

# Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor:

The June 14 Sheila's Shorts gave very good advice to the fellow who wanted to start farming.

I think you should have mentioned that although things start looking good, when you think everything is going all right, that is the time things start going wrong; like cows get sick, and die for no reason and your equipment you think is in good shape, breaks down and many other little things.

Also in this week's issue (June 21st) you should come to see those pretty white tags in our heifers ears, and all the flies we have on them. We also mix Rabon in the feed and the flies seem as bad as last year.

Ed Brown  
R3 Littlestown

Dear Editor:

I was disappointed to see the article, "Will diet change prevent heart attack?", in your paper that is dated June 14. It implies or states as facts those things which are unproven and are very likely false. With a farmer publication which should be supportive of the Animal Agriculture - dairy, meat and poultry - I would hope you would do a front page story on the recent report disputing the American Heart Association stand.

I do enjoy your paper and many of our staff find much useful information in it.

Grant W. Sherritt  
Associate Professor  
of Animal Science  
Penn State

Dear Editor:

Congratulations on your editorial "Independent Dairymen Need a voice." Well done.

Nothing has demonstrated this need more than the recent fight on the Milk Security Fund, which you mentioned.

The proposal for the fund originated in New York, as you know, where the cooperatives bragged about their success. They are not so sure today since it apparently is not working as well as expected.

After the Loudon Hill ("I can sell for less and still make money") bankruptcy efforts were made to put in a fund in Pennsylvania. I believe the State Grange first came out with a recommendation that it be a farmer-financed fund - paid for and controlled by them. It didn't sell. Then, the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association came out with the split payment - dealers and farmers each paying half. This was on its way until the co-ops got organized.

They virtually took control of the "policy sessions" for both organizations and both groups came up with the "dealer pay all" concept.

Oh, yes, the co-ops did not have to pay unless they wanted to. There are few betting they will.

It was interesting to note at the recent meeting of the Agriculture Committee of the House of Representatives the "organizations" named by visitors to the meeting. Many said "Cooperatives for the Security Fund". "Let us not permit ourselves to be charged."

We talked to many farmers who told us they would be happy to participate with the payment to assure adequate money and protection. Many legislators have heard the same but the pressure from the organized cooperatives does not permit any action.

There once was talk about a statewide referendum on the subject with cooperatives not having bloc voting privileges. Apparently this has been squelched, too, lest the individual and/or independent farmer might have a voice.

No one likes dealer bankruptcies but, in reality, losses to farmers from such failures are far less than losses due to co-op dues, co-op assessments, co-op rebinding and the like. It

would appear that a call by you to the Milk Marketing Board for the figures might make an interesting story - as a follow-up to your editorial.

I am labeled at "Anti-Coop Geisinger", but this is not true. Cooperatives - when properly run - have a purpose. Unfortunately, some gears must have slipped since so many are in trouble. Eastern tries to say its latest \$500 assessment is due to dealer bankruptcies which is not totally true. At times part of the blame is due to continued deliveries of milk to dealers who have not been paying.

The Grandview (New York) failure is listed with the comment that Eastern would not have lost that much if Pennsylvania had a Security Fund. This is untrue. It was an out-of-state company which did not buy milk itself in the state and thus was "unknown" to the Milk Marketing Board. It bought through Eastern.

And there have been allegations that the Grandview milk was shifted from New York producers to Pennsylvania when Grandview could not or would not pay into the Empire State's Security Fund. We don't know whether this is true, but we have read it in the public press again and again.

We read with interest your paragraph stating that "the only serious challenge to co-op ideas" came from our organization. I do not agree that I was working totally for "the dealers' interests and not the producers' interests".

Unless farmers are happy and satisfied (They should be with today's prices) the industry cannot continue on an even keel. My one big concern for farmers was those belonging to cooperatives who might not have protection (note

assessments and the like). Also, with dealers only putting up the money there does not appear to be protection for a goodly number of Pennsylvania farmers shipping milk out of state.

True, some "foreign" dealers do pick up their own milk in the state and do file bonds and pay license fees. These farmers would be protected. Others do not. Milk is picked up by independent truckers and title does not change until the farmer-paid tanker drops off the milk at the platform of the buying handler - all this despite some provisions in Senate Bill 1287 relative to "Title Change".

With 1.5 billion pounds of milk reportedly being sold out of state there could be many farmers unprotected. At current blend rates this could be all or part of some \$15 to \$20 million worth of milk a month. We thought all farmers should have the privilege of protection.

