



# Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

## Which referendum next?

There's a word that has become commonplace in agricultural circles in the past several years. It's a word that lends itself well to popular revision to suit each commodity adjective that is attached. The word, as many of you might guess, is r-e-f-e-r-e-n-d-u-m.

Farmers have been watching the rise and fall of several of these bureaucratic polls recently. In 1980 there was the "beef referendum" in which cattle producers across the nation voted "no" to a promotion checkoff program aimed at increasing beef sales. Fresher still in our memories is the Pennsylvania "milk referendum" which was rejected by the state's dairy producers.

Now we have the "sheep referendum" which will be coming up for a national vote Aug. 16-27 and the "eggerendum" which will be voted on this fall.

Sheep producers across the U.S. who have witnessed a constant decline in their product's consumption will have their turn to signal a thumbs-up or thumbs-down decision on another promotion plan. A "yes" vote would provide the necessary affirmation for the American Sheep Producers Council, located in Denver, to continue their efforts in getting lamb back on the American menu.

Don Meike, a Wyoming rancher who serves as chairman of the board of directors for the National Wool Growers Association, stresses "promotion is a key element in the total mix of business factors which add up to progress for the sheep industry." He notes "sheep producers need responsible leadership, research, new product development, and an effective promotion program."

To vote in this election, anyone who has owned sheep six months of age or older for 30 days during 1981 can "register" at the local Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office. What sheep producers will be deciding is whether to contribute financially to their own survival program and put their marketing future in the hands of USDA and the ASPC.

Whether the sheep referendum will follow in the footsteps of beef and milk is up to the producers. If they're worried about getting fleeced by another sales promotion scam, all they have to do is review the proven track record of the ASPC, a council that has already untangled much misinformation about wool and lamb by educating consumers on the proper way to cook the delicacy dish and store woolen clothing.

But, will that be enough to offset the growing problem of more sheep and lambs, and fewer markets for wool and mutton?

Recent USDA statistics show lamb and mutton production up 9 percent from a year ago. And, like many other agricultural commodities, the sheep industry is not immune to the negative impacts of foreign imports.

Poultrymen, too, will have a chance to vote on an increased check-off program this fall. Although a year ago, this proposal to increase the promotion pot wouldn't have stood much chance of passing, the break in the downward slide of sales has given this year's egg referendum a greater than 50 percent chance.

The American Egg Board, like the farmers it serves, is learning the cold, hard facts about the inflationary freeze on programs. What was spent on bringing the incredible, edible egg's benefits to the consumer's attention when the promotion program started four years ago now only buys half the media time and space.

Although most poultrymen hate to part with any of their egg money, they have learned during the past 30 years that without promotion they're in real financial trouble, something a few of the other farm commodities have refused to recognize.

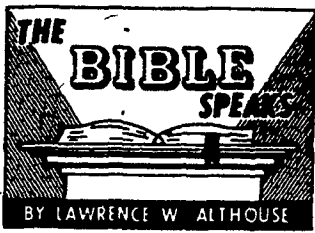
As Walt Buescher, a Sperry New Holland marketing specialist, points out, "Farmers can never produce too much — they sell too little. Somewhere along the line farmers got the idea they were somehow exempt from the responsibility of having to sell their goods. If they're going to produce it, they're going to have to sell it, too."

And, as Buescher notes, the way to sell more farm produce is not by dishing out nutrition sermons at supermarket checkout counters. We, also, don't need anymore free recipe books sitting on shelves and collecting dust.

Today's checkoff dollars and cents must be channeled to areas where they'll stand the best chance for increasing agricultural sales — in developing export markets, in improving production efficiency through research, and in finding out what consumers require and then changing to meet those needs.

Of course, there's no overnight answer to agriculture's marketing problems. Like the egg industry, it's taken years to develop and it sometimes takes years to recognize the fact that something has to be done.

Like the automobile industry's Chrysler Corporation when faced with sagging car sales, and lots filled with oversized gas guzzlers, farmers must also change the "models" of livestock and other produce to attract buyers. And once we make the change, we have to sell it to the public. Otherwise, the "Toyotas" of the food industry will be more than willing to step in.



## RIVALS AND FELLOW WORKERS August 1, 1982

Background Scripture: Acts 18:24 through 19:7; 1 I Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:4-6.

Devotional Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:6-13.

