



# Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

## On the home stretch

And it's going to be a close race. As we come around the first turn, it's Farmer Brown out in front with a four-row silage harvester lead. Not far behind though, with heart and stamina driving him on, is Farmer Smith astride his old-faithful two-row 'chopper'.

Perhaps you might not get the feeling that every farmer is running a race to get their corn silage chopped and packed away in the fastest time, but it sure feels that way to me. Why, the way those machines are running almost day and night, you'd think everybody wants to get their name at the top of the list in the Guinness World Book of Farm Records.

Spurring on the racers, the weather has been the best cheering section for those farmers who were chomping at the bit back in August to start tearing up the field. Hot, dry weather—pushed those high-as-a-hairy-mammoth's-eye stalks and ears to an early maturation so that farmers almost had to toss a coin to see whether to make third-cutting hay or corn silage.

The early starters lead the pack, pushing their succulent silage high into upright silos of assorted colors as the whirl of unloaders cheer each contestant on. Other farmers are joining in the race by the score, trying to get over the obstacle course of corn before the autumn weather pushes the crop to a dried and dented finish.

Just this past week, for the very first time, my husband Mike and I decided to enter that grueling competition. Having made our debut into the field of farming on our own, we were ecstatic when our corn actually came up last May, watched it grow knee-high by July 4, and prayed for rain in August to help those golden ears fill with kernals.

Now, it's harvest time. And we, too, are experiencing those anxiety pangs and the pressures of racing to get that corn off the field.

But, unlike many seasoned farmers, we haven't gotten to the point where luxuries like trenches or metallic towers have been erected on the farm to cure our corn silage — as a

matter of fact, we're still working on a barn. But, with the advice of our local Extension agent and countless references, we've gotten silage-wise and have even come up with a barn design we both agreed on.

With all that information, facts and formulas digesting in our brains, we 'constructed' our first mountain of maize. By moonlight, we tucked our aromatic mound under a blanket of black plastic — anchored with ground turned over by an old, very-much used three-bottom drag plow that joined our ever-increasing inventory of used equipment.

Now we wait for nature to do its work and pat ourselves on the back for having actually crossed the finish line, even if it was only on a small scale and with the help of our neighbor's custom equipment. We can relax for a few days and catch our breath while we plan our strategies for the next race when we'll be trying to beat the elements, wind, and snow, from stealing our grain from the dried and worn out stalks.

Reaping the fruits of labor must certainly give each farmer satisfaction — remember how great it felt to have finished your first harvest?

Take it from me, we're floating on Cloud Nine — and our crops didn't even come close to setting the world record or even Lancaster Farming's record. But, we are thrilled that our crops — the silage, grain, and hay — some how beat the odds in the gamble of farming and our growing herd of Polled Hereford cattle will be content and well fed with bellies full.

Unfortunately though, during such a joyous time, it is often a time of sadness. Whether it's carelessness, freak accidents, or fate, this time of year is notorious for maiming and marring the lives of farm families.

We all were shocked and saddened to learn that this harvest season has already claimed the life of one member of the Lancaster County farm family — bringing our farm accident losses to six this year.

Please, take the time to be careful. In the race of life, you don't want to finish first.

## NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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### To Fertilize Alfalfa Stands:

The Fall of the year is one of the best times to apply phosphorus and potash to establish alfalfa stands. Many growers will topdress the field after the last cutting is removed. In addition, the stand can be fertilized next spring after the first cutting is removed. When the plants are fertilized in the Fall they will be stronger next summer.

Since alfalfa is a very heavy feeder of both phosphorus and potash, these elements must be replaced for top yields. If the area is to be grazed in the fall instead of removing the final cutting, these fertilizer elements should be washed down with a rain before livestock are permitted on the field; bloating may result if grazed soon after application. Use the application rates as recommended on your soil test results.

### To Identify Johnsongrass Areas

There are many farms in this part of the country that have Johnsongrass problems. This

sudan-like grass grows very rank and will take over a field in a very few years. A few plants this year without control will result in hundreds of plants in the area next year. Farmers should mark the area of infestation so that treatment can be applied properly. On fields where small grain was harvested the re-growth of Johnsongrass can be sprayed with Roundup when 30 to 36 inches in height. In corn fields the treatment should be next spring before the corn is planted. The attention to control Johnsongrass is very important.

### To Protect Show Animals

September, in Lancaster County, is fair time. It is also a time to be concerned about the health of show animals. Our dairy agent, Glenn Shirk, emphasizes that fairs should be a place where we can exhibit our animals; they should not be a place for spreading diseases and other ailments. Be considerate of other exhibitors and of other show

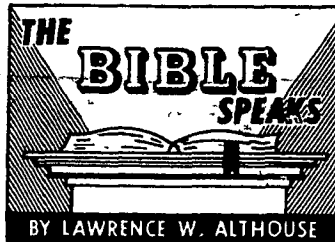
animals. If your animals have any infectious or contagious problems, leave them at home; it's like keeping a sick child out of school to protect those who are healthy. If you do show, consult your veterinarian about necessary tests and protective vaccines. Of particular concern at many of this year's shows is pseudorabies.

Many fairs are requiring that hogs be negative to a PRV test conducted within 30 days of the show — a good requirement! At the show, hogs should be kept isolated from other stock. If hogs are to be returned to the farm after the show, isolate them from other hogs and livestock on the farm, and have them retested before introducing them to their herd mates.

