

BY CURT HARLER, EDITOR



Lancaster Farming says...

One farmer, one vote

Few farm measures in recent years have so much potential to divide the farm community as HB 767 does. That bill proposes to eliminate cooperative block voting on commodity referendums.

Usually proposed laws can be seen as pro-farm or anti-farm. This one is likely to divide farmers across commodity groups, and to split members of big co-ops from their independent neighbors.

The two sides faced off for the first time Tuesday in Harrisburg. But there will be further rounds — the House Ag Committee unanimously voted to hold public hearings on HB 767 at a date to be determined.

The measure has three goals: eliminating co-op block votes, requiring a two-thirds majority to pass a referendum, rather than a simple majority; and requiring review of all programs every three years rather than five as now provided by law.

The first point is well taken. Why should a co-op be allowed to vote for

an individual?

One dairy co-op, in defending the practice, said if there is something wrong with block voting, then there is something wrong with the entire representative system of government.

They note "modified block voting" allows a co-op member to vote against the co-op position.

There is a hidden flaw in the argument. While individuals do vote for persons to administer or initiate programs, nowhere does our government provide for selling, willing or otherwise passing along one's vote on an individual membership basis.

A father can't cast votes for his family. Democrats who miss an election don't see their ballot automatically cast for the party platform.

Some nations levy heavy fines against those who don't vote. The American way always has been to penalize a non-voter by eliminating any say in the issue.

Although many good commodity programs became possible because of block voting, the danger of abuse is real.

The 'modified' provision places a burden on dissenters that doesn't even fall on those too lazy to vote. Why assume a farmer is for something unless otherwise stated? Why not assume the farmer opposes the issue unless willing to stand up and fight for it? A farmer needs the right not to vote without turning his say over to a hired hand.

If a co-op wants to mobilize its membership, let its leaders give talks, make mailings, lobby lawmakers.

The voting percentage also will be a hot issue.

Tallying some commodity checkoff votes almost requires an expert in statistics or mathematical manipulation.

"If a majority of producers representing two-thirds of the production, or two-thirds of the producers with a majority "

Confusing? What ever happened to good old American majority rule?

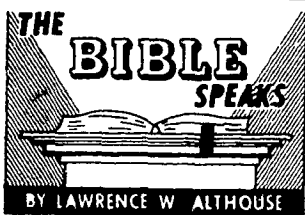
Sure, a lot of poor programs have been voted in because a majority voted for them. U.S. Presidents are elected with the votes of only 25% of the nation's population. But majority rule wins.

The current measure would require a simple two-thirds vote. But rather than this constitutional quota to pass or defeat a program, let's stick to simple majority rule.

Program review after the first three years will give a prompt redress if enough farmers feel a measure is a mistake. After that, why not maintain the five year review period to save the taxpayers money and allow the program to flow smoothly?

Make no mistake, we support promotion, if done properly.

Any farmer who may be asked to vote in a checkoff program should make his feelings known at the upcoming hearings. After all, what good is an unused vote?



MAKING THE TOMB SECURE

April 19, 1981

Background Scripture: Matthew 27:62 through 28:10.

Devotional Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9.

If you've ever visited the tomb of Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois, you've probably marveled, as I

have, at the sheer massiveness of that structure. The guide told us that the reason for this was that, when the martyred President was laid to rest there, it was feared that attempts would be made to desecrate the tomb or even to steal the body. So the tomb was built in massive concrete to discourage any attempts upon President Lincoln's final resting place.

There was a somewhat different motive behind the Pharisees' request that Pilate have the tomb of Jesus securely guarded. They were afraid, not that someone would try to desecrate it, but that his

disciples would spirit away the body of Jesus. "Therefore," they demanded, "order the sepulcher to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first."

Make It As Secure As You Can

Pilate's response is as grudging as had been his condemnation of Jesus at the insistence of the crowd. "You have a guard of soldiers; go make it as secure as you can!" Perhaps all the Pharisees wanted was permission to post their own

guards, for Matthew tells us, "So they went and made the sepulcher secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard." They made it as secure as they could.

But they could not make it as secure as they wanted, for, when the two Mary's came to the tomb on Sunday morning, they found that the tomb had not been able to hold their Lord. Jesus was risen!

In all probability the luckless soldiers sent to guard that tomb were severely reprimanded, probably even punished, for what happened at that tomb. It was the very thing they were sent there to prevent.

But it was not the soldiers' fault for what happened. For any other person that tomb would have been secure enough. But it was the power of God himself they were trying to imprison and there is no way they could have kept the Christ in his tomb. No tomb, no guard, no power on earth could have kept Jesus from the victory of the resurrection.

