



Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

Always room for improvement

Pennsylvania's farmers have survived another Farm Show. And, almost amazingly, this year's tremendous show was carried out with nary a hitch — except in the draft horse pulling classes, of course.

When considering a show of the size and scale of Farm Show, we have to give an 'A' plus to all those who worked together to make it a success. But let's remember, there's always room for improvement. Take for instance — the weather:

It's probably taken most of the 66th Pennsylvania Farm Show exhibitors about seven days to thaw out from the frigid weather that enveloped Harrisburg last week.

Even though every Pennsylvanian has been weaned on the fact that Farm Show week is destined to be the worst, weather-wise, of the year, it still seems to catch everyone by surprise when that chill Arctic air brings the inevitable icicles and snow. Driving to and from the state's largest agricultural show is always a challenge.

This year, although the temperatures were frigid outside the large Farm Show complex, the atmosphere was warm throughout most of the barns and exhibit areas. As a matter of fact, the temperature almost was too warm for many exhibitors and entries.

In the dairy barn, things were too close for comfort — both in crowded conditions and warmth. Exhibitors complained of the "shocking" difference in temperature that they and their cattle experienced when coming in from the sub-freezing outdoors.

And, the stall occupants were packed in like sardines this year, despite the fact that many exhibitors chose to leave a few of their would-be contestants back at the farm. Some of the cramped quarters was due to the fact that commercial exhibits lined both sides of the aisle leading to the main arena rather than just one side along the wall, as was the case in previous years.

The dairy cattle shared the squeezed-in feeling with their counterparts in the beef barn. Although the temperatures were somewhat cooler here, exhibitors complained that their cattle were crowded both in the barn and outside at night. Although the Farm Show Commissioners called for a new tie-out area to be constructed closer to the complex last year, the 'last minute' facility was built so that cattle can be tied only to one side — but it is new and in a better-lighted area than before.

Much of the close-quarters in the beef and horse barn is the result of having to save spaces for the pulling ponies and horses that come in for the show during mid-week. These waiting, empty stalls dividing the drafts and the cattle are a constant reminder of the space

that's being 'wasted' while show boxes, blocking chutes, wagons, and harness are shoved into every spare corner.

In the sheep and swine barn, it was as crowded as ever. Shepherds and swine showman each went to their corners to scrub and spray their entries squeaky clean. And it was just through luck and Farm Show good will that the hundreds of hogs and sheep didn't come to blows fighting for a wash rack during the week.

The small arena was the focus of some constructive criticism last week, too. The hog showmen would like to see half of the small arena cleared down to the concrete so that judges will be looking at swine entries walking on a hard surface. The present situation, where about 6 inches of tanbark cushions the floor, allows many unstructurally sound animals to 'fake' their way to the top of their class.

The sheep showmen also want changes in the small arena. They say they're tired of getting their entries' snow-white fleeces speckled with dark, dirty tanbark the minute they step onto the small arena floor. Clean sawdust or wood shavings have been suggested for a most welcome alternative on half of the small arena floor.

There seem to be workable solutions to most of these '82 Farm Show woes. The sheep and swine showmen are working on an idea that could be reciprocally beneficial. And there's been talk about improving the beef cattle tie outs when the parking area is expanded next year. The too-warm temperatures in the cattle barns should be taken care of when the zoned heating system replaces the central heating presently in the complex.

And, hopefully work will soon begin on a new ventilation system that will help clear the air at Farm Show and make the event more enjoyable for livestock, exhibitors, and visitors alike. The smoke that cast a bluish-hue throughout the complex last week was not from burned-up exhibitors or from the hot ideas of Commissioners solving Farm Show headaches, nor was the burning tobacco an entry in a contest.

Until the Farm Show directors find an air pollution solution, perhaps all non-exhibit tobacco should be kept outside the Farm Show doors.

Of course there's always the cry for higher premiums, closer parking, and cheaper food. Solutions to these problems come about as close to being solved as the chance of finding a show judge that everybody agrees with — we all know just how 'easy' that would be, right?

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent
Phone 717-394-6851

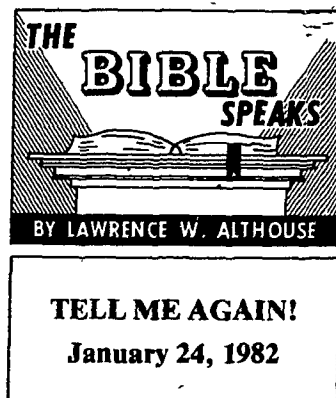
To Feed Efficiently
Cattle and hog producers face unstable prices for their finished animals. However, in most cases the profits must be made from cheaper gains rather than on the margin between first cost and market value. Good management at all times will help keep down these costs. The control of parasites, balanced rations, salt and minerals, less feed wastage, and market when ready are all things that should be handled for efficient gains. With the price of

feed grains the cost of weight should be low enough to realize some profit when market prices are favorable. Attention should be given to the lower cost of weight gains in all feeding programs. This is the area where the feeding operation can mean profit or loss.

