

BY CURT HARLER, EDITOR



# Lancaster Farming says...

## Resolve to pass a security fund

It's the time of year to make resolutions. And farmers across the state are resolving to keep better records, be more liberal with the fertilizer, cull flocks harder, spend more time with the family.

For the New Year there'll be resolutions to get a better price for our products, to sell only when the market is up, buy when it is down.

But the big resolution to be made and kept is to get a workable milk security fund into law.

Between 40 and 50 percent of the farmers in Pennsylvania are dairymen. They represent the biggest single bloc of buyers in the farm community.

If for nothing else, the 1970s can be remembered as the year dairymen across the state got stuck with the bill for outlandish amounts of money on several dairy failures and co-op assessments.

The total loss to state dairy farmers was in the tens of millions of dollars.

Any farmer not personally touched by the tragedy certainly has neighbors or friends who opened a registered letter informing them they'd be short \$10,000 or more in their milk check.

It seems odd that some segments

of the dairy industry seemed unconvinced there was a need for a security fund.

Most of the doubt came from here in the southeastern corner of the state where farmers were relatively untouched by the problems which plagued dairymen in northeastern Pennsylvania several times this decade, which disrupted Pittsburgh area milk, which saw farmers scrambling for a market.

But today the biggest drawback to getting a program passed is the number of proposals being advanced.

It's hard to tell all of the players without a scorecard. And some are changing sides.

Look at the Grange's dairy resolution, for example. Approved at its convention just this past October, it asks for a split payment of a penny per hundredweight by farmers, a penny per hundred by dealers or processing co-ops.

State Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hollowell told Grangers at their meeting that such a plan was the only one which stood a chance of being adopted given the political realities.

Then, last week, Hollowell shifted around and proposed a plan where

dealers foot the whole bill, but at a rate of one penny per cwt, rather than two cents.

Co-ops are exempt from the provisions. And farmers are covered only for 90 percent of potential loss, rather than 100 percent as in all other plans.

Hollowell's about-face in less than two months time leaves current Grange policy dead in light of new developments. Grangers probably will come up with new policy at their Dairy Committee meeting next week.

Pennsylvania Farmers' Association and the many dairy cooperatives serving state farmers generally agree the fund should be built by a two cent contribution funded entirely by dealers.

That doesn't sit well with dealers who say it is unfair that processing co-ops not be forced to pay some of the freight. Dealers don't like the idea of paying any of the bill, anyway.

Two things can be said of the Secretary of Agriculture's plan. First, its provisions were a surprise to most members of the dairy community. And that's bad.

Some consensus could have been attained before it was announced. His ideas could have been outlined for all parties involved to save em-

barrassment such as the Grange is facing.

The second thing to be said is the proposal will force some action on the security fund issue. And that's good.

Our objections to the proposal aren't so much what it says as the abruptness of its introduction, the rabbit-in-a-hat way it was sprung on the dairy community.

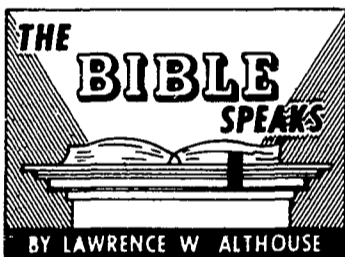
Admittedly, the Secretary did listen to dairy representatives. But he dodged all of their questions about his plans, playing his hand close to the vest. Then, last week, he suddenly turned his cards face up on the table.

Dealers pay all. Farmers assume some burden to assure they make reasonable marketing decisions. The low payment rate means living with current bonding laws for several more years, but farmers may have to swallow that so potential participants aren't scared off.

Protection farmers need will be provided. In short, Hollowell's is a workable plan.

It would be well for all factions to get together now and resolve to pass a security fund measure early in the New Year.

It'll make the 1980s happier for all.



### JOHN THE BAPTIST

Lesson for December 30, 1979

Background Scripture:  
John 1:6-8; 19-34

Devotional Reading:

"There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came for

testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him" (John 1:6,7).

It was quite a commission: "sent from God... to bear witness to the light!" Jesus himself was later to say to John: "I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John" (Luke 7:28). Of all the personalities in the story of Jesus, John is one of the few who is mentioned prominently in all four gospels. And rightly so, for John and his ministry were big news among the people of Israel in Jesus' day. People either admired him or despised him, but

everyone was aware of him and his message.

