

Saturation point

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

Is there any ag area in the world that has higher total livestock and poultry concentrations than in Lancaster County? I doubt it.

Sure, there are counties in California with more dairy cows and places in Virginia with greater numbers of beef cows. Counties in Iowa have more pigs and there are places cropping up with more chickens.

But, when you put all of these four categories of livestock and poultry together, I doubt if there is another county with a greater overall density.

And with these Lancaster County densities have come problems:

--Pseudorabies was concentrated in Lancaster County and has hung on for a couple of years.

--Now, there's a very serious problem with Avian influenza in poultry.

--And, of course, the problem of disposing of the mountains of wastes from these livestock densities has caused not only ag pollution of wells and streams in Lancaster County, but has contributed significantly to the so-called "nutrient loading" of the Chesapeake Bay.

In the case of pseudorabies and Avian influenza, the densities perhaps were not the direct original cause of their introduction (and

this point could be argued), but the high concentrations of hogs and chickens certainly has contributed to spread of the diseases in the county and beyond and has made it all the more difficult to bring them under control and eradicate.

It's a lot like having a half-dozen little kids and one comes home from school with a cold. You can be sure that the cold will run its course through the entire brood before you can get it out of the house.

While pseudorabies and the Avian have not had direct ramifications for the consuming public through the meat or eggs, it has caused serious problems for hog and poultry operators. How serious? Ask the Eastern Lancaster County hog breeder who depopulated his entire breeding herd, cleaned up and literally started over. Or, the owner of the layer operation who recently lost 11,000 out of 60,000 birds and had egg production drop from 40,000 eggs a day to zero.

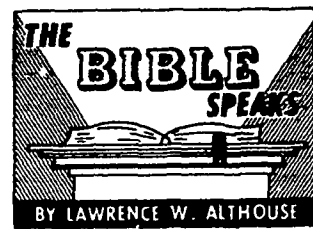
What has been the total cost of these two diseases? The bill likely is already in the millions and still climbing.

Perhaps, it's time that the various livestock and poultry organizations in Lancaster County start policing themselves. At some point, livestock and poultry densities are going to have to be a factor to be considered concerning future expansion. And the densities will need to be viewed not only from an operational health standpoint, but from one of waste disposal.

And, consideration of health and waste disposal doesn't even include the increasing social problems that are being prompted by livestock densities between farm and non-farm neighbors.

Is there a saturation point for livestock and poultry numbers that can be satisfactorily maintained on a given number of square miles of land in one county?

The Lancaster County farm community better start thinking about this question before it -- like so many other questions -- is answered for them by those outside of agriculture.



IT IF FEELS GOOD
October 30, 1983

Background Scripture:
Exodus 19: 306; Jeremiah 3:31-34;
Hebrews 8:6-13.
Devotional Reading:
Jeremiah 31:31-34

A new commandment has been given to us: "If it feels good, do it."

Well, we've been "doing it" but I'm not sure just how "good" we're feeling about it. Oh, individually, we may think it "feels pretty good," but as a society we seem to sense a great void in our moral climate. Oh the one hand, we wildly celebrate the lifting of all the old restraints, while on the other we mourn the loss of our foundations. We like the new moral freedom for ourselves, but we're disturbed about what it's doing to our neighborhood.

THE OCCASION

In a sense, this same ambivalence haunted the Christian Jews of the early church. They recognized that the old covenant of Judaism was not enough. At the same time, they couldn't feel secure without it. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews says, "For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second" (8:7). He acknowledges that the new covenant in Christ is "more excellent than the old" and was enacted on better promises.

Actually the "new morality" of whether "it feels good" is built on the perception that the old

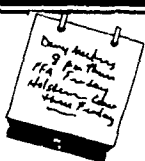
morality based on rules and regulations is not adequate. Just as in Jesus' day, the people had become too dependent upon rules, so in our own times we had become perhaps too dependent upon the written covenants. The admonition to "do it" if it "feels good," was an attempt to take the responsibility for our lives away from written rules and place it within our own hearts. In a sense this is what the prophet Jeremiah had prophesied: "I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts" (31:33). No wonder it seemed so "right" to regard the old rules as obsolete. The writer of Hebrews himself had said of the written covenants: "In speaking of a new covenant he treats the first as obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away" (8:13).

