



Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

The right medicine?

It was bound to happen. Actually, it comes as no surprise. So then why does it make us so angry to learn that the minute a national help-program for farmers is announced, consumer groups across the nation raise their united voices in protest?

True, the 1983 wheat program announced by U.S. Agriculture Secretary John Block last week has some shortcomings even in the eyes of most farm groups; but it does offer some relief to those of us who are already feeling the economic crunch of another record wheat crop.

With less money in the bank from this year's harvest, a September acreage-diversion payment may be the ticket many farmers need to stay in business at least one more year. But, the payment certainly won't be the free ride consumer groups are shouting about.

It seems a bit unfair that 99 percent of the farm community can sympathize with these consumer advocates who carry the torch to hold down prices. What farmer wouldn't be tickled if the price of cars, gasoline, and other merchandise would hold steady or even drop during a year's time? Unfortunately, that doesn't seem to be as much the case for these items as for farm commodities.

As U.S. House Ag Committee Chairman E. Kika de la Garza says, it's not the farmer's responsibility to subsidize the American home. But, hasn't that been the case for decades?

Last week I had the opportunity to chat with a New York City native who was attending a leadership convention in Hershey. To my surprise, this labor union leader was quite knowledgeable about the current farm dilemma. His farm "education," he said, was learned through the television media.

Although he could not confess to being sympathetic, he was aware that farmers were going out of business and as a result farm equipment dealers, feed companies, and other agri-businesses were suffering from the ripple effects. And, this labor leader had the cause for this economic turmoil all figured out. Like other businesses, he realized agriculture was feeling the impact of too-high interest rates.

Knowing what caused the problem for farmers, however, didn't change this man's feelings about food prices. When asked if he felt city dwellers would be more willing to accept higher food prices if it meant keeping farmers in business, he just smiled.

With a shrug of his shoulders and a lift of his

hands, he answered, "Why should they care. Most everyone doesn't think food originates any further away than their corner supermarket. They don't worry how it got into the can or carton; just so it's on the shelf when they need it."

As far as their willingness to pay more for food, this Teamster leader said city consumers would be willing to pay more for food only if they earned more money — so that groceries wouldn't take a bigger bite out of their budgets.

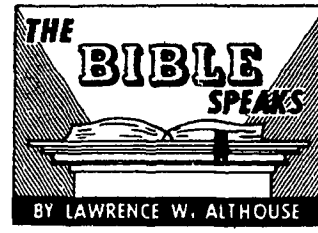
"If they get a raise, they don't mind seeing the farmer get one too. But, if they see the farmer getting more money and they are getting less, they'll condemn the farmers. They'll think the farmers are holding back food to drive up prices. They won't think any further than that."

To say farmers are caught between a rock and a hard place is quite an understatement. We need higher prices for our products in order to stay in business — growing costs keep going up. But the minute steps are taken to add a few coins to a farmer's income, the population masses rebel. And we all know whose voices carry the most weight behind them in our nation's capital — not the farm organizations' who represent the meager three percent of the nation that feeds and clothes the protestors.

It's interesting to hear how city-folks feel about farmers. Through our brief tete-a-tete, this New Yorker and I both came away from the conversation with a better insight into each other's situation. But, it also pointed out how vast a separation there is between city and country, and how wide a communication gap exists.

As this particular person stated, his knowledge of the farming situation was learned, correctly or incorrectly, through information broadcast by television. It's imperative that farmers and their organization representatives stop talking to themselves and instead make sure their city cousins are getting the true story of agriculture.

The story about the farmer, which usually ends up with a not-so-funny punch line, can no longer afford to be the butt of jokes shared at dinner or in the office. Although it may not make the most exciting newscast transmitted into our urban neighbors' homes, the real-life saga of farmers and their commitment to the land may be just the right medicine for making higher food prices easier to swallow.



THE JAILORS SAVED BY HIS PRISONER
July 25, 1982

Background Scripture: Acts 16:6-40

Devotional Reading: Acts 28:16-28

In the New Testament and in the years that followed in the life of the early church, Christians often found themselves imprisoned for openly following and teaching Jesus Christ. If you'll read these various passages in the New Testament, you'll note that Christian prisoners usually were unique, to say the least. They weren't like other prisoners. In fact, although these men were physically confined to a jail, there was a lingering apprehension among their jailors that it was the prisoners who seemed to be the free men.

The Prisoners Were Listening

That's the way it was with Paul and Silas at Philippi (Acts 16). Having been beaten and hauled before the magistrates upon their arrival in Philippi, Paul and Silas were put in jail. One would have expected the prisoners to be either discouraged or humiliated, perhaps even both. Instead in the midnight stillness of the prison there was heard these two men praying and singing hymns. What's more, we're told, "and the prisoners were listening to them."

