

BY CURT HARLER, EDITOR



Lancaster Farming says...

Spudmen need help with price famine

Dramatic news photos broke this week in the New York Times and Philadelphia Inquirer of Maine potato growers dumping loads of potatoes to prevent trucks from crossing the U.S.—Canada border with more spuds.

The publicity given the Maine growers underscores the attention usually given them while Pennsylvania spudmen languish in the backlash of potato politics.

Keystone State growers are being robbed of markets by subsidized farmers both in Maine and in Canada.

The facts in this case are simple enough. There are just too many potatoes. The industry realized this a year ago and took action. Pennsylvania growers reduced acreage by 10 percent. Meantime, Maine cut output by less than 5 percent.

But the latest crop was excellent, and potato prices have taken a dive. Current price on No. 1's ranges from

\$4.70 to \$5.40 per cwt. That's a dollar, or a full 20 percent, below year ago prices.

Meantime, state growers face a \$4.80 cost of production to storage. Factor in a 15 percent storage loss, labor, packaging, and marketing expenses, and a conservative demand price should be about \$7.90 per cwt. This is the fourth year in a row Pennsylvania growers have faced a tight situation.

The only difference between Pennsylvania growers and Maine growers is that Pennsylvania's spudmen have no help.

Maine has Senator Edmond Muskie. When he sneezes, he gets action.

Maine growers have been working with disaster funding from FmHA in recent years, paying three percent interest. Pennsylvania farmers are borrowing at today's inflated rates.

Despite this U.S. government aid,

insiders are predicting massive FmHA loan failures in the Maine potato region as farmers find themselves unable to make payments.

At the beginning of the year, an estimated 60 percent of Maine potato growers with FmHA financing were in arrears. Those loans are due in two months. And those growers are sitting with storages full of spuds.

Farmers in New Brunswick, Canada, just across the Maine border, are given a 40 cents per cwt subsidy by their government on the first 10,000 cwt they produce. This coming year, the subsidy will be raised to 60 cents.

Canadians also benefit from a hidden subsidy due to current exchange rates. The Canadian dollar is 18 cents cheaper than the U.S. dollar.

A mild winter has kept Canada's ports ice-free and allowed Canadians to export much of their product both

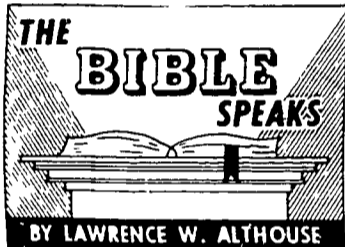
abroad and to traditional U.S. markets.

Although Pennsylvania growers are closer to big Eastern markets, they are losing sales to subsidized producers both in Maine and Canada. This is forcing non-subsidized producers out of the potato business.

"Those subsidies take away free enterprise," agrees Tom Lyon with the Pennsylvania Cooperative Potato Growers, Inc. "Every acre of potatoes we lose in Pennsylvania we'll never get back."

There seem to be two solutions. First, and best, is to get back to basic free enterprise. Then, Pennsylvania growers will have a better than fighting chance to get a piece of the potato market.

Second is to get FmHA money for Pennsylvania potato growers. It's hard to deny their business today is bordering on true disaster.



BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

MARY MAGDALENE

Lesson for April 6, 1980

Background Scripture:

John 20:1-8, 30-31.

Devotional Reading:

1 Corinthians 15:51-58.

If you drive today from the city of Tiberias along the

shore of the Sea of Galilee to the ruins of Capernaum (Khafer Nahum), roughly one-third of the way you will pass on your right side a site that is easily and frequently missed by the pilgrim to the Holy Land. At best, it is usually pointed out as your bus rumbles by in haste as Magdala, the hometown of Mary the Magdalene.

Several years ago, as I was driving a rental car throughout the Holy Land, I stopped at that site. I had it all to myself: few people, if any, visit it. As I strolled under the shade of its lofty trees, I wondered why in this

land of shrines and memorials there was none built here to the memory of Mary Magdalene. There may be such a shrine at other places in the Holy Land, but I cannot recall ever having seen or heard of one. This woman seems peculiarly overlooked by the Church.

Early To The Tomb

For, next to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene is the most important woman in the four Gospels. According to John, it was Mary who came first to the garden tomb on that Easter morning. It was she

who saw the stone had been rolled away and it was thus Mary who ran to tell Simon Peter. Furthermore, it was Mary Magdalene who saw the angels in the tomb and spoke to them.