Where He Used To Be

The two Mary's were shown the tomb by the angels so that they would know that Christ had arisen: "Come see the place where he lay." For a few short hours the tomb had held the body of Jesus, but now

nothing could contain him any longer. They tried to make his tomb secure, but they couldn't do it. And neither can we, although we sometimes try.

One of the motivations that lay behind the rise of Gothic architecture in the Middle Ages was the belief that the Romanesque architecture dwelt too much upon the suffering, dying Jesus and not enough on the risen, living Christ. So we have often unconsciously attempted to entomb Christ in our churches, our creeds, our theologies — making them as secure as we can, but failing because. "He is not here, for he has risen...!"

NOW IS THE TIME

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To Check Alarm Systems

Many farms have alarm systems, and unless they are tested regularly to determine that they will function immediately in an emergency, they may create a false sense of security. It is important to use a test record form. It should contain columns for entering the date of the test, initials of persons performing the test, and comments. An alarm system should be tested at a specific time, at least once a week.

The completed forms should be filed for insurance purposes. If the system is not designed to operate under farm conditions, the chances for malfunction are increased. Dust and dander, fertilizers and chemicals, gases and vapors are all problems that can cause malfunctions on most alarm systems which use electro-mechanical components. Also,

power surges and lightning can be most damaging.

To Check Water Supplies

Your water supply should be checked at least once a year for nitrates and bacteria. Nitrates can get into ground water from several sources — from a septic field, a barnyard or feed lot, silage seepage or from nitrogen fertilizer on surrounding cropland. Nitrogen can travel farther through the soil than bacteria, with the likelihood that more wells may be polluted with nitrates than with bacteria.

And, nitrates can be dangerous. Nitrogen in drinking water reduces the ability of the blood to carry oxygen and causes symptoms of oxygen deficiency in people and animals. If your drinking water hasn't been checked within the last year, then do it now. Also if you notice any changes in your water, such as an

off-color, an unusual flavor or even an odor than be sure to have it tested immediately. Remember, these samples should be taken to the lab in either a container provided by the lab or a sterilized bottle.

To Apply Sprays

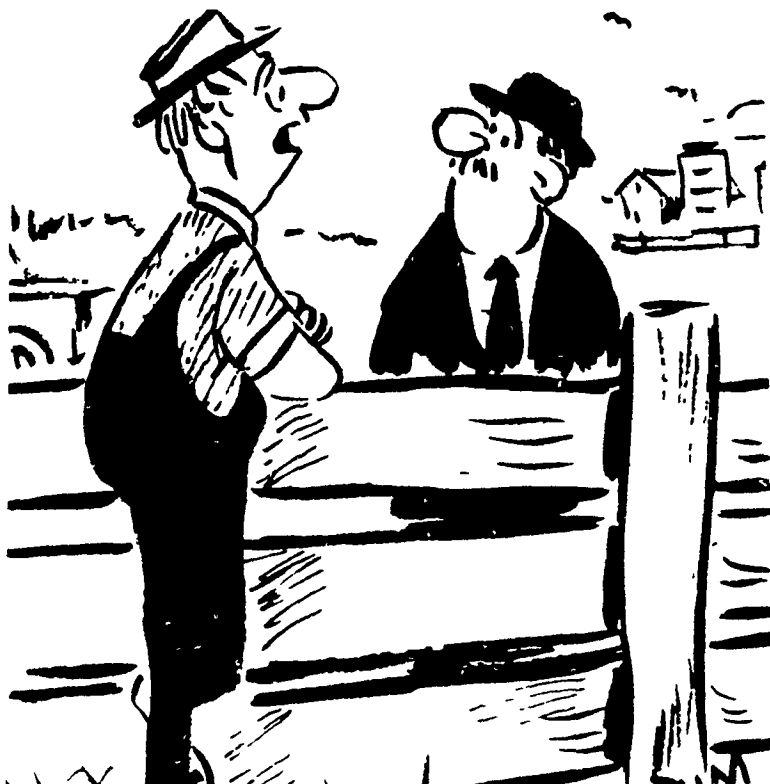
The highly intense agriculture demands the use of many types of pesticides. They are used for various farm, orchard and garden crops. It is important to know that every container or package of pesticide carries detailed instruction on how to mix and apply the material. These instructions should be followed closely. It is also extremely important to apply the spray at the proper time. In case of fruit trees, the weather has pushed them along very fast, and unless the grower was on the job, it may be too late for some of the sprays. We urge prompt and careful attention to applying the proper spray at the right time. Too late will not control the problem and may injure the leaves.

To Consider Farm Pond Weed Control

It is always later than we think when weed control practices must be considered in early springtime. All weeds have their own clever ways of getting a headstart on us. Farm pond weeds become active in their growth long before we can see them. This is especially true of

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HAY HAWS



I don't think we'll be adding any more poultry houses this year. With our recent heavy expansion, I'm losing about all the money I can afford for awhile.