



Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

Free to disagree

As we prepare to celebrate our nation's independence for the 206th year, none of us can say we remember the first July Fourth festivities. But all of us easily remember how important this date is and what it has stood for over the years.

Because of the fortitude and dedication of those men who worked day and night drafting the standards by which our nation was shaped, Americans continue to enjoy the greatest freedoms of any people in any land. Freedom to agree, disagree, and most importantly, voice our opinions is an inheritance most of us take for granted when it should be our most cherished possession.

This freedom to have differing opinions, even when it means opposing government leaders, has created a nation where organizations representing various segments of the population can raise public outcries. Just last week, a message was shouted by farm groups throughout the U.S. as the House Agriculture Committee killed legislation aimed at bailing farmers out of the economic turmoil that threatens to drown them.

Twenty-one congressmen cast their votes against H.R. 6274, the 1982 Farm Crisis Act, which was introduced by fifteen Democrats and five Republicans. Its prime sponsor was Rep. Tom Daschle, a Democrat from South Dakota. It came as quite a surprise as last week's final vote was called and three of the bill's original sponsors switched their allegiance, throwing their votes to the "no" side.

Several farm organizations, including the National Farmers' Union, have blamed the 21-21 rejection of the supposedly non-partisan Farm Crisis Act on legislators following party lines, with Republicans kowtowing to the Reagan Administration wishes.

Pennsylvania Farmers' Union President Jim Brown reacted to the House Ag Committee's decision saying, "The Reagan Administration and the Congress sent notice to the American farmer they are willing to pull the life preserver away from a drowning man by failing to pass the Farm Crisis Act. They talk about reducing supplies and increasing prices for farmers, but when we come up with a plan to do just that and actually save the government some money, they oppose the measure."

H.R. 6274 would have provided for an additional five-percent paid diversion for major field crops in order to reduce production. It also would have called for an annual referendum each July for farmers to vote on a voluntary fifteen-percent diversion for the next year's crop. In return, they would have qualified for a ten percent loan rate increase. In addition, the Crisis bill would have mandated the use of Farmers Home Administration economic emergency loan funds, a \$1 billion

export credit revolving fund, and a guaranteed loan program for farm storage facility construction — all in an effort to bring supply in line with demand and improve farm prices.

Sticking with the Administration's cheap food policies, one of the chief opponents of the bill was the farmers' "champion" John Block, U.S. secretary of agriculture. Testifying before the House Committee, Block was unflinching in his stand against the bill.

"I'm afraid that the authors of this so-called Farm Crisis Act did not take the necessary time to analyze what could happen if this legislation were enacted into law," he criticized, adding the greatest danger he saw was that the legislation "could be taken seriously."

"This legislation is an attempt to deceive us into believing that it will lead agriculture out of a crisis. Common sense tells us that this Farm Crisis Act is destined to lead us into a crisis situation."

Block encouraged the legislators to "not spend a great amount of time considering a bill that is misleading, self-defeating, dangerous and unwanted by farmers." Instead, he advised them to work on lowering interest rates and expanding sales through exports.

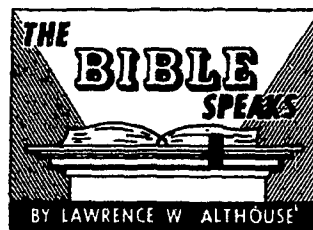
Because of the delays suffered by the Farm Crisis bill from the time it was introduced until last week, Block's reasons why the proposal would not work had merit:

"Calling for a five-percent paid diversion program for the 1982 crops is unrealistic. With most of the crops already planted, it is naive for anyone to believe farmers would pull a plow into five percent of it. American agriculture wasn't built on poor management decisions like that." (How quickly he forgets his own "timely" announcement of the "voluntary" acreage reduction program this spring.)

And, indeed, it would have been too late to set up the necessary avenues to hold a national referendum by July since we're already gearing up to celebrate July 4.

Boiling it all down, the Administration's opposition, the time of introduction, the lobbying effort against the bill by American Farm Bureau and the National Grange among others, and the party-line politics spelled defeat for the Farm Crisis bill almost from its inception.

We are disappointed and agree with Pennsylvania Farmers' Union's Brown who pointed out "the agriculture industry is going to have to improve if the nation is ever going to be aroused from its economic doldrums. Otherwise, without rectifying legislation, we can look forward to another harvest of red ink this year and more family farmers going out of business in record numbers."



A MAN CALLED "USEFUL"
July 4, 1982

Background Scripture:

Colossians 4:7-9; Philemon.

Devotional Reading:

Colossians 1:9-14.