But, most of all, according to John, it was Mary who first encountered the risen Lord. Supposing, at first, that he is the Gardener, Mary recognizes him when he says to her in that familiar way, "Mary." Her response is immediate: "Rabboni" (Teacher)! And it is this same Mary who hurriedly carries the good news to the disciples: "I have seen the Lord!"

Seven Demons

Matthew, Mark and Luke differ from John's account in that they have Mary going to the tomb in the company of other women, but Mark agrees with John in saying, "Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons" (Mark 16:10).

Of what importance to us is this prominence of Mary Magdalene? Perhaps, in this day when we are re-thinking and debating the professional role of women in the Church, it is significant that it was a

woman who first visited the tomb and encountered the Risen Lord. Despite her scriptural prominence, Mary would find considerable difficulty in being ordained in many Christian Churches today.

And, secondly, it is well for us to remember that the first person to experience the Risen Christ was one from whom Jesus had cast "seven demons" — a pointed reminder that the business of Christianity has been, is, and continues to be salvation and the redemption of sinners, and not the celebration of the righteous.



NOW IS THE TIME

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

TO DRAIN WET SPOTS

This is the time of the year when wet spots will be showing in crop land. Some farms have considerable trouble with these wet areas each spring, or in wet weather. Land is a valuable item these days and every acre should produce its maximum. These wet spots do not produce well and are a nuisance with modern machinery. Many wet areas do not produce a thing

because they cannot be tilled and planted.

We urge farmers with wet areas to have them tile drained; this should be done before the crop is planted and will improve the area for many years to come. This can be done in pasture areas as well as in crop land. Technical assistance is available through our Extension Service and through the local Conservation

Service. Don't put up with wet spots any longer.

TO CONSERVE FUEL

I've heard many farmers remark about the higher cost of their fuel last year; they are about to do something to improve the problem. This is not easy and I doubt if alcohol is going to be the answer this year. However, reducing the use of tractor power might be one way to reduce fuel costs.

I'm thinking of less tillage to the soil - or minimum tillage. In many cases, it might be no-till plantings. There is little doubt that many of our Lancaster

County farmers till their soil too much; some of our Penn State agronomists have been saying this for years. One or two less trips over the field will surely reduce fuel needs. This might be very much in order on many farms. The point I'm trying to make is to do the job with as few hours of tractor time as possible. You might be just as well pleased with the results.

TO GIVE PASTURES A CHANCE

I notice that some herds of cattle, or flocks of sheep, are already running over the pasture area. When this is

done so early the grass does not have much of a chance to get well started. In addition, the ground is very soft and the animals will cut the sods with their feet and damage many plant roots. It would be much better if the animals were confined to an exercise lot area until the ground dried, and until the grass had a chance to get started.

Also, most permanent pastures should have been fertilized, or manured, during the past month. By keeping the livestock off the area, the fertilizer will have a chance to work into the plant roots and increase growth. Don't allow your livestock to damage the pasture area before the season starts.

TO CONTROL MULTIFLORA ROSES

Have you noticed the spread of these wild roses in your part of the community? Every land owner should make an effort to keep them under control. These wild roses were promoted and distributed several years ago by several federal government programs; they

were supposed to protect wild game and serve as a natural fence. However, they got out of control and are spreading into many pasture and woodlot areas.

I hope that all land owners will not plant any more of these roses. Also, make a special effort to kill the existing bushes. Materials, such as Tordon 10-K pellets, or Roundup herbicide, will do a good job; the best time to make the application is in May or June when the bushes are growing fast and in blossom. We need the effort of everyone to keep these wild roses from taking over pasture and wooded areas. Additional information is available from any Extension Agent's office.

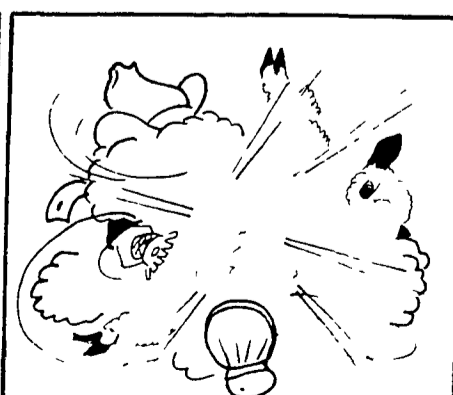
Farm Calendar

Saturday, April 5

Maryland Polled Hereford Sale, Frederick Fairgrounds, Md.
Pennsylvania Relief Sale continues at the Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg.

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RURAL ROUTE



By Tom Armstrong

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