



Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

Promotion, promotion, promotion.

This word is getting a hard work out these days among farmers and farm businesses.

To some, the word promotion seems to be a 'dirty' word — it shatters their long-held belief that every one in the world recognizes the importance of agricultural products . . . there's no need to toot our own horn. But all present day indicators point to the fact that the general public doesn't know much about food, nutrition, and what to eat.

Every commodity is looking for a spokesperson — preferably a pretty one — to help sell their products. Dairy princesses are crowned in almost every county of the state, along with other royal representatives of the different beef and dairy breeds, fruits, vegetables, sheep, swine, and poultry. Just about every facet of agriculture has someone wearing a crown who'll tell their commodity's outstanding qualities story to any consumer who'll lend an ear.

During the month of May, we saw state and county officials donning aprons and chef's hats to try their culinary skills in cooking giant omelets. They were sometimes upstaged by a giant egg known as 'Eggatha' whose appeal to both the young and old sets was instantaneous.

A dairy cow on the steps of the Capitol, jingles on the radio about the terrific summertime drinks that can be made with milk, beach towels, tooth brushes, hot chocolate mugs — these are

advertising ploys designed to catch up with our fast-paced, health conscious consumers and their kids who want 'fun' things to drink.

But what's this grumbling we hear from the dairy people about the amount of publicity eggs are getting these days through their 'incredible' campaigns, and vice versa. Could it be there is some infighting among the farming ranks — jealousy?

Now really, does it matter which commercial gets the consumers to the dairy case? Nine chances out of ten, the shopper will pick up a dozen eggs and a quart of milk — it's rarely an either or situation.

And what about those bumper stickers we see driving around the farming community — "Eat more pork, run over a chicken"? Funny, yes and no. Pork producers and broiler producers have been known to be in competition with each other for a long time, so the joking is understandable to a fellow farmer. But, why should one farmer publicly put down another's commodity?

The main goal is to get consumers to the meat freezer where they'll buy pork, chicken, and beef based on what their pocketbook will allow. That doesn't mean they'll buy all chicken, or all pork, or all beef — who eats all one meat? Any home economist will tell you a well balanced diet requires a variety of meats, fruits, vegetables, dairy and poultry products.

Let's face it, farmers don't like to eat just one thing, and neither do consumers.

But what are the U.S. farmers doing? They are each



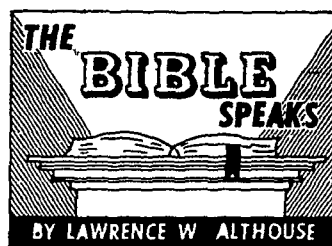
greedily going after their slice of the pie by putting down their competition. Instead of working as a team to promote agricultural products as a whole, they are independently struggling to tie down their corner of the market.

This dissected effort in agriculture isn't confined to marketing — the same pattern can be seen in legislative lobbying, land use policies, and even in cooperation at county and state fairs.

Farmers taken as an entirety are quite a minority — about five percent. But if they further subdivide themselves into beef producers, dairy producers, vegetable growers, mushroom producers, broiler producers, egg producers, peaches, apples, grapes, and on and on and on . . . well, it doesn't take much to see what a small segment of the population that would be

What impact can each small group hope to have on the enormous public — especially when facing the experience and big bucks other industries are playing with to grab what spending dollars the U.S. consumers have for vacations, cars, homes, and other luxuries.

Promotion, that's the key to all the problems we're told. Well, it's probably not the panacea for all our problems, but a combined, concerted effort to teach the public what a bargain food is would be a start.



WHAT YOUR EYES HAVE SEEN
June 21, 1981

Background Scripture:
Deuteronomy 3:12-14.
Devotional Reading:
Romans 4:13-25.

"Do it just because I told you to do it!"

Most of us have been on one end or the other of those words. Unquestioning obedience, although not so prevalent today as in previous eras, is still demanded in some quarters today. Perhaps it is assumed that our religious life is one of them, yet the Bible tells us that very often when God gave a command to his people, he appealed to their experience with him as much as their obedience.

We see this demonstrated for us in Deuteronomy 4 when God comes to Israel through Moses, saying: "And now, O Israel, give heed to the statutes and the ordinances which I teach you, and do them; that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which the Lord of your fathers gives you" (4:1).

What The Lord Did

But, along with the command, there is also an appeal: "Your eyes have seen what the Lord did at Baalpeor: . . . you who held fast to the Lord your God are alive today" (3:4). Those who previously obeyed God know for themselves what happens when they follow his commandments. God's requests

upon us are always given in the light of his faithfulness which he has already demonstrated to us. Once again he appeals: "Only take heed, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life" (4:9).

God has not changed his manner of appealing to us, for, along with the commands he gives us, there is always the challenge to remember what he has already done for us. Like the Hebrews, we are always in danger that we will "forget the things which your eyes have seen," that we will fail to find the faith for the future in the providence God has demonstrated in the past.