### To Grab-Proof Lawns

Many lawn owners report damage from various kinds of worms, insects and moles; also at this time of year the Japanese

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## THE SHEPHERD IN YOUR HOUSE

September 13, 1981

### Background Scripture:

Psalms 23.

### Devotional Reading:

John 10:7-18.

Whenever I take a poll for people to list their three favorite scripture passages, the 23rd Psalm is always one of the three and often it leads the list. It is also usually the best known of all Bible passages. If a person has committed any part of the Bible to memory — either fully or partly — it is likely to be Psalm 23.

The reason for this enormous popularity is no mystery: it is filled with comfort and assurance. What the Psalmist says about the Good Shepherd is what everyone wants to find in their experience of God. For one thing, the analogy of the shepherd and his sheep, even though hardly a contemporary image for most of us, is still very descriptive of the way we want to view our relationship with God — particularly when we are in need of him. Even those of us who have never seen a shepherd, nor even, perhaps, a flock of sheep know that it is a very deep and comforting type of relationship.

### My Cup Overflows

Secondly, the 23rd Psalm emphasizes that God provides for our basic daily needs. Just as Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" the Psalmist witnesses that "Thou preparest a table before me . . .

thou anointest my head with oil, my cup overflows" (Psalms 23:5). Our circumstances in life may vary greatly from those of others, but none of us are ever exempted from recognizing and confessing that in any and all circumstances our "cup overflows."

A third attraction to the 23rd Psalm is its assurance of comfort in time of need, particularly at the time of fear and death. Unseen by the human eye, God is experienced as present with us when we "walk through the valley of the shadow of death." "Thy rod and they staff, they comfort me," is a conviction that, whatever the danger or threat that confronts me, God's presence with me will be sufficient.

Next, the 23rd Psalm testifies to the experience of God's power to renew our lives when life has taken its toll. Exhausted, "he makes me lie down in green pastures" (23: 2). Weak and tired, "he leads me beside still waters." Depleted and worn out with pressures of daily living, "he restores my soul."

Fifth, the 23rd Psalm reminds us that God will lead those who are willing to be led by him. Daily we face choices, decisions, and questions, but we do not have to face these alone: He will lead us. There is a purpose in life and he will help me find it.

### I, He and Thee

But today I'd like you to see one more thing in this familiar Psalm that perhaps you've never seen there before. Yes, it is a testimony and assurance of comfort and help for each of us, it does tell us what we can expect from God, but see it today as an indication of what God can expect from you! More than comfort, it is also a challenge. For, if he is your shepherd, then you, if you comprehend what God is all about, must know that he wants you to be a shepherd to others. You are the shepherd in your house . . . and beyond!

## OUR READERS WRITE, AND OTHER OPINIONS

### How do you treat your pet dog?

Your latest editorial diatribe on animal rights prompts this letter to express my acute disgust with your limited mentality. I am no city slicker—I was raised on a farm and now have a farm.

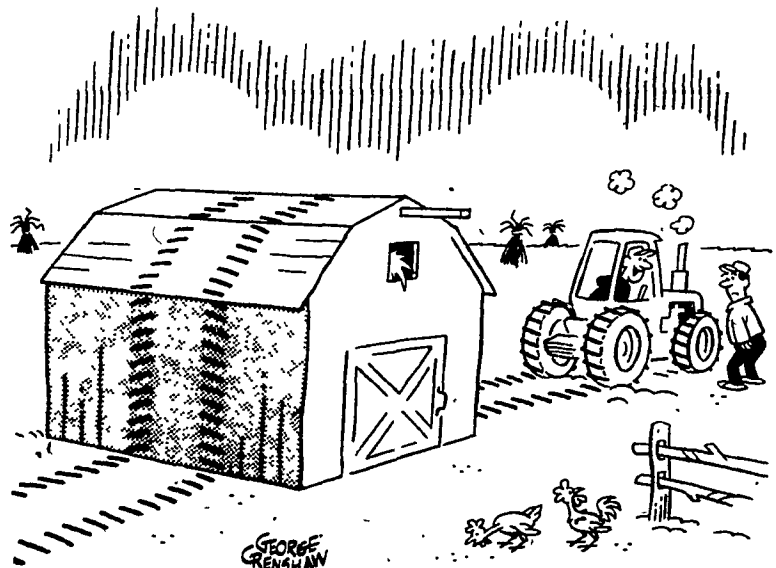
You obviously have never had to contend with suffering, and know nothing about animals to believe they do not feel or suffer. It would be delightful to drag you out of that comfy editor's chair, load you up in a cramped cattle car with several loose floorboards, haul you around for at least two or three days without food or water, and then box

you up in a nice little dark stall with room only to stand up and lie down for several weeks to fatten up. However, considering the thickness of your hide, I doubt you'd be edible.

The realities of farming can be conducted without inflicting undue suffering on the creatures we maintain to serve our needs. And a lot of things aren't really needed but keep us in spoiled luxury—such as prime veal. This earth was not created for man alone to despoil and do with as he

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## HAY HAWS



"You said you didn't care how I got myself in gear — to just get out there and get that silage wagon. How's that for 4-wheel drive?"