

BY CURT HARLER, EDITOR



Lancaster Farming says...

The three percent solution

The solution to feeding 220 million Americans and almost as many people overseas rests on three percent of the U.S. population.

Three percent: that's 6.6 million farmers feeding the rest of us.

It was only a few years ago the figure was six percent. And it was well into double digits before the second world war.

Secretaries of agriculture, co-op leaders, and farm writers seem to take some sort of perverse pride in informing farmers that they are in danger of becoming extinct.

It is looked upon as a point of pride that farmers are being forced from the land at an ever increasing rate. It is supposed to be an honor that a small group can work its tail off to feed the rest of the country; and it's an advancement in society that fewer acres of farmland await the plow each spring.

Often batted about is the figure that Americans pay only 16 percent of their salaries for food. It's an old and out-of-date figure, but a good example of another one of those statistics that was supposed to make the three percent feel good about working hard.

Today the cost of feeding a family is higher. Even at that time, the figures included only the relatively well-to-do. The poor then and now pay upwards of 50 percent of their income for food.

Still, Americans as a whole eat better and cheaper than people anywhere else.

If you're an 'average' farmer 52 years of age, the hungry world population has doubled in your lifetime.

It means more people to feed — especially more poor people for

whom food is a major part of the weekly budget.

The world's supply of good farm land is going fast. A quick review of man's history shows he does little more than search for food and places to produce it.

Mankind has identified and now uses most of the productive land in the world. Look at the United States: land brought into row crop production in the past decade lacks the quality of traditional farm land, has not yielded as well, is more prone to soil erosion. Most will be returned to grasslands.

So it is on a worldwide scale. What saved American agriculture is the vast amount of research in breeding, mechanization, transportation, preservation of produce, and labor saving devices that have made it possible for the nation to exist with

only three percent of its labor force working in the fields.

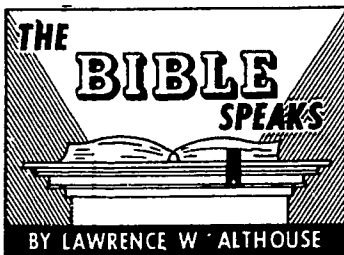
An array of packaging, processing, and retailing people must be added to the base of three percent who feed the nation. All are supporting the three percent core which does the bulk of the work but gets only a fraction of the pay.

There will come the time when three percent solution to feeding the country is not enough.

Three percent is a weak solution indeed.

Three percent is a thin margin against hunger and economic disaster. Investment today is needed to protect the lot of that three percent who feed us.

There can be little pride that a nation places such a burden on so few people and gives so little in return.



A "MERE PRESIDENT"

October 26, 1980

Background Scripture: Nehemiah 8 through 9.
Devotional Reading: Matthew 21:33-43.

It will not be long after you

read this column that this nation will go to the polls to elect a President and a congress, as well as state and local officials. In all likelihood, emotions will be running high and the intensity and desperation with which the candidates will be conducting their campaigns is likely to deceive some people into assuming that it is the Messiah, not a mere president that we will be electing.

A "MERE PRESIDENT"

I am not demeaning the office of our President one bit in speaking of a "mere President". What I am doing is trying to set this election in perspective, for whether

we elect President Carter, Governor Reagan or Congressman Anderson, what we will be setting in motion is another political administration, not the Kingdom of God!

It is an important election, but the fulfillment of our hopes is not riding on it. It will not solve our basic problems. In all due respect to these three men, not one of them can turn this country around. If there is to be a national salvation, it will have to come, not through the political process, but through the consciences of millions of Americans. Only then can the political process take us anywhere.

We have let the election process become twisted and distorted so that all of our energy and interest are invested in electing "the right persons." When the election is over - even before the inauguration - we assume we have done our bit and quickly return to our own interests (something we never got very far from even during the election). Saving the country has now become the job of the "Right Man" whom we have elected. But it doesn't take very long until "Mr. Right" becomes "Mr. Wrong" and we respond by beginning to look ahead to 1984 and the next circus.

TELL US, NEHEMIAH!

