



# Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

## All that glitters isn't gold

What are the chances of flipping a coin and having it come up heads, tails, and land on its edge all at once? Pretty slim, you say?

Well, believe it or not, that's what happened on Tuesday during the Agri-Business Outlook Conference held at Cockeysville, Md. No matter what you came into the conference hoping to hear — whether it was an optimistic forecast, a pessimistic one, or one that was a happy medium — you left the conference satisfied that at least someone agreed with your thinking about agriculture's future.

For the pessimist, there was Sheldon Stahl, president of Economic Consulting Service, Kansas City, Mo. He painted a picture that showed our national economy in very poor light. "Anyway the federal reserve turns, it will be the wrong way," he said, decisively.

The slightest encouragement he allowed himself to reveal he quickly squelched. Although he predicted a modest decline in interest rates, he emphasized that he saw this decline to be short-lived and that by the year's end interest rates will be on the rise again.

Just to make his point unquestionably clear, this economics forecaster noted that "if the economy does manage to lurch on, the slightest pressure could cause it to fall over the edge into a recession."

Stahl was slightly more hopeful about agriculture's future, seeing it as a more stable field, less inflationary. He stated the demands are there for agricultural products if people can afford to buy the "fruits of ag labor."

He even added foreign countries should be given or lent the money so they have funds to buy food, and pointed out "a hungry world is one of conflict."

Agriculture is less inflationary? Keep food cheap so peace can be maintained in foreign nations? Unfortunately for farmers, when this economist looks at agriculture's future, he doesn't seem to be watching out for the well-being of the people who do all the work.

Donald Bowman, president of Bowman Financial Management Company, Baltimore, Md. presented a more optimistic outlook for agribusiness.

He expressed his belief that the next 25 years will be "golden for farms" with trade expanding into the Orient and Far East.

"We've passed the major turning point. If

we can get through the next few years, our future looks bright."

Bowman predicted that until the end of December of this year, prime interest rates would drop from their current 19½ percent to about 14-17 percent, and by the end of next year he said interest rates would drop to the 10-14 percent level.

Great news for everyone, but especially to farmers who have to fight the inflationary trends in the machinery and supply markets.

Bowman signed off by saying 1984-86 would be a period of prosperity for American agriculture, and that he's moderately optimistic on the short term and very optimistic on the long term.

And then there was Bruce Gardner, a professor of Ag Economics at the University of Maryland, who offered a little optimism and pessimism to keep everybody happy.

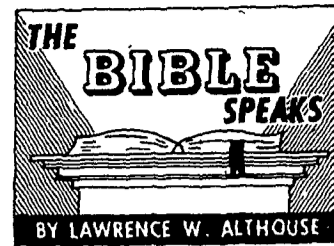
He stated the rising trend of commodity prices is true, however in the past there was a lowering trend. He noted the "scarcity scenario is not as likely as other experts predict" and that he doesn't expect commodity price rise as a long term trend, at least not at a rapid rate of increase or decrease.

Gardner encouraged agribusiness people to look past the "valleys and hills" and year to year swings of the ag economy in order to get a truer picture of conditions.

The question is: "How many farms can survive those trips up the hills and down into the valleys?" With the dairy price support being nipped and tucked to fit into the Reagan Administration's regime and with other ag legislation aimed at what seems to be knocking out the decreasing number of farmers in 1981, those golden years may be a dream for many.

Listening to economists say a \$60-70 billion tax cut will add to the federal deficit and that the U.S. can't afford it, and President Reagan's pleas to the nation to support his tax cut package and take up the volunteer attitudes of our forefathers, leaves us straddling the fence with both sides pulling.

If agriculture can flounder through the next several lean years, and if politicians and economists learn the value of food and don't cripple farmers with price ceiling and quotas, things could look golden. But, all that glitters isn't gold, so promises of across the board sacrifices will have to be seen to be believed.



GETTING YOUR WINGS  
September 27, 1981

Background Scripture:  
Isaiah 40.

Devotional Reading:  
Psalm 89:11-18.