Almost seven years ago I left the pastorate of a wonderful congregation where I had been the minister thirteen years. In my last sermon to this congregation, I said:

"Let me make one thing clear: you will not honor me by allowing Calvary Church to go downhill after my departure. My greatest satisfaction will always be, not in hearing how poorly you have done when I have left, but in how you grow on from here. The vindication of my work here will be in its endurance...Paul says, 'so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. If Calvary does not go forward from this moment, my work will have been for nothing.'"

What Then Is Apollos? Apparently, the congregation took this admonition to heart, continuing to prosper and grow under two subsequent pastors. Last week the congregation celebrated its 50th anniversary and the man who served as interim pastor after I departed sent a letter in which he spoke of his experience with this congregation: "I was struck by...the strong lay leadership that functioned during

that period...I was impressed by the sense of 'family' and rootage that I found, people who knew each other intimately, people who cared and shared. Attendance did not wane, the budget did not suffer from malnutrition, the choir sang beautifully. I was in essence privileged to see a community of believers in Christ."

You'll excuse me, I hope, if for a moment I experience some pride in reading those words. But perhaps you'll ask: "Pride? But he never mentioned your name?" Oh, but he did and in the best possible manner. He assured me that my work was not in vain.

Any of us who work in the church-lay or clergy-must bear in mind that, no matter how much recognition we get from our congregation, church school class, official board or committee, it is what we plant, water and nurture into growth that is important.

God Gives the Growth When Paul wrote his first letter to the church at Corinth, he made reference to the factions that existed there. Some people saw themselves as "Paul's people," others "Apollos people," some "Peter's people." It is understandable that these people wished to honor those who had helped them so much. But Paul reminds them that they belong to no teacher or Apostle. They are "Christ's people," and their church is the product of the labors of many different people. "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." Paul and Apollos both made their contribution to this church, but it was God alone who was behind whatever success they experienced.

Paul and Apollos were fruitful in their work for Christ because apparently they understood what often escapes us: "For we are fellow workers for God."

## NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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### To Make Summer Alfalfa Seedings

Late July and early August are good times to seed alfalfa, particularly in this part of the state. When seeded during this period, the plants have time to become established before freezing weather arrives. Alfalfa is still one of our major forage crops and deserves the very best of planning and management. Band seeding is the best method to make this seeding.

Weed control is a "must" with a straight seeding without a nurse crop. Many stands are injured by poor weed control during the first year. Refer to your 1982 Agronomy Guide for assistance on weed control practices. Be aware that alfalfa should not be planted in ground that has been treated for corn weed control during the past year, especially fields sprayed with atrazine. Alfalfa is an excellent forage crop; however it does require attention and good management.

### To Order Winter Grain Seed

It is not too early to be ordering your winter grain needs. The seeding of winter oats is only about six weeks away with winter barley and winter wheat close behind. Some growers may choose to use their own seeds, but this is questionable in many cases. We continue to stress that using certified seed is the best practice. It may cost a few dollars more at the beginning, but usually will result in greater yields. Home-grown grains should be cleaned, treated and tested for germination

before using. By ordering now, your chances of getting the variety and quality of seed you want is much better. Don't put it off until you have to take what is available at seeding time.

### To Evaluate Weed Control

By this time of year, any weed problems in your fields are fairly evident and probably beyond control. But now is a good time to develop an effective program for next year.

The easiest way to check for the effectiveness of different herbicides is to leave a small part of your field untreated. This gives you a chance to tell what weeds were controlled and what ones were missed. However, if you didn't do this, you should be able to find spots where the sprayer missed. These will usually be areas near the ends of the fields and will serve your purpose quite well.

If several types of weeds seemed to have escaped control, you should check the herbicide container label as to whether the material was designed to eliminate those weeds.

If your entire weed control program seemed to be ineffective, reread the label to see if you followed instructions. Just a few simple mistakes during application can result in complete failure. Either too much or too little rain soon after application can often cause a great loss of effectiveness in many herbicides. in many herbicides.

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## Farm Calendar

- Saturday, July 31
  - Schuylkill County 4-H Dairy Roundup.
  - Pa. Cattlemen Summer Field Day, Devereux-Soleil Farms, Downingtown, 9:30 a.m.
  - York County Beekeepers Association corn roast, 5 p.m., Erwin Miller home, New Freedom.
  - Laurelton, continues through Saturday.
  - Harford County 4-H Fair, Rocks State Park, Jarrettsville, Md., continues through Thursday.
- Sunday, Aug. 1
  - Heart of Penn Goat Club, 2 p.m., wine & cheese party.
  - Union County West End Fair.

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