But, the new covenant is not something less than the old, but something more. It is not a lower standard if morality, but a higher one. It is based upon, neither what someone else says is right or what I think is good for me, but upon what I believe God says is good with him. To be sure, it is harder than the old way; it places more responsibility upon each of us. "And they shall not teach every one his fellow or every one his brother, saying 'Know the Lord,' for all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest."

MY LAWS

In our zeal to have done with the old rules, we have tended to misread God's intention. It was never that we should replace the old laws with our rules, but that the laws of God would be written on all our hearts: "I will put my laws into their minds and write them on their hearts." So, it is not a matter of something feeling "good" to us, but of "feeling good" because it is perceived by us as being good with God.

Farm Calendar



Sunday, Oct. 30
Standardbred Horse Sale at the Farm Show Complex. Continues through Monday.

Tuesday, Nov. 1
Water Resources Meeting at Honesdale High School at 8 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 2
Lancaster Conservation District meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Farm and Home Center.

1983 Southeastern Seminar at Howard Johnsons Motel, Newark, Del.

Hunterdon County Board of Agriculture meeting, "Ag in Classroom," at 8 p.m. in the Extension Center.

Thursday, Nov. 3
Show Window Sale at the University of Delaware Dairy Farm, Newark, Del.

Chester County DHIA banquet at 7 p.m. at East Brandywine Firehall.

Dauphin County Dairy Night at 7 p.m. at Camp Hebron.

Lancaster County Poultry Association annual banquet at 6:15 p.m. at Good and Plenty Restaurant.

Friday, Nov. 4
Keystone International Livestock Exposition. Continues through Nov. 9.

Pa. Livestock Association banquet at the Holiday Inn in Grantville at 7 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 5
North American International Livestock Exposition, Louisville, Ky. Continues through Nov. 19. Includes dairy division shows, sheep and beef.

20th annual Pa. Suffolk Bred Ewe Sale at the Farm Show Complex at 5 p.m.

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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To Check Ventilation Equipment For Winter

Exhaust fans in dairy and poultry houses have a heavy ventilation job to do. They remove moisture and dust, and in many cases run almost continually from October to April.

To make your ventilation system ready for winter, several items may need attention. The fan blades, motor enclosures and louvered shutters need cleaned frequently. Loose belts are common on belt driven fans. Fan output varies directly with fan speed. A 10 percent loss in RPM's of the fan means a 10 percent loss in air delivery.

Check the thermostat for accuracy by hanging a thermometer beside it for easy comparison. Be

sure the sensing element is clean and free from dust.

Have your fan motor protected by adequate overload protectors. Protection is secured by using thermal overload switches in the power line, or you may use a time-delay motor fuse.

To Pick and Store Apples
Whether you grow apples or just like to eat them, it's important to store them properly.

Cool apples will keep longer. Ideally, they should be stored at 33° F., at 90 percent humidity, and in dim light or darkness.

Now as to picking, it's a good practice to store the fruit in shade as it's picked, then allow it to stand in the orchard overnight to cool. Then, place the apples in storage early in the morning before the

temperature rises too much.

If you leave apples in a packing shed or in piles under the tree for one week, you'll shorten their storage life by about five weeks. So, keep apples cool, maintain good air circulation during storage, and your apples should keep a long time.

To Hunt Safely

The small game hunting season opened on Saturday. We need to remind ourselves to be courteous and considerate while hunting on farms. We encourage all hunters to practice good relations between farmers and hunters. Criticism of hunting often starts because a few hunters forget the landowner is his host. By observing a few sensible hunting manners, hunters will keep themselves from becoming uninvited guests.

Most landowners permit reasonable hunting. Asking permission to hunt is a small courtesy in return for a pleasant day in the field; yet too few people follow this rule. Landowners may actually need protection from indifferent, careless and destructive hunters. When the trouble starts, many farmers post their land for protection from irresponsible hunters.

It takes very little time and costs nothing to observe a few common courtesy rules while hunting: ask permission before hunting, close gates, pick up litter after eating lunch and stay out of unharvested crops. Keep a safe distance from

(Turn to Page A12)

Otis

