



Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

Snow 'em under with mail

The old adage, "unpredictable as the weather," was certainly apropos this week as our spring fevers were quickly cooled by almost a half-foot of snow, bringing our field work to a screeching halt here in the Lancaster area.

Other sections of the state didn't escape the white onslaught and were buried under even deeper coatings of snow in what was hopefully old man winter's last temper tantrum of the season.

To most of us, this Easter surprise seemed more like an April Fool's prank than a blessing. Although we all realize the benefits it provided in replenishing our water supplies and insulating our winter grains, let's face it — we've all had enough snow for one winter.

As I sulked my way to work through walls of drifted snow that towered high over the roof of my car, and cautiously plunged headlights first into blinding screens of blowing snow, it was hard to imagine that just last week this bleak white landscape was a variegated display of green plants and brown soil.

Almost feeling my way down the snow-blocked, one-lane road, I couldn't help wondering what I would do if I met up with a car heading the opposite direction. Would we crash head on and wind up hurting each other? Would I be the one to back down, or would I cautiously continue on until I could get by this temporary blockade? Then again, would it be better if I just stayed in one spot — that way at least I'd be safe even though I wouldn't be making much headway. The only risk I'd have would be getting buried by the blowing snow.

These same feelings and questions can also reflect how farmers are dealing with the animal welfare legislation responsibility that's falling on the shoulders of our congressmen in Washington.

Like April's blizzard, farmers didn't ask for House Joint Resolution 305 that calls for the establishment of a 16-person Farm Animal Husbandry Committee. Unlike the blizzard, however, this issue isn't likely to quietly melt away.

As a matter of fact, Congressman Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) has told farm groups throughout the nation that he is under pressure from animal welfarists and rightists to hold hearings on Res. 305. As chairman of the subcommittee where this legislation is pending, Harkin has two choices: ignore the requests and face losing the bill to another committee, or hold hearings with the risk of opening a Pandora's box for farmers.

Most farm organizations have adopted the wait and see what happens attitude towards animal welfare. That's fine in that it doesn't call any more attention to the issue, but burying our heads in the snow won't make the

problem disappear. To deal with the animal welfarists, we need to see where they're coming from and what direction they're planning to take next.

Many farmers are afraid of a head-on collision with the welfarist groups. They therefore hesitate to plot a course and strike out in a direction that could turn out to be a "one-way street" where obstacles are unknown and the outcome uncertain.

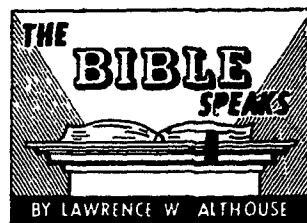
However, if we believe the reassurances of groups like the United Egg Producers, farmers have nothing to fear. They point out that the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology's recent study to determine if farm animals are suffering from confinement rearing turned up no conclusive arguments against present livestock and poultry management practices. The CAST study, done at the request of congressmen, utilized the expertise of some of the nation's top researchers, including Dr. Michael Fox, a person who is equated with the animal welfare movement.

And, even if we have a head on collision with the animal welfarists while traveling that uncertain road of legislative lobbying, doesn't it stand to reason the smaller "vehicle" will sustain the most damage? By far the larger of the two opponents, farm groups could have the more powerful impact on Washington congressmen and carry their message forward — "An efficient agriculture uses the best management practices available to produce the nation's cheap food. Any alteration in this management would achieve the end-result of higher-priced food with no real measurement of the emotional benefits to livestock and poultry."

The problem of waiting for the problem to pass by is evidenced by what is currently happening in Washington. As farmers are quietly waiting for their turn to continue undisturbed on their chosen path, the animal welfarists have been bombarding legislators and anyone else who'll listen with horror stories about cruelty to animals. Harkin has commented that most of the hundreds of letters he's received have come from these folks, with only a handful of farmers taking time to put their sentiments down on paper.

It's time for farmers to stir up their own paper storm in Washington. Let these city-slicker legislators know you're keeping an eye on their Res. 305 actions and that you oppose what it calls for — a 16-member committee that will attempt to tell farmers how to raise animals.

Don't wait until it's too late to sound off. After hearings are held and laws are passed, the freeze on farmer's freedoms will make the Blizzard of '82 seem like a flurry.



MARY TURNED!
April 11, 1982

Background Scripture:
John 20:1-20.

Devotional Reading:
1 Corinthians 15:42-50.

If you carefully read the resurrection accounts in the four Gospels you'll find that it is virtually impossible to put them together in a harmonious arrangement. There is just too much disagreement as to just who went to the tomb, who saw Jesus first, whether there were two angels, one or none, not to mention the discrepancies as to the exact nature of his resurrection appearance.

Given the nature of the experience, I do not find these discrepancies either surprising or troubling. If two readers cannot agree on the meaning of one of my columns, why should it surprise me that four witnesses can't agree on the nitty gritty of the resurrection?

I Have Seen The Lord!

The one unifying theme of the resurrection accounts — a theme that far out-weighs these unimportant discrepancies — is perfectly expressed in the testimony of Mary Magdalene to the disciples: "I have seen the Lord!" It matters little who else saw him, or precisely what we said or did when we saw him, or just what was the nature of the Person we "saw," so long as we too can say, "I have seen the Lord."

