



# Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

## Nothing to fear

Farming is, and always has been, a risky business — not only in the financial sense but physically as well.

Most of us can probably relate our share of horror stories based on farm-related mishaps and near catastrophes. But somehow, no matter how often we're reminded of the danger, we seem to think "those kinds of accidents can't happen to me."

I remember one story told to me during my earlier years that succeeded in giving me a profound respect for farm machinery, especially tractors, and the damage it can inflict on careless or unskilled operators. The story was about one of our neighbors who lost her mother in a freak accident; of how the tractor unexplainably went out of control as it was pulling a wagon out of the barn, rolled over the edge of the barn bank, and crushed its terrified driver.

What actually went wrong? No one ever found out. But, the accident most likely was the result of an extra hand being needed during haying time. Without the necessary instructions or training, a temporary driver was hoisted up onto the tractor seat, and by taking the wheel without questioning, took her life.

But gasoline-powered "workhorses" aren't the only culprits in the gruesome statistics of farm accidents. We also hear sad tales about deaths or injuries sustained when normally docile, lumbering equines unexpectedly bolt for the barn, trampling or impaling their teamsters.

These are morbid memories that come back to haunt and hopefully help us in realizing just how dangerous our occupations as farmers can be.

Even though farmers sometimes have a difficult time accepting or remembering the dangers we face each day, each time we climb into a waiting bull's pen or step on the first rung of the silo chute, the public doesn't share this disregard for safety on the farm.

Admittedly, their concern about farm safety comes from a selfish perspective. The nonfarm public is not so much concerned about the farmer's health and well-being as they are their own. They don't worry so much whether a farmer may develop health problems as a result of occupational hazards, but they are gravely concerned if various farm practices might pose potential hazards to them.

For example, let me share a story told by Arthur Hart of the National Agricultural Chemical Association to the assembled members of PennAg Industries this week. Although he could be accused of having a somewhat biased point of view, he pointed out some surprising and alarming results of a Philadelphia firm's survey.

What did the survey ask? According to Hart, a list of the 30 greatest health hazards was developed by experts in the field. After the list was made, the public was asked to take the list

and put the substances they felt were most dangerous in descending order.

The results of the survey, which polled recent college graduates, business professionals, and homemakers, left no doubt as to how the public feels about pesticides.

You see, pesticides was one of the substances on the list. In actuality, they appeared at the very bottom of the danger list — being tied with three other hazards for twenty-sixth place. But in the survey groups' eyes, pesticides ranked fourth, tenth and fourteenth.

Although Hart could not recall all the substances on the "30-most-hazardous" list, the sum and substance of his tale was easy to understand. By telling his story, Hart was not attempting to exonerate pesticides from being labelled dangerous substances, which they can be if not handled properly. Instead, his point was aimed at the public's paranoia of pesticides and what this fear could ultimately do to farmers.

Hart explained that this unjustified alarm over agricultural pesticides has led to some states drafting legislation which would "handcuff" and shackle farmers' freedoms to operate. One bill was drawn up which would require farmers to notify adjacent landowners of their intent to spray prior to filling the tanks and heading for the field.

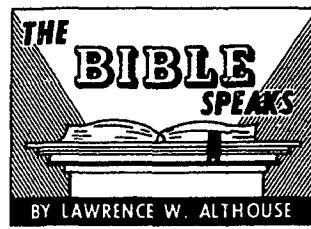
One state took this idea one idiotic step further and tried to require prenotification via registered mail. A farmer would have to send out certified letters to all parties and could not spray until all had responded with written permission to his request.

Why, an entire growing season could come and go before those farmers would be able to assemble the necessary paperwork. And, if just one die-hard environmentalist happens to be living next door, the farmer may as well nail up the "For Sale" sign and save the postage.

This week hearings continued in Washington D.C. on federal regulations covering the use and manufacture of pesticides, insecticides and the like, with farm lobbyists and their agribusiness counterparts pleading their cases to predominantly urban congressmen. Although the federal regulations do not seem to threaten farmers with the hand-tying results of the state fiascos previously cited, the problem remains — "pestiphobia." If agriculture's future use of chemicals is to continue, much needs to be done to educate the public and some unthinking farmers on the safety factors built into a sound pesticide or insecticide program.

Next week is National Farm Safety Week. While you're busy filling silos, baling your last cutting of hay, or fixing the toaster, think safety. And keep Hart's warnings and predictions in mind so that next spring, when it's time to spray, you'll handle farm chemicals with both yourself and your neighbor in mind.

Remember, a little courtesy goes a long way in clearing up the public's fears of pesticide drift.



