



Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

Biting the hand?

It seems that our legislators, both nationwide and statewide, are looking out for everyone but farmers.

These politicians are concerned about food when it comes to the welfare of people in Poland and to the consumer who walks into a supermarket with food stamps gripped in his hands, but they seem to be forgetting the people who make their toying with food possible — the farmers.

Just recently, Iowa Congressman Tom Harkin, chairman of the House Agriculture subcommittee with jurisdiction over the nation's dairy program, stated the "U.S. should help ease the food shortage in Poland by shipping 165 million pounds of surplus U.S. cheese to the Polish people as a positive sign of support for their determination to resist Soviet domination."

Little did most dairy producers know they were the chosen ones to serve as foreign ambassadors to Poland — at their own expense.

Under the federal government's dairy price support program, the Commodity Credit Corporation acquired 275.9 million pounds of processed cheese at a cost of \$392.8 million dollars. According to Harkin, the Reagan Administration has expressed concern over the cost of storing the stocks and that there is some concern the stocks may soon begin to spoil.

Harkin said the "U.S. should use the stocks to further its humanitarian and political goals, rather than let the stocks spoil and become worthless." He said the U.S. could provide the cheese either as a direct donation or through concessionary sales at the rate of 5 pounds for every man, woman and child.

At the same time, the Reagan Administration announced it had negotiated a 5 year grain agreement extension between the USSR and the U.S.. This agreement requires the U.S. to sell at least 6 million metric tons of grain to the Soviets next year.

That was one vote in favor of the farmer — freedom from the embargo.

But in the same breath, the Reagan Administration turned around and said the Soviets could buy no surplus U.S. butter. Instead, they announced they would sell the 220 million pounds of butter the Soviets offered to buy at \$1.05 a pound to New Zealand at the price of 70 cents a pound.

Once again, farmers are the fall guys for political maneuvering.

As a result, the U.S. will be selling about half of its surplus butter to New Zealand for \$50

million less than the Soviets were willing to pay.

A Washington spokesman pointed out that while the contract prohibits New Zealand from direct sales of U.S. butter to the Soviets, nothing prohibits them from selling their own butter to Moscow, or selling the U.S. butter to a third party who could then sell it to the Soviets.

"If New Zealand sells it at the world price — which it will, you can be sure — it stands to make a cool \$50 million."

The American dairy farmer is providing the ammunition for New Zealand, a country that floods the U.S. with casein, to make a windfall profit — and at whose expense?

As if that's not enough of a slap in the face for the dairy farmer, this past week the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine sent out a news release over the wire service announcing the results of a three year study it had conducted on bovine leukemia virus, transmitted in raw milk and its possible effects on humans. This research was funded by Pennsylvania's Agriculture Research Committee.

This release went out to all the news media across the nation. Imagine the impact this kind of 'news' will have on milk consumption — remember what happened to pork?

Even though Secretary of Agriculture Penrose Hallowell "pooh-poohs" the effect of this kind of information being released to the general public, we feel it could be devastating. All the consumer has to hear is cancer being linked to anything and that product will become the object of total abhorrence. In this case, milk has been linked with leukemia — most consumers won't care two hoots if the report did say bovine — most won't know what the word means anyway. The damage is done, perhaps inadvertently, but irreversibly.

Since the research data only related to cattle, why in the world did PDA and U. of P. release that kind of information to a general audience? Why not get the story to the farmers through their in-house magazines? The results would have been much less alarming and more beneficial.

But, in order to get more funding, the researchers needed to make a big splash — get the most mileage on their 'discovery.' They admitted more studies had to be done to see whether there are any links between bovine leukemia virus and humans.

It looks like the dairy producers will be footing

another research bill, whether they want to or not.

This 'bad press' not only affects dairy producers but other farmers as well.

A recent new release based on a controversial study of soy products conducted by University of Kansas Medical Center's James Cook prompted this response from American Soybean Association President Charles Hamon, a soybean farmer from Valley Falls, Kansas:

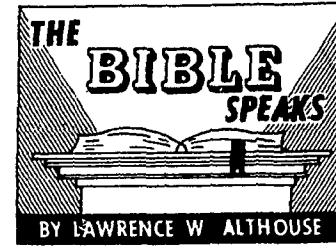
"Scientific studies conducted or funded by government agencies should be subjected to peer review by qualified scientists prior to their release to the general public and news media."

The study which is being challenged indicates diets containing soy protein inhibits the body's ability to use iron.

When will these politicians learn — you don't bite the hand that feeds you?

Stop using food as a political 'weapon'.

And, apply the "We're Growing Better" promotion to the attitudes of state officials and legislators for the farmers they represent.



HONEY FROM A ROCK

August 30, 1981

Background Scripture:

Deuteronomy

31:30 through 32:14.

Devotional Reading:

1 Kings 19:9-18.

Teilhard de Chardin, the brilliant Roman Catholic priest and scientist, writes or tells of "testing-time" that he experienced in his life. Like many of us, he sought comfort and support in various things and persons around him. But one by one they were peeled away, until it seemed that nothing else remained.

But this experience, says Teilhard, "did not bring me unalleviated sorrow. On the contrary, a glorious, unsuspected joy invaded my soul: because, in the collapse of those immediate supports I had risked giving to my life, I knew with a unique experiential certainty that I would never again rely for support on anything save your own divine stability." (Hymn of the Universe).

