAGE

When was the last time your insurance coverage was adjusted? If it hasn't been done in recent years, you may not be properly covered. Due to the increase in replacement costs, it is important to review insurance coverage to be sure the amounts will replace the building or equipment.

The original cost of the item is no longer important

because it will usually be far short of the replacement cost. A good insurance agent should be willing to sit down with the property owner and discuss changes to give maximum coverage. Don't put it off until you have to make a claim — that is too late.

TO BEWARE OF BIG BALES

I am not one to promote the use of large bales of the hay-making business; however, I do realize that we have some balers in this part of the country making the big bales. Farm accident reports indicate that big

bales are adding to the accident numbers. Our Extension Engineer at Penn State working in farm safety, Dennis Murphy, has a few suggestions.

If a front-end loader is used, keep the load low and move at a very slow speed; in this case it is advised to add ballast to the rear of the tractor. Discharge bales on level ground, or have some means of preventing them from rolling down the hill and hurting someone; this has actually happened.

Keep bystanders and youngsters away from the big bale handling operation.