John the Evangelist does not tell us how the disciples reacted to Mary's declaration. He tells us that "she told them that he had

said these things to her," but nothing else. The very lack of an expression of enthusiasm on their part leads me to suspect that, even if they did not outright doubt her claim, neither did they seem to embrace it. After all, she had no proof whatsoever; only her word. And so it may be for us: no one can prove the resurrection to us. Thus, if someone claims, "I have seen the Lord," we have to decide whether or not to accept that witness. In short, the resurrection is a matter of faith, not proof.

Jesus Said: "Mary!"

Actually, faith had been the active ingredient even for Mary. At first, she did not even recognize Jesus. She assumed that he was the gardener. All the evidence seemed to indicate that someone had stolen the body of Jesus. But then, Jesus said to her, "Mary." Someone called her name and that Someone, she knew, could only be the Master. The resurrection Presence stood directly in front of her, but it was only when the Risen Lord spoke her name that Mary turned to him and recognized him? "She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabboni' (which means Teacher)."

He was the Master she had come to love and revere, yet, in a way, he was not quite the same. "Do not hold me..." Jesus warned her. The new relationship would not be that of a physical presence, but a new and even deeper one. The Presence would not be restricted by walls and doors, only the hardness of people's hearts.

John tells us that when Jesus later appeared to the twelve, "Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord." That must be the greatest understatement in the Bible! For when, like Mary, we hear him speak our name and we turn to the resurrected Christ, there are no words that can adequately convey that transforming experience.

OUR READERS WRITE, AND OTHER OPINIONS

Farmers care

Editor's Note - The following correspondence is a copy of a letter to President Ronald Reagan mailed March 27, 1982 by a Lancaster Farming reader. Her initiative in taking the farmer's story to the top is commendable.

On Wednesday evening March 24, 1982, at approximately 7:30 p.m. I hit an animal while driving. I stopped and found an unconscious dog. I picked up the dog to take it to a vet. I stopped at a neighbor to complete my original errand.

At that time I realized the dog was conscious. He got out of the truck and appeared to be all right. I returned home, fed and watered

the dog and began my quest for an agency to take him.

S.P.C.A., Humane League, and Dog Catcher are not listed in our local phone book. A friend suggested calling the sheriff's office. The deputy on duty was unable to help because the dog did not have a license. He suggested calling our township constable.

The name he gave me was not listed in the telephone directory. The next step was to call the county treasurer's office in the morning.

The treasurer's office took the necessary information and stated

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NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent
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To Inspect Pasture Fields

It won't be long before some permanent pastures will be ready to graze. I am afraid that some may be grazed before they are ready. However, another area that I would like to review, is that you should walk over the pasture areas before livestock is turned out. Remove all trash to prevent injury and poisoning. Unfortunately, people still use the rural areas to dispose of their solid trash. Some of this may contain glass or

poisons that will be harmful to livestock. Remove the junk before the livestock has a chance to become involved. If there is any evidence on the trash reflecting the guilty party, this information should be given to local officials. Most township regulations do not permit the dumping of solid waste on private property.

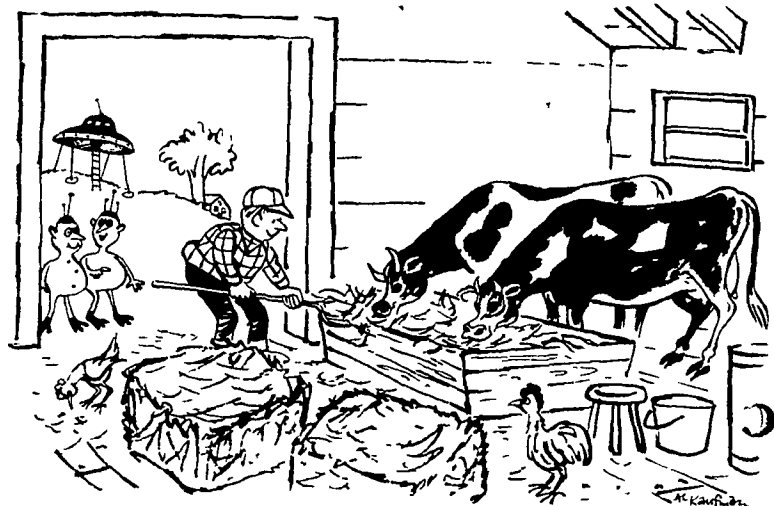
To Operate Machinery Sensibly

Farmers are always in a big hurry when the good spring weather arrives. As a result, they

operate their tractors and other machinery at too high a speed. This presents safety hazards and is the cause of too many accidents. Grain drills and corn planters are designed for accurate planting, if operated at a normal rate of speed. Often in the rush of things, we travel too fast and the planting job is disappointing. We urge farmers to take the time to properly prepare and adjust their machinery and then drive at a

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HAY HAWS



"THE INHABITANTS SEEM TO BE INTELLIGENT. THEY HAVE SERVANTS WAITING ON THEM!"