The Perfect Rock

Teilhard's experience has been particularly helpful to me, for I too found God most real at a time in my life when all other supports had been eliminated or neutralized one by one. All my life I had lived by the conviction that with diligent thought, hard work and faith in

God, there was no problem that I could not solve, no situation I could not master. Then, one day, I was faced with the realization that all my clear thinking and hard work were not sufficient for the situation that confronted me. Like Teilhard, I found that all I had left was my trust in God.

I came out of that experience, not despising or forsaking clear thinking and hard work — I still believe in them — but realizing that these, like all the other human supports to which we look for help, are limited and finite and sometimes are just not enough. When that happens, only trust in God can bring us through. Then we are led to sing with Moses: "The Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deuteronomy 32:4).

Found In A Desert

Sometimes it is only when we find ourselves lost in a desert wilderness of disappointments, failures, sins, and false solutions, that we come to know God face to face. This is how Israel first encountered God: "He found him in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness" (32:10). Destitute, despised, alone, the people had nowhere else to turn but to God.

Yet, in the midst of such an experience there is often life's sweetest discovery: the faithful love of God! It was in the desert that God proved his love to Israel, leading, feeding and sustaining him: "and he made him suck honey out of the rock" (30:13).

God forbid that you should have to encounter God thus. God, if you find yourself in one of life's barren deserts, remember to look for the Rock, and the sweetness that can be yours even in the wilderness.

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent
Phone 717 394-6851



To Cut Corn Silage at Proper Stage

Corn silage can provide a large part of the stored feed needed on a dairy farm. Therefore, it's important to keep a close watch on corn intended for silage.

Both the nutrient content and

preservation of silage are affected by the stage of harvest and moisture content. For best feeding results, dairymen should harvest corn silage in the full dent stage of maturity. The total corn plant at this stage has close to 70 percent moisture which is ideal with a

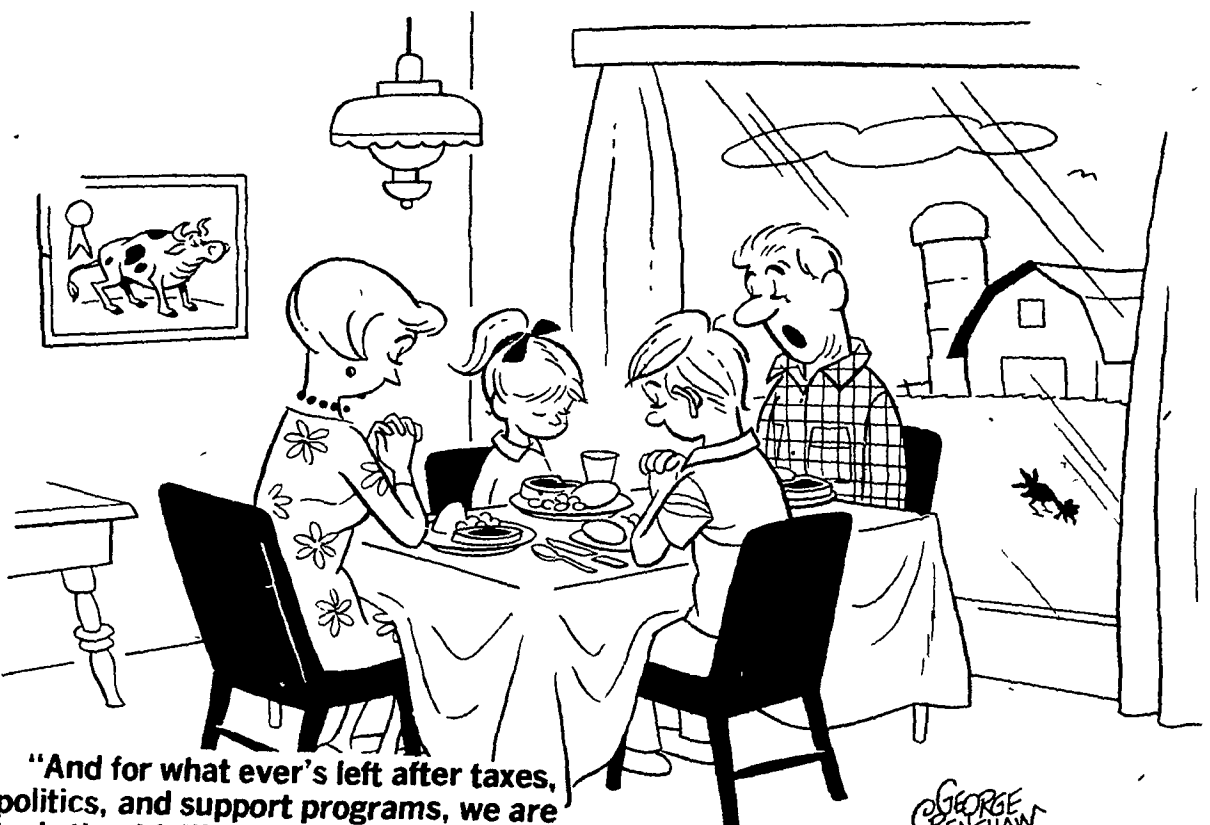
grain moisture of 35 to 40 percent. The grain content is also higher than that of corn cut at an earlier stage.

High moisture is one problem that has troubled many dairymen in storing high quality silage. High moisture can result in a loss of nutrients resulting from seepage of juices from the silo. Too much moisture also results in a bad odor, and consumption drops.

On the other hand, corn cut at a late stage of maturity will create problems, because it won't thoroughly pack...excluding the air. Poorly packed silage will shrink and pull away from the silo walls and spoilage results.

(Turn to Page A12)

HAY HAWS



"And for what ever's left after taxes, politics, and support programs, we are truly thankful!"

GEORGE KENSHAW