Make Them Known

How often do you give thought to the ways in which God has demonstrated his faithfulness in your life? How often do you remember those times when you found God at your side in the time of some great threat or challenge? We can choose to focus our attention on our fears, or upon the evidences which God has already let us see with our own eyes. The choice is up to each of us.

This is no less true in the impact we make upon our children and the coming generations. We can communicate an ever-present state of anxiety about the future, or we can make a point of sharing the goodness of God which we have already experienced for ourselves. Each of us has a responsibility for interpreting the lessons of the past so that we may witness to God's providence. We expect to see the goodness of God in the days before us because we have already seen the goodness of God in the days that are behind us.

When doubts and fears cloud the future, remember what your eyes have already seen of the goodness of God.

OUR READERS WRITE, AND OTHER OPINIONS

A question of 'tax cuts'

With all the discussion about "tax cuts", it might be useful to cut through the fog and restate the basic economic case for an immediate multi-year reduction in income tax cuts.

It previously has been noted by Farm Bureau that the size of the federal government as measured by the spending and regulatory burden was the fundamental problem confronting the economy. And, there is little wonder why U.S. productivity continues to

decline as the public sector (the unproductive sector) has grown in relation to the private sector (the productive sector). Further, there is little wonder why inflation remains chronic as more and more federal money and credit have been created to pay for the ever-larger unproductive government sector.

We also have observed that until long-term economic policy measures are taken, the economy

(Turn to Page A12)

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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To Beware of Black Cut Worms in Corn

It seems like farmers are faced with a new pest problem every year. Well, this year is no exception. The Black Cut Worm has been found in eastern Lancaster County and Chester County corn fields.

They are a very destructive insect, with a smooth skin like a regular cut worm but are larger and black in color. They cut the corn stalk off at ground level and then consume it, much like an army worm.

One field that I inspected, had about 80% of the stalk consumed. The corn was about 14 inches in height. Another farm replanted over 100 acres due to Black Cut Worm damage.

It will require a spray application to bring them under control. If the corn will be used for

grain - not silage - then Toxaphene is most effective; for silage corn use Lorsban. Be sure to follow label instructions for application rate.

To Let Their Lives Not Be in Vain

Recently, three young rescue workers unselfishly gave up their lives in an attempt to rescue a young lad from a septic tank. Other workers were also injured. Let us not let the sacrifice these three young men made be in vain.

Glenn Shirk, Extension Dairy Agent, reminds us that the same toxic gases that took the lives of these rescue workers are the exact same gases that exist in manure pits! So, be alert when working in and around manure pits.

In addition to being toxic, some of these gases are explosive. Thus, it is important to keep flames and sparks away from manure pits.

Remove cattle from enclosed barns before agitating the pit.

If it becomes necessary to enter the pit be sure it has been well ventilated. Never enter the pit alone. Tie a rope around yourself and have a strong person or two at the other end. While in the pit, carry on a conversation so they know that all is well.

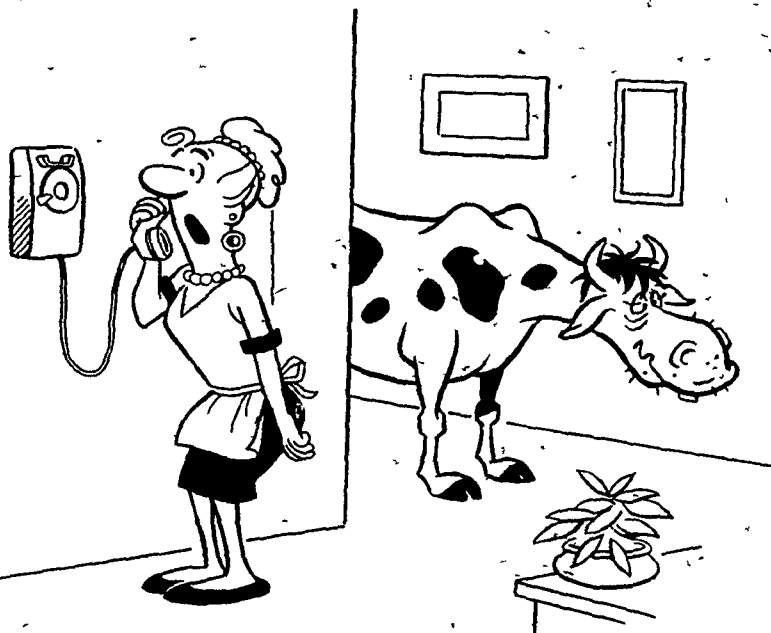
For more information about toxic gases and fumes on the farm, contact the Extension office in your county.

To Deal With Volunteer Corn

There is a great deal of volunteer corn growing in many fields. This is corn that has been left in the field since last fall and is really a weed that will hurt our yields the same as any other weed. The big problem is how to get rid of it.

(Turn to Page A12)

HAY HAWS



Hello, Clair. I don't mind us celebrating Dairy Month. But I think it's a little too much when you start inviting these unusual special guests to dinner.