#### I Am The Wilderness Voice

Looking back at the story of Jesus in the four gospels we think of John as one of many personalities who encountered the Christ. Yet, when Jesus first came upon the scene, the stage belonged to John. Jesus was an unknown figure in the audience and John's was the name that echoed throughout the land. So renowned was he that some thought he was the reincarnation of Elijah the prophet, whom some believed would return to earth before the Messiah.

Others went even further, suggesting that he was none other than the Messiah himself. Large crowds of people went out into the wilderness of Judea to see and hear him and his name was on the lips of all authorities, civil and religious.

It is into this picture of popular acclaim and official notoriety that Jesus, an unknown Galilean carpenter, enters as part of a great multitude at the River Jordan seeking baptism.

The acclaim and notoriety might easily have gone to John's head and who could have blamed him for

basking in the public glow. Yet, despite the success of his movement, John never forgot his mission: "I am not the Christ...I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said" (John 1:20,23). Furthermore, John had no illusions about his vocational rank: "...among you stands one whom you do not know...the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to tie" (1:27). And, although he might have claimed center-stage a while longer, John does not hesitate to point to Jesus and proclaim: "Behold the Lamb of God,

who takes away the sin of the world!" (1:29).

#### I Must Decrease

This was not a mere moment of spiritual excitement, for what John proclaimed that day by the Jordan, he would repeat again in clear-cut terms no one could fail to understand. Pointing once more to Jesus, John says: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (3:30). John's confession and commitment are no less important for us than for him. Once we have encountered the Son of God in our lives, we too are called to defer: "He must increase but I must decrease."



## NOW IS THE TIME

By Max Smith, Lancaster County Agricultural Agent  
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#### TO EVALUATE GASOLIN

The use of gasoline in order to reduce fuel costs seems to be getting considerable dialogue. Our Penn State engineers continue to remind us that this type of fuel may have a place in today's energy crunch, but needs considerable attention before jumping into it's use or it's making.

In the first place, it is a very explosive fuel and needs special handling; also, it may be hard on motors and gaskets, when it is not 100% water-proof.

In addition I'm aware of

some farmer interest in making their own gasoline for personal use. I do not have the exact figures, but surely feel that the investment is too great for each individual to consider making his own gasoline.

It might be more economical for a group of farmers to go together and invest in this equipment. Do some investigating and your "home work" on gasoline before jumping into the movement.

#### TO BEWARE OF SOIL COMPACTION

When your topsoil becomes hard and cloddy, has poor water-holding capacity, produces crops with shallow roots, and crusts severely, it might be severely compacted.

A good soil will consist of

about 50 percent pore space, of which half of this is taken up with air and the other half with water.

In a compacted soil, we lose a lot of this pore space. With today's heavy machinery there is a greater chance of compacting the soil. This often happens when heavy machinery is operated over the soil when the ground is too wet. Also, working the soil into a very fine condition will favor compaction.

Farmers are urged to consider this possibility this winter and spring in preparing their land for the 1980 cropping season. Soils high in organic matter are less likely to become compacted.

#### TO PROTECT TREES FROM RABBITS

If we don't get any more snow in the next two months than we have had in the last two, this article will be of little value however, winter is still to come, and no doubt some snow cover.

During these times of snow on the ground, mice and rabbits may feed on the tender bark of young fruit trees and ornamental shrubs. This can be very serious during times of lasting snow.

or shrub with hardware cloth, or with aluminum foil, is suggested in order to keep them from being girdled. If these trees or shrubs happen to be in a block, or nursery, then a chicken wire fence around the area will keep out the rabbits.

The tree or shrub should be protected to a height of at least 24 to 30 inches. This is needed in case of deep snow or drifting.

#### TO PROVIDE POND SAFETY EQUIPMENT

If you have a farm pond and are permitting ice skating, then you had better have some rescue equipment at the pond site.

Due to the temperature of the water and air, rescues

need to be immediate. Wooden boards, a ladder, or rope with inflated inner tubes could save a life.

Don't keep this equipment in the barn or in the garage because it may take too much time to get it to the person in trouble.

Owners of farm ponds are urged to use caution in permitting skating unless the ice is thick enough, and unless emergency rescue equipment is handy.

## Farm Calendar

Tuesday, January 1  
HAPPY NEW YEAR

Wednesday, January 2

Hunterdon County Board of Agriculture regular monthly meeting, Extension Center, 8 p.m.

Woodlot Management

Workshop at the AG Center in Leesport.

Thursday, January 3

The 1980 Mid-Atlantic No-Tillage Conference at the Hunt Valley Inn. Topics include No-Till Dr...

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