THE SAME, YET DIFFERENT  
September 19, 1982

Background Scripture:  
Genesis 27 through 28;  
31 through 32.

Devotional Reading:  
Genesis 35:1-15.

I did not really recognize Allen, although when we shook hands there was something vaguely familiar about both his name and his appearance. I dismissed this "odd feeling" until much later in our conversation a chance remark he made led us both to realize that we had met perhaps ten or more years ago under very different circumstances in a little New England town.

At that time I was visiting a facility for delinquent and troubled youth and Allen was a "graduate" of the program who decided to stay on to help as a lay therapist, working with teenagers who, like himself, had considerable emotional problems and had been in some kind of difficulties with the law. I remember looking at Allen and wondering just how rehabilitated he was. In his eyes there were still a lot of that cunning that had made him a despair to his parents and community.

"I Am Not Worthy"  
And then I forgot Allen and he forgot me...until yesterday's chance meeting. (Was it really "chance"?) As I left the house to keep an appointment, I was sur-

prised I had made, if Valere had asked me, "You aren't really interested in that proposal, why are you going?" I could not have satisfactorily answered her. Was it the hand of God prodding me that led me to say "yes, I'll come"?)

Yesterday afternoon when at last Allen and I recognized each other, I couldn't help but wonder to myself: "Is he really as different as he appears?" Around the eyes and the mouth there seemed to linger some flickering traces of the old Allen. Yet, it was obvious that he was a vastly different Allen than the delinquent teenager who had been sent East by his desperate parents.

It is this same paradox that always strikes me when I read the story of Jacob. Obviously a rascal in the deepest sense—a person of both charm and cunning who uses and manipulates people to get what he wants—Jacob nevertheless returned to his homeland many years later as a man who had changed so much that God would give him a new name. No More Be Called "Jacob"

The Jacob/Israel who returned to his homeland, however, was not just a new person in a familiar body, but the same personality that had been transformed by his encounters with God. The new Israel still had the old Jacob's charm, sly intelligence and "take charge" assertiveness. He was still as skillful as ever with his persuasive use of words. The essential ingredients of the old Jacob were still in the new Israel.

What made the old scoundrel a new patriarch was the driving force behind all those personal attributes and character traits. God took what Jacob gave him of himself and re-directed it in a new direction and for a new purpose.

And what he did in making Jacob Israel, he can do with you.

## NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent  
Phone 717-394-6851



### To Observe National Farm Safety Week

The proclamation of September 19-25 as National Farm Safety Week is very important during this busy corn harvest and fall grain planting season. Safety is something we should practice all the time, but we need a gentle reminder sometimes. Here are some safety rules that apply to everyone:

\*\*Read and follow the operator's manual for each machine you're using.

\*\*Make sure all workers are trained and competent to carry out their work safely.

\*\*Keep all shielding in place. Stay away from unshielded moving parts.

\*\*Always disengage and turn off the engine before unclogging, adjusting or servicing equipment.

\*\*Watch where you are going.

\*\*Keep extra riders off and away.

\*\*Take work breaks with refreshments to maintain alertness and reduce fatigue.

Let's have a safe harvest season and a safe year.

### To Be Aware of Century Farm Programs

The Century Farms Program is aimed at recognizing the efforts of Pennsylvania's farm families which have preserved the traditions and the rural heritage of the pioneer farm.

The program was initiated as part of the nation's bicentennial observance in 1976, but is being continued for its value in promoting the ideals of the family farm and the importance of farming to Pennsylvania's economy.

To be eligible for Certification as a Pennsylvania Century Farm, a farm must have been owned by the same family for at least 100 consecutive years, and a family member must currently reside on the land. In addition, the farm must consist of ten or more acres of the original holdings or gross at least \$1,000 a year from the sale of agricultural products.

We encourage you to participate in this program that is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

Applications are available at the County extension Offices.

### To Mow Weedy Pastures

If your pasture is weedy, get out the mower. There are two good reasons for this; one it eliminates the production of weed seeds. Two, it removes mature forage which lets plants send out new and tender growth. But, before you mow, you should graze the pasture heavily. With grazing you can utilize all the available feed. The animals eat some weeds, but they also eat some of the tall grasses that would be wasted by mowing. If the dry weather is taking its toll, it is not a good idea to mow all your pastures at one time because of problems with poor regrowth. Under these conditions you should mow only one-third to one-half of the land about every two weeks. Remember to mow closely...2 to 3 inches. And instead of trashing the clippings, save them. Many farmers get enough hay from pasture mowings to winter their cattle.

### To Check Water Supplies

Quality drinking water is a great asset on the farm as well as in the

(Turn to Page A12)

## Otis