Suddenly there is an earthquake and both the prisoners' letters and

cell door are sprung open. Waking with a start, the jailor jumped to the conclusion that the earthquake had made it possible for Paul and Silas to escape. The thought of his prisoners having escaped devastates him. Some commentators think that his despair arose from the fact that the town magistrates would execute him for allowing the prisoners to escape. Others lay his extreme reaction to his sense of humiliation. His pride was crushed.

Whatever his reason, the jailor soon finds himself where we sometimes find ourselves: he is overwhelmed with despair, he finds himself unable to cope with his situation, and he comes perilously close to giving up and calling it a day.

What Must I Do?

It is in this crucial moment that he hears Paul calling loudly to him: "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." In amazement, he calls for lights and finds that, in truth, his prisoners are waiting quietly within the jail. It is a picture of contrasts: on the one hand he is scared and desperate; on the other, even though he is the jailor, it is Peter and Silas who seem to be in control. "Men," he asks desperately, "what must I do to be saved?" The jailor needs the help of his prisoner.

How often you and I find ourselves either frightened or in deepest despair and we turn to God to ask what we must do to be saved. Whether our danger is physical or spiritual, we want to be redeemed of all this. It seems we just can't go on one more hour, that we have reached the end of our faith, that nothing is working out the way it's supposed to.

But the answer is as simple and complex as it has ever been: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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To Control Canada Thistle
Canada Thistle is listed as a noxious weed in Pennsylvania; this means they should be controlled and not allowed to go to seed. Too often we see what some people call "summer snow flakes" floating through the air. These are not snow flakes but thistle seeds. We should insist that these be mowed or sprayed to prevent seed formation.

Most townships have noxious weed ordinances to prevent the spread from farm to farm, of Canada thistles and other noxious weeds. These ordinances should be enforced for the best interest of all farmers. You can spot spray with Banvel for control. Be sure to follow all label instructions. We urge everyone to do something about this problem.

To Control Erosion

We were blessed with timely rains this spring and early summer, but some of the rains have been very heavy and created considerable run-off. It emphasized the need for terraces, contours and strips to control these large amounts of water.

The use of diversion ditches and sodded waterways above the area to be protected should be considered.

When surface water is not controlled around the premises we also have the added danger of surface water entering our well supplies; this can cause the water to be unfit for human consumption, and in some cases, increases the nitrate content of the water supply. We need to be concerned with controlling these large amounts of

water on the land and around farm buildings.

For Hot Weather Feedbunk Management

During hot weather, nature often works against you in getting rapid, efficient gains, reminds Chester D. Hughes, Extension Livestock Agent. This is usually the result of soured, moldy or overheated feed and dirty water. Some special precautions will help those cattle gaining.

(1) Clean bunks at least twice per week. More often if moldy feed is observed.

(2) Be sure you are feeding enough silage or high moisture grain each day to prevent spoilage. Ammonia-treated silage has longer bunk life before heating and molding.

(3) Regulate feed offered so that feed is not allowed to accumulate in the bunks.

(4) Feed two or three times per day rather than only once.

(5) Feed early in morning and late in day. Avoid the hot early afternoon.

(6) Clean watering devices at least once each week.

To Consider Early Castration of Foals

Early castrations in ponies, even at 10 days of age have been done successfully and is a good practice for these reasons:

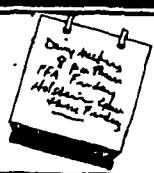
(1) Less distress and trauma to the animal.

(2) Easier to handle at this age.

(3) Quicker recovery from the surgery, with fewer post surgical complications. (The mare exercises the foal and supplies moral support).

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Farm Calendar



Saturday, July 24
Pa. Angus Field Day, 9 a.m., South Branch Farms, York.
Pa. Nut Growers Assn. Field Day, Dry Run.
Bradford Jersey Club picnic, Bruce Andren's farm, W. Burlington.
Cavencrest Canadian Classic Red & White Sale, 12:30 p.m., Lancaster Guernsey Pavilion.
Shippensburg Community Fair,

Cumberland County, continues through Saturday.
Brown Swiss and Jersey Field Days, Frederick County, Md. Fairgrounds.
Lancaster County Swine Producers Association annual pig roast, 6:30 p.m., West Lampeter Community Fairgrounds.

12:30 p.m., Wye Research Center, Queenstown, Md.
Clarion County Fair, New Bethlehem, continues through Saturday.

Monday, July 26
Butler County Fair, continues through Saturday.
Goshen Country Fair, West Chester, continues through

Sunday, July 25
Md. Angus Association Field Day,

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