To Make Plans To Attend Cattle Feeders' Day
Beef cattle feeders are invited to attend the Lancaster Cattle Feeders' Day 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 26 at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center. Extension

Agent, Glenn Shirk, mentioned that this year's theme is "Feeding and Marketing Cattle Economically". Extension Specialists, cattle feeders, marketing personnel and ag loan officers will discuss a variety of topics relating to the cattle, feed and money situation, costs of production, hedging, buying and selling cattle and feed, feeder cattle marketing programs, plus feeding and managing cattle for profit. Participants will have an

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Background Scripture:
Luke 3:15-22; 4:14-44;
7:19-23.

Devotional Reading:
1 Corinthians 7:5-13.

Sometimes the Gospel records tantalize us with what they do not tell us. For example, they do not tell us what happens in the mind of John the Baptist between the time of Jesus' baptism and the days that just preceded John's execution by Herod. But something did happen: that much is obvious.

In Luke 3 we find him down by the River Jordan, baptizing the multitudes that come to him. But this time his message is different: "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (3:15,16). Having announced the coming of Jesus, John baptizes him and we are told, "the heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, 'Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased'" (3:21,22).

Are You the One?

Luke doesn't tell us that John the Baptist heard the heavenly voice or saw the vision of the dove, but all the gospel accounts lead us to believe that John recognized Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah. It must have been the high moment of his life, for it represented the fulfillment of his mission to "prepare the way" for the Messiah. One would think that that

experience would serve to anchor his faith for the rest of his life.

Apparently, however, it did not. For when we come upon Luke 7, we find that John the Baptist is now uncertain about Jesus. He sends two of his disciples to Jesus to inquire: "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (7:19,20). What has happened to his faith in Jesus in the time period covered by the four intervening chapters? We can only speculate about what took place in John's mind and heart, but perhaps it is not really all that difficult to understand. First of all, we draw the conclusion that since the baptism by the Jordan, John the Baptist has been languishing in prison. In other words, since that great day of conforming Jesus as the Christ, John the Baptist has been having his faith in God severely tested. Gone are the multitudes who came out into the wilderness to hear him. Is it so hard for us to conceive that under these circumstances, he might have had second thoughts about Jesus?

Tell What You See

I can sympathize with John, for there are times in my life when, despite wonderful experiences that have lifted my faith, I have allowed myself to wonder about God, Christ, the Kingdom, the life beyond. These are the times when I say to God, I know what your answer is, but tell me again. I need to hear you telling me what I already know. I need to be reassured that what my life is built upon, is solid rock.

And when I make that request, God answers just as Jesus answered the disciples of John: "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive the sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the good news preached to them" (Luke 7:22). It is what I personally have seen and heard that reassures me.

OUR READERS WRITE, AND OTHER OPINIONS

Farmers needn't fear

In the article on the proposed cruelty to animals bill (Jan. 2, 1982) you stated that some of the "sins" are already dealt with in existing law. However, you failed to point out which ones these are and that failure along with the quoted words of the spokesmen of the Pennsylvania Farmers Association and the Pennsylvania Farmers Union give the im-

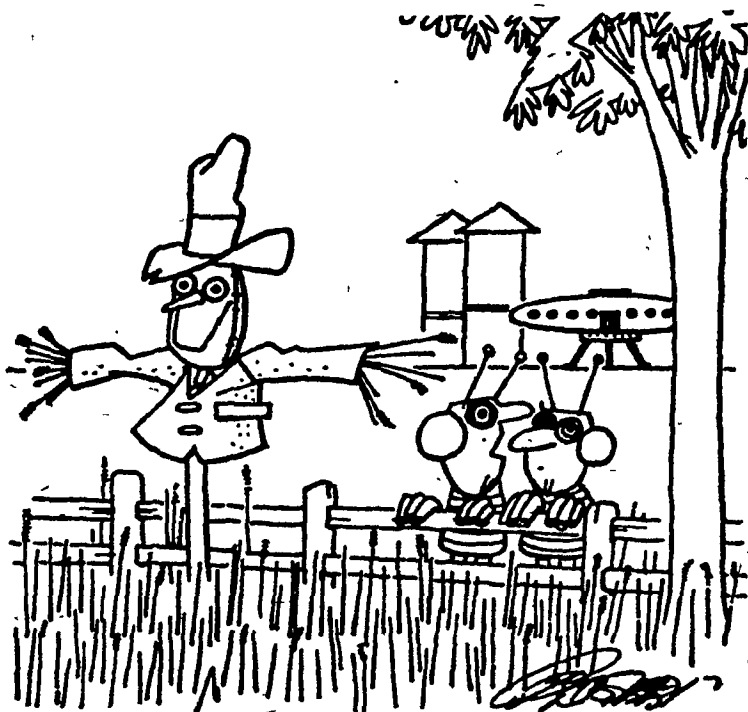
pression that ear cropping of dogs and failure to milk cows are new proposals in the law.

In fact they are part of the existing law and have been for many years, as has the section on hours of labor for horses.

The bill certainly does not "jeopardize" the farming industry, since the deprivation of shelter has

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HAY HAWS



"You try — I can't get a word out of him."