

BY CURT HARLER, EDITOR



Lancaster Farming says...

There's no joy in others' woe

There's an undertone of glee, or at least of smug satisfaction, running through much of the farm community now that dairymen have lost their April price boost

The atmosphere is similar to that of a bunch of children watching a spoiled rich kid fall off his shiny new bike into a mud puddle. The pompous have been brought back to earth

Killing the semi-annual production cost increase was seen by politicians as urgent and important in the fight to control inflation

President Reagan, in one of his first official actions upon recovering from surgery after the heinous attempt on his life Monday, signed into law the bill eliminating the April price boost. The 7:15 a.m. Tuesday timing of the action should show how

strongly the Administration feels about the milk program

Within dairy organizations, there seems to be some confusion over whether cutting semi-annual adjustments is a good thing. Both Interstate and Maryland Cooperative Milk Producers are on record favoring the move, noting the current surplus is creating an artificial price floor, building a surplus, and placing a burden on taxpayers

On the other hand, as major and influential a group as the giant Associated Milk Producers urged its members to push for "a sound price support program, including semi-annual recognition of increases in production costs"

Lancaster Farming agrees with the cut. Dairymen have gotten too close to the edge and need to pull back, to get supply and price back in balance

Taxpayers, including dairymen and other farmers, will save about \$2 billion dollars by September 30 of this year in CCC outlays as a result of the measure signed Tuesday

Dairymen are working with a seven percent increase in milk prices, although cost rises of 10 percent will more than eat up the gains. If not the best possible financial scene, dairy is in far better shape than the livestock industry in general

Still, there is no cause to rejoice because the single most prosperous group in farming today is going to have to tighten its management and margins

There is no benefit in having one segment of society benefit at the cost of another. It is unfortunate that dairymen are going to be pinched, but we have seen no reliable prediction that there are going to be

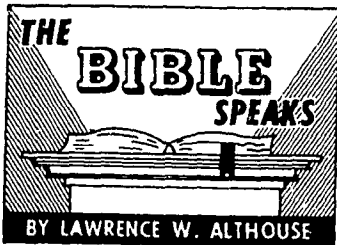
the wholesale problems in the milkhouse that have beset poultry farmers

Hogs are struggling up from year-ago prices of \$29. Cattle markets are improving. The grain operator is doing well, although without an embargo profits could be higher

Rather than taking delight in the belt-tightening in the dairy industry, all of agriculture should band together to improve its common lot

Sure, dairymen have been riding higher than the rest of the ag community even while singing the price blues on a false note. New realities may sting

But the next time, all farmers should work together to get pigs and poultry, cattle and corn prices up to dairy's profitable levels, not smirk while the situation turns the other way around



CATHEDRALS AND BREAD

April 5, 1981

Background Scripture: Matthew 26

Devotional Reading: Isaiah 51:4-6

My college philosophy professor, Dr. Glenn Morrow, once told us of a Sunday

school class that was shown a picture of a Roman amphitheatre in which Christians were being devoured by lions. "What does this picture say to us as Christians?" the teacher asked one little boy. The little fellow pointed to the picture and exclaimed, "Why here's a poor lion who doesn't have a Christian!"

The little boy's answer proves that even compassion can be misplaced. In fact, there's hardly any virtue in life that can't be misplaced or misused. Often it's a matter of getting the right idea at the wrong time. That's what happened during the last week of

Jesus' earthly ministry when, while resting in Bethany, he was anointed by an anonymous woman as he sat at table with his disciples. His disciples made the right response, but at the wrong time. "Why This Waste?"

How often Jesus had tried to impress upon his disciples their need for compassion for the poor and helpless. Not only in what he said, but also in what he did he emphasized this priority of God's kingdom. And how often it must have seemed to Jesus that his disciples were still not getting the message. But that day when the woman poured the costly

ointment on Jesus's head the disciples suddenly became concerned about the poor. Why this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for a large sum, and given to the poor.

The logic of their indignation was inescapable, wasn't it? Who could argue with their reasoning? Certainly they were voicing no more than what must have been in the Master's own mind. Yet, when he realized what they were saying to the woman, his rebuke must have caught them by surprise. Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always

have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.

One cannot help but wonder if it really was compassion for the poor or jealousy that motivated the disciples that day. Doesn't their "Why this waste" have just the slight flavor of sour grapes? Was it the waste of the costly oil that bothered them or that this woman - this outsider - was the one who was doing it? They could not afford to make such a gesture themselves and perhaps they didn't want anyone else to do it either.

Always The Poor

It seems that the disciples

had made a kind of law out of Jesus' pronouncements on the treatment of the poor. But others have done the same thing with Jesus' reply - you always have the poor with you. They have used it to interpret Jesus as fatalistic about poverty. And so they have reasoned if poverty is always going to be with us, let's not get too concerned with it, for Jesus himself accepted it.

The example which Jesus set for us is made manifest in a faith which can both build cathedrals and minister to those in need. It doesn't have to be one or the other.

NOW IS THE TIME

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To Look At

Oil and Gas Leases:

We are getting calls from farmers that are being approached about oil and gas leases for their farms. There are several things you need to be concerned with if you become involved.

The life of the lease should be spelled out so that at any time the lessee (company) failed to pay, the lease would automatically be cancelled. You need to consider the water rights so that water could not be used without written approval. Also, any waste water needs to be handled so as not to be a pollutant problem.

You own the land, so you need to spell out the responsibilities in case any action is brought against either party. There could be damages; clarify these responsibilities.

Most leases specify there shall be no drilling within certain distances from building and property lines. You may want to include a scenic area such as a pond or picnic site.

Remember that you are the landowner and no one can force

you to sign a lease or condemn your property for a gas or oil well. And finally, be sure to counsel with your lawyer before you sign anything.

To Practice Safety

We are rapidly approaching the very busy spring season when field activities are heavy. Safety statistics indicate that accidents increase when people are rushing to complete a job. With spring oats time here and preparing for corn planting not far behind, we need to take time to be safe.

Farming is not the safest occupation. Records indicate that the average farm worker can expect that once every four years he'll be injured so severely that medical attention is needed. Farmers have a work accident rate that's two and a half times greater than the average for all industries. The problem is that unlike industry, farmers work with minimal amount of supervision and they may not be properly trained for the job.

It is important to take a break in mid-morning and mid-afternoon to relax, even if it is only fifteen

minutes. It could be the most important part of your day. Always think and act with a positive and safe attitude.

To Use Pesticides Safely

The arrival of spring also means that we are in the season when

farmers will be using many different types of pesticides. We need to stress the importance to read

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HAY HAWS



"As soon as I'm finished with this 1040, it looks as if we're going to have to put the south 40 on the auction block."