

BY CURT HARLER, EDITOR



Lancaster Farming says...

Why supply-demand doesn't work

A year ago hogs were selling for 56 cents and pork chops in the supermarket were going for \$1.89. Today, hogs are selling for 32 cents and pork chops still are going for \$1.89. What's the story?

It works the same for butter or beef, walnuts or wheat. A year ago, bakers tried to use slightly higher farm wheat prices as an excuse to predict dollar-a-loaf bread.

The reason for the topsy-turvy pricing situation is the law of supply and demand is vetoed for agriculture, says David A. Witts. Witts is a rancher and attorney who has written a book called *The Power of Parity*. He argues that 100 percent parity is vital to assure the nation is fed and clothed properly.

He points out that if supply exceeds demand, prices should drop. So if the producer gets less, then the consumer should pay less.

But any consumer will tell you

that's not the way it is. Often the farmer is blamed.

Everyone in the food pipeline, except the farmer, tacks on costs and profit, not earned by productivity but resulting from inflation, taxes, wages, union dues, government regulations, and environmental blue laws, he says.

While it's not true that the processors add nothing, it's hard to accept the fact that the wrapper on a loaf of bread costs more than the wheat.

Witts points out General Motors has one middleman between producer and consumer, utilities have none. The food chain is loaded with middlemen.

As if the scales weren't tipped enough by a chain of middlemen wearing cost-plus uniforms, and by regulations which add to the cost but not the calories, the farmer is stopped short of his profit goal by the

giant government goal tender.

Rather than help farmers, the government goalie adheres to a political game plan: either dump surpluses on the market to force prices down; or, open the flood gates to foreign imports.

This Alice-in-Wonderland market does not set the value of a commodity by its supply and demand, but by consumer interest groups and their congressmen.

While industrial productivity has increased at an average of one percent per year, wages have increased at an average eight percent per year.

Agricultural productivity has gone up four times faster than industrial output, but farm income actually has declined.

It remains beyond the understanding of most agricultural observers why the farm factory is not properly recognized for what it

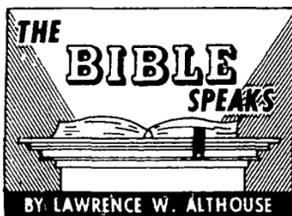
contributes to the economy.

The most telling point in the supply-demand argument is the ratio 365 to 1. When the farmer's product is ready to market, there is a year's worth of supply but only a single day's demand.

Farmers, recognizing this, have dotted the countryside with grain storage bins. But it's impossible to store a bulk tank of Class I milk or keep a fat steer around for too long and still be able to market it.

Perhaps, as Witts says, the rules have been changed. Supply and demand, long the darling of free-market economists, is being smothered by intervention on all sides.

The answer, then, would seem to be a united farmer front, a continuing struggle for 100 percent parity on the value of their product, and the government's blessing to sell at true market worth.



FOR EVER AND EVER!

Lesson for May 18, 1980

Background Scripture:
Revelation 4 through 5;
7:9-14.

Devotional Reading:
Psalms 24

I cannot read or hear read these words without hearing simultaneously in my mind the stirring music of Handel's "Messiah":

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, To receive power and wealth and wisdom, And might and honor and glory and blessing!" (5:12).

"Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God, For ever and ever! Amen." (7:12).

Even reading them to myself, the enthusiasm and ecstasy are infectious. The writer of Revelation has caught perfectly the dynamics of true worship.

I Was In The Spirit

If our own experience of worship - either private or corporate - is not much like what the writer of Revelation describes, maybe it is because there is an important dimension missing. Actually, this book focuses attention on two different dimensions. The first of these is the dimension of the present. In the early chapters, the letters to the seven churches, we were brought face to face with the present as it existed when this book was written. The "present" was what the writer of the epistles saw in each of the churches: im-

morality, pagan practices, idolatry, false teachings, wrong leadership, the loss of love and lukewarm indifference. Each of these assessments of the present was sobering.

