

BY CURT HARLER, EDITOR



Lancaster Farming says...

We need a national bargaining law

Any farmer who grows apples or peaches for processing, mushrooms, radishes, snap beans, tomatoes, peppers, plums, beets and a host of other crops should sit right down and write a letter to his federal legislator asking him to support HR 3535.

Hog men, sheep breeders and other farmers, too, should be supportive of the measure. They may need it some day.

The bill is the National Agricultural Bargaining Act of 1979, a bill which would give farmers some muscle in the marketplace.

HR 3535 has a mob of co-sponsors, about 35 in all, including Pennsylvanians Austin Murphy, John Murtha, and Donald Ritter.

A bargaining bill would give farmers the leverage they need to get a fair price plus some margin of profit for what they produce.

When dozens of farmers are selling to a single outlet there is little choice

for bargaining of any kind. The farmer has to take what's offered or grow some other crop. Often, that's not a viable alternative.

On the other hand, most corn or soybean growers have a choice of mills where they can sell their grain. While their choice may be somewhat limited, there still is the opportunity to hang up the phone if the price isn't right and go elsewhere to sell.

HR 3535 would set up standards by which associations of farmers would be accredited for bargaining. The bill will incorporate elements of the Ag Fair Practices Act.

It would oblige processors to recognize accredited associations, meet with them, and negotiate in good faith over price and other fundamentals.

It's easy to appreciate the need for farmer bargaining power for vegetable and fruit markets. But, with the trend toward thinner

markets for lambs and hogs, the day may not be too far down the road when one or two outlets may control all of purchases of a commodity.

The only way to meet a giant, monolithic buyer is with a giant, monolithic seller: the ag bargaining association.

Most resistance to the law by packers and processors revolves around the Capper-Volstead Act of 1922. With that, opponents say, there is no further need for farm bargaining power.

But Capper-Volstead has one major deficiency. While it allows farmers to organize, and exempts them from certain anti-trust provisions, it does not force anybody to recognize farmer bargaining organizations or to negotiate with them.

The Ag Fair Practices Act of 1967, while prohibiting discrimination against farmers who join bargaining

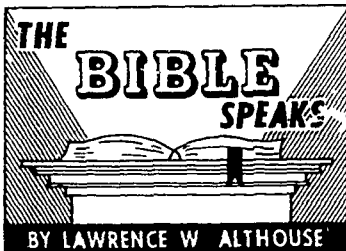
associations, does not compel processors to recognize them.

The National Farmers Union, Pennsylvania Farmers Association, the Grange, and the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives all support such legislation.

With that endorsement, and the legions of legislators behind it it would seem HR 3535 would be a shoe-in.

Not so. Similar bills failed to become law in 1967, 1972, and 1976. National Farmers Organization thinks it can bargain without such a law. Packers and processors are fighting the bill tooth and nail. After all, it's tough on a bully when the little kids grow up and get strong themselves.

It'll be better for producers of all crops to have the legal means to become price makers rather than price takers.



WALKING IN THE DARK

Lesson for April 27, 1980

Background Scripture:
1 John 1 and 2, 3:19
through 4:6
Devotional Reading:
Psalms 43

The other day when I was on the campus of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, I saw a man preaching in front of the student union building. A few students had already stopped to hear him and the group was beginning to swell with students on their way to the next class. I joined the crowd to hear what he was saying.

I had to admire the man's courage and conviction: it wasn't an easy task he had taken upon himself. But I couldn't admire what he was saying, for although he had never been on the campus before and knew nothing

about these students he attacked them viciously for the sins he imagined they committed. He assumed they were addicted to drugs, alcohol and illicit sex and he condemned them without knowing whether his assumptions were just.