Little known by Christians, seldom read and even less frequently understood, the letter of Paul to Philemon is Christian masterpiece.

If the statement I have just made causes you to blink just a bit, let me assure you that it has taken me far too long to come to that conclusion. Like many, I have often felt a sense of embarrassment in regard to this letter. On the face of it, it seems that the Apostle Paul is giving in to unspecified pressures to return the former slave (although legally he was still regarded as one) to his legal owner, Philemon, of the city of Colossae (today's Turkey.)

Double Jeopardy

What one might wish for in this letter from Paul is one of his typical clear, forthright pronouncements against the evil of slavery. But for once, Paul disappoints us — his letter to Philemon doesn't "ring" or command. In fact it is probably the Apostle's most low-key appeal in the New Testament.

Consider the facts: Onesimus had been the slave of Philemon and, at some time, had run away, probably stealing from his master in the bargain. Later, after his escape, he had come under the influence of Paul and been converted. In fact, it appears that

Onesimus (won-ESS-ee-muss) had become one of Paul's trusted associates, possibly during the time that Paul was under house arrest in Rome. If the story had ended there, it would have had a happy ending. But for some strange reason, Paul decides to persuade Onesimus to return to Philemon. Because slavery was perfectly legal in those days and Onesimus was regarded as Philemon's personal property, Paul's request of Onesimus was putting him in a very precarious position. There was nothing to keep Philemon from inflicting bondage on Onesimus once again.

I Prefer to Appeal

Yet, despite these appearances, Paul's letter to Philemon is more effective than any pronouncement or command. By appealing to Philemon, instead of compelling him to renounce all claims against Onesimus, Paul does a great deal more than simply secure Onesimus' freedom — he also manages to free Philemon from his bondage. As a slave owner, Philemon was even more a slave than Onesimus.

You may protest, however, that in using appeal instead of command, Paul was subjecting Onesimus to a considerable risk. Not really, for Paul knows Philemon and his Christian commitment and he is confident that Philemon's prejudices cannot withstand the appeal of Christ's gospel: "...for love's sake, I prefer to appeal to you." Paul's letter is so skillful that there is no way that Philemon can turn him down.

How cleverly he plays on the meaning of the name: Onesimus actually means "useful." As a slave, Onesimus had not been truly useful to Philemon, but as a brother in Christ he would be "useful" in a way no slave could ever be. Because of the compelling power of Christian love, the "useless" one becomes forever "useful" to God and his children.



- Monday, July 5**
Holstein Junior Judging School through Tuesday, Northampton/Bucks Counties, headquarters Sheraton Easton Inn, Easton.
- Tuesday, July 6**
Penn State Weed Days, continues tomorrow.
- Wednesday, July 7**
Lancaster County Conservation District meeting, 7:30 p.m., Farm and Home Center, Lancaster.
1982 Dairy Fitting and Showing workshop, Jefferson Co. Fairgrounds, Sykesville, continues tomorrow.
Holstein Junior Judging School,

- continues through Thursday, Blair/Huntingdon counties, headquarters Minuet Manor, Altoona.
- Southeastern Pa. FFA Market Hog Show and Sale, Quakertown Livestock Auction, Show at 10:30 a.m. Sale at 3 p.m.
- Pa. Ayrshire Breeders Firecracker Sale, Carlisle Fairgrounds.
- Thursday, July 8**
Bradford Co. Holstein bus tour to Ontario, Canada, continues through Saturday.
Keystone Stud Ram and Ewe Sale, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg.

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NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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To combine at the proper speed It will soon be time to harvest winter barley, and then in a few weeks, the winter wheat crop should be ripe. Both of these crops require mechanical harvesting equipment and good weather. From the volunteer grain seen growing following barley and wheat harvests, it is evident that too much grain is being left in the field.

Too much speed with the combine might be part of the reason that grain is thrown out with the

straw. The manufacturer recommendations should be followed in this respect. Also there are times when the grain may be too tough to combine. This is often the case when the crop is quite weedy. The best solution is to have the combine adjusted to the best of your knowledge and then drive at recommended speed. You'll need every bushel of grain and every bale of straw from your crop.

To beware of lead poisoning Livestock producers are reminded of the danger of lead

poisoning around the farm.

Cattle and sheep are curious and will lick crankcase oil, paints or old batteries. Some of these may contain enough lead to cause lead poisoning.

Signs of poisoning from lead are blindness, retarded growth, eye and ear twitching or uncoordinated gaits. Prevention is the only answer; lead poisoning is seldom curable. Keep dangerous materials away from all livestock.

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HAY HAWS



"Look, Leroy, I don't want you running up to me every 5 years asking for a raise!"