This is what happened in Israel. They had put their hopes in kings, alliances, armies, diplomacy and priests. They ignored the warnings of the prophets to "Repent!" If they had the right king they didn't need to repent. But they never had "the right king."

So the people had a terrible price: war, defeat, captivity, the destruction of all they had held precious. Later, when a remnant returned to the Holy City, they were disheartened with what they found. Sensing a need to return to something their fathers had forsaken,

they asked Nehemiah to read to them the forgotten commandments of God. He did and for the first time in generations, the people of Israel heard what God was saying and realized how far they had strayed, how grievously they had sinned.

Yet, through all this hardship they saw that God alone had remained faithful to them and kept his covenant. And if they were to rise up once again as God's people, this would be the first requirement: to return to the Lord and renew the forgotten covenant.

Unless that comes first, nothing else really matters.



TO DO FORAGE TESTING

The winter feeding period is usually the most expensive time of the year for dairy and cattle feeders. With feed grain prices on the increase, every producer should make an effort to get maximum nutrients from the roughages and not from the grains. This means the

operator should know exactly how good, or how poor, their forages are in the way of feed nutrients. Many producers can save money by having their forages tested through the Penn State Testing Services. With high quality forages, less grains and proteins need to be purchased. We suggest that more producers get their silage and hay tested and request a feeding recommendation.

TO CULL DAIRY COWS

With milk supplies mounting and the market

agencies being stressed to handle the quantity this fall, it might to a good time to cull out a few of the older, or the lower producers. Beef prices are rather favorable for dairy beef at this time. In many cases a few less of the lower producers, and more attention and feed to the higher producers in a herd, will result in the same total income. Also, milk surpluses can easily lead to lower prices per pound for all producers. As we face the winter months, I'd suggest that dairymen give this culling idea some consideration. To get "bigger" does not always mean getting "better".

TO UTILIZE FARM RECORDS

The 1980 cropping season is about over; soon it will be time to summarize your farm accounts and be reporting to the Internal Revenue Service. In addition to the need of good farm records for tax reporting purposes, I'd like to suggest these farm records be used for future farm planning, and in making major farm decision. When time permits, as the outside work gets completed this fall, it is good management to spend some time in your office and do some "pencil pushing" regarding the most profitable parts to your

farming business. Your records of success or failure of the various enterprises are the best guide to future expansion, or termination.

TO PROVIDE SALT AND MINERALS

All types of livestock need certain amounts of salt and minerals for efficient utilization and digestion of feed nutrients. The amounts of each will vary between the animals. Therefore, it might be the best practice to put a minimum amount in the grain ration, but also, have

free-choice salt and minerals available. These free-choice feeders should be protected from the weather and give every animal a chance to consume what they want. In the way of salt it is suggested producers use loose salt rather than block salt; with some animals and block salt, the tongue will get sore before the animal gets sufficient salt. Animals with ample salt and minerals will usually drink larger amounts of water and therefore, be more efficient milk or meat producers.

NOW IS THE TIME

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

CHRIS CLOVER

CHRIS, EVERYONE TOLD ME THAT 4-H WOULD TEACH ME MANY SECRETS OF SUCCESS FOR BECOMING AN ADULT. WHAT'S THE FIRST?

THAT NONE OF THE SECRETS OF SUCCESS WORK UNLESS YOU DO!



Farm Calendar

Today, October 25
New Farmer's Short Course, University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton Center, Kennett Square.

Sunday, October 26
American Dairy Goat Association Annual Convention; Sheraton Inn; Frederick, Md.; Continues through November 2.

Monday, October 27
PA State Grange annual meeting; Holliday Inn; Lewistown; Continues through October 31.
Conrad Weiser Adult Young

Farmers' animal health meeting; 7:30 p.m.; high school ag. department.

Maryland Cooperative Milk Producers District 8 meeting; Kauffman Community Center; Kauffman Station; 7 p.m.

Tuesday, October 28
First Chester County 4-H Market Lamb Show; 3 p.m.; Farm of Bill and Joan MacCauley, Atglen; Sale, 7 p.m. at Vintage Sales Stable

Bradford County Barn
(Turn to Page A39)