The Darkness Of Hate

Some of the students scoffed and jeered at him, but most listened quietly, a few challenging his unfair assumptions. One young man was particularly upset with the preacher's allegations. At last he broke in and called to the preacher: "I've heard only

judgment and condemnation from you, not one word about the love of God. You're not talking about the God I worship in Jesus Christ!" Instead of replying, the preacher began to thumb through his Bible and, finding a proof-text he read it aloud, the purpose of it obviously to ignore the student's question. (One girl standing in front of me shook her head and said to no one in particular: "It's people like you who give Christianity a 'blackeye'," and she walked away.)

As I joined the crowd that began to drift away, I couldn't help but think of

those words from 1 John: "He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still" (2:9). To judge and condemn people you don't know is hardly an act of love. The preacher had intended to share the "light" of the Gospel, but what he presented to them was, not light, but darkness.

The Light Of Love

The writer of John draws a very sharp line: you cannot despise your brother and still walk in the light. As I drove home that same afternoon, I asked myself: "Am I walking in the light or am I walking in darkness?"

Am I free of hate for all brothers? In fact, can I regard all people as my brothers and sisters?"

And as I asked myself these questions, I thought about my belligerent feelings toward some USA-based Iranian students about whom I had read in our morning paper. Like most Americans, I was caught up in the growing hostility over the American hostages in Iran. All of it perfectly understandable and certainly justified - yet, according to John, I cannot continue to feel that way and walk in the light of Jesus Christ.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Max Smith, Lancaster County Agricultural Agent
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TO GIVE CORN PLANTERS A CHANCE

Too many corn growers are in a big hurry when it comes time to plant corn. Corn planting time is here and many acres will be planted in the next few weeks. All planters that are in good condition should do a good job; that is, if the farmer gives it a chance. Too much speed is often the cause of poor planting distances. The operating instructions should give the

suggested speed for all machines; we urge corn growers to respect these instructions.

Why not make a trial run on the lane, or some other place, to be sure the planter is dropping the corn kernels as desired. It pays to take time to make the proper adjustments, and to get the correct planting distances. Once the crop is in the ground and up, it is difficult to change the planting

distances—or too costly to plant the field over again.

TO INCORPORATE MANURE

By this time most barns and manure storage facilities are being emptied on our fields. This livestock or poultry waste is an important source of fertilizer, if properly stored and handled. We urge farmers to mix the manure with the topsoil soon after application. This can be disced into the soil, plowed down, or injected in the soil as it is spread on the fields. The important thing is to get the manure out of the barns and into the topsoil.

Some farmers may get

into such a hurry to plant corn they do not take the time to haul the manure out of storage; this is a mistake and does not go with good manure management. In addition, manure that is spread on the fields will be much less noticed in the community, if mixed with the topsoil immediately.

TO BE CAREFUL WITH WEED KILLERS

How often have you heard of a farmer, or gardener, that applied a weed killer to his crop instead of an insecticide or fungicide? This happens too many times during the year. We urge all folks to be sure they are

applying the correct material. Weed killers should be stored separately from other spray materials. I'm aware of a person that had a fertilizer and a weed killer stored together in the same colored bag. In his haste, he applied the weed killer instead of the fertilizer. Needless to say, it is hard on the desired plants. The same thing could happen with any type of pesticide that is stored close to feed or other supplies. Be sure of the identification of all materials. Keep materials in their original containers, or have them well identified. These mistakes are serious and may be fatal to a person, to animals, or to your crops.

reason to use lime, is to get the chemical weed killers to do their job. Most of the herbicides will not do a good job of controlling weeds if the soil is sour. Since many crops are produced now without hand or mechanical cultivation, the pH of the soil is more important when it comes to killing weeds with chemicals. Weed killers used on crops being grown on sour soils will not give good results. Attention to lime needs should be given before the crop is planted.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, April 26

NTPA Grand National 4WD and mini-tractor pull, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg; through Sunday.

Eastern Shore Spring Cattle Show; 4-H Park, Centerville, MD.

MPPA Feeder Pig and Feeder Lamb sale; 10:30 a.m. Swine and Lamb Judging School; Carroll

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RURAL ROUTE



By Tom Armstrong