I think that dimension - of present woes - is very much with us in the sanctuary of our church or our private worship. We are aware of it all: political corruption, wars and rumors of wars, injustice, torture, starvation, corruption, tyranny, illness, crime decay and hatred. We can hardly avoid carrying the screaming headlines of our Sunday morning newspaper along

into the church sanctuary. Who Are These?

But there is another dimension that must be viewed side-by-side with the daily headlines, and that is the dimension of "for ever and ever". Yes, the Soviet Union intrigues against the future of humanity. But also: "Blessing, and honor and glory and might" be to the Lamb "for ever and ever." Yes, the candidates are lying again. But "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing! Yes, my next door neighbor died last night

of cancer, but in the perspective of "for ever and ever", I will worship God before his throne.

In John's vision there was a group of people in white robes. One of the elders demanded, "Who are these...and whence have they come?" And the answer: "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:14). They are those who have viewed the present from the perspective of "for ever and ever" and never cease to worship the Lamb of God.



NOW IS THE TIME

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

To Note Stage of Maturity
This is the time of the year when various forage crops are cut for silage or for hay. In many cases the real feed value depends upon the maturity of the crop when cut. If small grains such as winter wheat or barley are to be made into silage, it is suggested they be harvested in the blossom stage; this will usually be several days after heading out.

At this time of the year both alfalfa and red clover

should be cut in the bud to early blossom stage. All of the grasses are at their peak of feeding value when harvested in the heading stage; do not permit the grasses to head out and get into the blossom stage. If growers will make an effort to cut these forage crops at the suggested stage of maturity, maximum feeding nutrients will be present. We realize that in many cases the weather conditions will be a factor in determining

harvest time.

To Consider Livestock Comfort

The hot weather season is approaching. When we get both high temperatures and high humidity, livestock suffer similar to human beings. In the case of fattening animals that are nearing market finish, this stress can be very severe. I suggest that maximum ventilation of the building be used. All windows and doors should be open to get cross-ventilation.

In some cases fans may be used to move the air over the animals. Some hog finishing barns are equipped with water sprinklers, or fogging

devices, that keep the floor and the hogs wet during peak hours of heat and humidity. Animals that are outside should have free access to both shade and water. Some attention to the comfort of the animals will reduce stress and possibly some losses.

To Spray Tobacco Beds

The effort should be to prevent blue mold in our tobacco beds, rather than to try and cure the infection after it is present. Last year many growers had severe losses because the infection was carried from the beds into the field. We are told that blue mold is already present in several of our

southern states. This means that we could have another serious infection.

We recommend the beds be sprayed weekly with Ferbam (black wettable powder) for the first 3 to 4 weeks; then best control will be experienced by changing to Maneb instead of the Ferbam. If the plants in the beds can be kept free of the infection, then we should have little trouble in the fields. Additional information is available from our County Extension Office, Lancaster, (394-6851). Keep in mind that old saying, "Prevention is much easier than the cure".

To Control Fly Population

With the amount of recent rainfall, no doubt the fly population is increasing on many farms. The best place to start on a fly reduction program is to enforce good sanitation. Clean up the premises and keep them clean at all times. When this is the case, there will be less breeding places for the flies.

Fly sprays and baits can be used to supplement good sanitation, if needed. There are many fly insecticides available that will kill flies, but materials to use vary

according to the place to be treated. Care should be used to prevent residues that will contaminate feed and water. Barns and pens should be cleaned frequently to prevent fly maggot development. Materials such as Malathion or Rabon can be sprayed over manure to prevent fly reproduction. Clean premises and good sanitation practices are the places to start with a fly control program.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, May 17

- Sheep field day and lamb sale; 10 a.m.; York Co. 4-H Center.
- Berks Goatherders meet at Triple Creek Farm; 10:30 a.m.
- State Chicken Cook-off at Northern Lebanon High School.
- MD State Grange Style Review; noon; Bethel Presbyterian Church, Madonna, MD.
- Old Fashioned Town Meeting; 9:30 a.m.; ELCO Middle School.

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RURAL ROUTE