Scientific studies in recent years have indicated that certain experiences are more likely than others to push us beyond our stress limits. Dr. Thomas Holmes of the University of Washington Medical School, conducted a study of the most stressful experiences and found that the top of the list is the death of a spouse. Divorce is second, marital separation third, imprisonment fourth and death of a close family member fifth.

Interestingly enough, Dr. Holmes found that an experience doesn't have to be unpleasant in order to be stressful. For example, marriage was number seven on his stress scale, retirement was tenth and marital reconciliation number nine. This means that pleasant experiences can also trigger stress. Another physician, Dr. Gary Vicker of St. Louis, has found that "Executive stress is often not triggered by failure, but by the pressures of success."

**Even Youths Become Weary**  
One of the important conclusions that Dr. Holmes and others have drawn from their study of stress is that stress—destructive stress, that is—is not caused by any of these factors. There is nothing that

says that the death of a spouse has to destroy our vitality. What causes destructive stress is the way you and I feel about the experience. The destructive power of the experience is not inherent in it, but in the way that you and I react to it.

Furthermore, this means that we can control the destructiveness of stressful experiences because we can choose how we will react to them. That means we can go to pieces if we are fired from our job and regard it as an insurmountable tragedy and injustice. Or, we can decide to learn from our experience, to pick ourselves up and go on from there. In choosing our response, we will be managing our stress as well.

Other experts in stress management tells us the reason we become exhausted emotionally and physically at work is not so much a factor of the work itself, but of the way we look at it. Thus, "Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted" (40:30). By the same token, an old man may continue in relative vitality if his outlook is right.

**Wait for The Lord**

And what is the "right outlook"? The prophet Isaiah points us in the right direction when he says, "they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles (40:31). If we think that we alone face the challenges and disappointments of daily life, we will be exhausted. But if we wait patiently for God to work his plan and purpose, we will find renewal in the midst of life, the power to go on. Then it will be possible to "run and not be weary", to "walk and not faint." When we draw from his strength to live our daily lives, we will learn the patience to allow God to be God. It is then that we will receive our eagle's wings.

## Farm Calendar

Today, Sept. 26

Third annual Delmarva Forestry Seminar, Tidewater Inn, Easton, Md.  
Bloomsburg Fair opens, 4-H Horse Show, morning. Continues through next Saturday.

Monday, Sept. 28

Stream protection workshop, Lancaster Farm & Home Center, 7:30 p.m.  
Pesticide license recertification meetings, 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m., (Turn to Page A12)

## NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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### To Check Water Supplies

Good quality drinking water is a real asset on the farm. Some farmers may be having trouble with a high bacteria count or high nitrates in their water supplies. These are hard problems to correct. However, in many cases the trouble comes from surface water getting into the well.

We urge all rural residents to check their wells and be sure that surface water is diverted around the well area. This is especially true if the well is located down grade from farm buildings or from where livestock wastes have been scattered.

Commercial laboratories are available to test the water; however, it is very difficult to correct these problems once they are identified. Keep surface water

away from the well area at all times.

### To Use Good Livestock Equipment

The moving and handling of livestock is a very important practice in this part of the state. We have thousands of livestock farms and there is a lot of traffic between farms and other public places. Producers who have the proper equipment to handle their livestock with minimum stress, will do better in the market place with less losses. I'm referring to loading ramps, cutting gates, and head gates. All of these can be made on the farm or purchased from commercial businesses.

To handle and treat livestock without this equipment usually means more excitement, bruises, and loss of weight. Become equipped to do the job properly.

### To Check Fan Louvers

Fan louvers on poultry and swine operations should shut tightly when a fan is not operating. If they don't, air will enter through the open louver and be discharged by the nearest running fan, giving you no ventilation value.

When the fan is on, louvers must be fully open; otherwise they will restrict the flow of air from the building. Tests have shown that a little dust on fan louvers can restrict air flow by more than 1,000 c.f.m. per fan. A restricted fan operates longer and bears a heavier load using more electricity, which costs money.

In many cases, you can repair louvers that are sticking open or shut just by cleaning them and applying oil or a rust solvent to the hinges.

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## HAY HAWS



"Mom went into town and you know your nest egg? She scrambled it!"