Henry R. Geisinger  
Executive Vice president  
Pa. Assoc. of Milk Dealers

Dear Editor

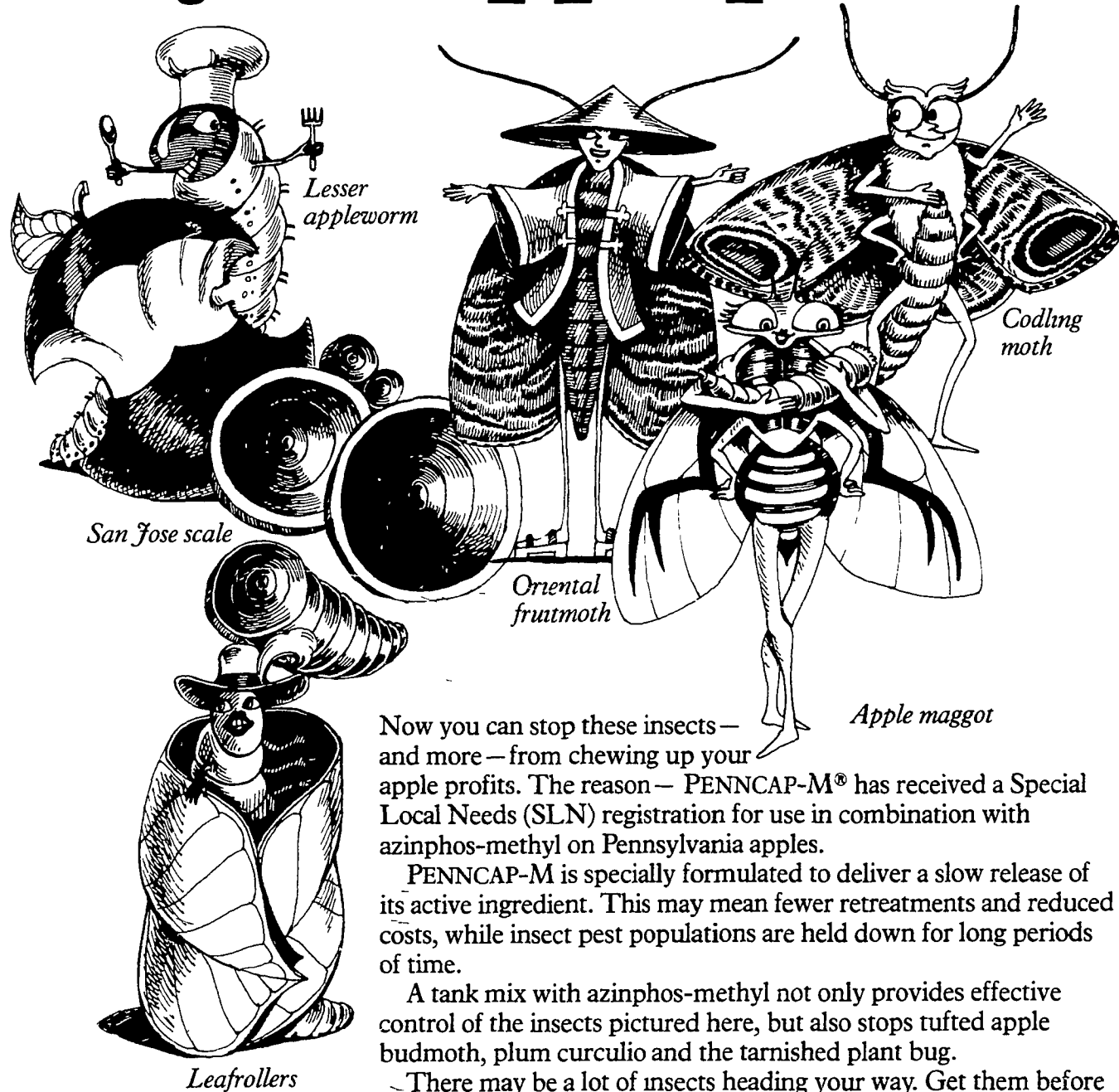
The "Journal of Soil and Water Conservation" contained an editorial which presented 10 land ethic prescriptions which follow. They are of particular interest to this region since so much of our farmland is being lost or threatened.

1. You ought to consider land as a resource that may be yours for a time but is also held in trust for the future. Land is not a commodity that any of us can own in the ordinary sense of the word.

2. You may be a trustee of the land and that will often confer private benefits on you, but you ought not to seek benefits that incur disbenefits on the community or other individuals.

(Turn to Page A14)

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