



Christmas on farm

Part I

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

(This is the first segment of a four-part holiday message from a Christmas on a small Pennsylvania farm a number of years ago.)

It was a small farm by today's standards. Three cows, a few pigs and some chickens.

It's the kind of a farm that people like to remember they were from. But if you plopped it down in the middle of today's modern ag operations, it would stand out like a sore thumb. It would be outdated, archaic and couldn't begin to make it.

But life on the farm was a lot different back then. Life on the farm was filled with lessons. Hardly a day went by that a living lesson for later life wasn't experienced. And Christmas was no exception.

Fields were postage-stamp sized -- hewn from the surrounding woods and partitioned with countless uncovered rocks. A central rock-lined corridor led off from the barn and the fields and meadow branched off from it.

Today, this layout is cited as inefficient and a waste of land. Back then though, individual character of a farm molded by practicality was considered more important than maximum fence-row productivity.

Even the smallest boy could easily chase the cows back up the access corridor to the barn and many an adventure was experienced in climbing over those walls.

The chickens ran freely from hen house down the wood ramp into the fenced-in yard that stretched off into the partially cleared woodland.

That chicken house was the source of a pre-Christmas ritual in which the small boy and father participated. They delivered dressed chickens to city and town folk for their holiday dinner tables. For the father, the holiday chicken route provided a little extra for the family's holiday and the boy, although he admitted it only to himself, liked to tag along for the extra treats he often received.

And, part of that ritual included a stop at the small abode of a retired carpenter, who repaired and nailed together the assortment of boxes and crates in which the dressed birds were delivered.

To everyone, he was the "old German." Few



had ever heard him speak any English.

One of the early stops on the first day of deliveries was the big, brightly-painted house of the foreman of the mill in the nearby town. It was one of the boy's "treat" stops.

Sure enough, the wife of the mill foreman had a shiny, new nickel for the boy. Quickly, he secreted it in a pocket of his well-worn jacket -- handed down from an older brother.

As the father turned the old pickup truck into the lane after a day of deliveries, the boy slipped off his mitten. Throughout the day, he had spent the coin a hundred times in his mind.

"Its gonna burn a hole in your pocket," the father warned.

When he slipped his little hand into the pocket all he found was emptiness and a small hole in the corner where the coin had been.

That night, the boy could hardly eat. After spending the coin over and over in his head, he would never get to really spend it.

As the family sat around the supper table, the father asked:

"Do you go along merely for the treats or to help deliver something that will make Christmas a little better for both us and others?"

"Spending money in your mind often buys only one thing -- empty worthless thoughts.

"Before you got the coin, your head was filled with a happy holiday.

"Now, you can only think of what might have been and of what you might have bought.

"What did you really lose -- you're no poorer than when we left this morning."

The father's words failed to get through and comfort the little boy.

In his youthful mind, he could only think of tomorrow's route and the other possible treats he might get.

PART II -- NEXT WEEK

p.m. at Thompson's Dairy Bar, Newton, Lackawanna County.

Wednesday, Dec. 7

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

Market Outlook Conference (PFA) at the Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg. Continues tomorrow.

Regional no-till meeting at the Berks County Ag Center.

Hunterdon County, N.J., Board of Agriculture meeting at 8 p.m. at the Extension Center.

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THE BIBLE SPEAKS
BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE
WHEN THE LION SHALL EAT STRAW
December 4, 1983

Background Scripture:
Isaiah 2:1-5; 62; 65:17-25.
Devotional Reading:
Isaiah 65:17-25.

I am glad that R was not President of the United States on that September day when the Soviet Union shot down Korean Airlines flight 007 and wantonly killed its 269 passengers.

I am glad because, upon learning of this terrible crime, my reaction rose up from the depths of the same human emotions that have perpetuated the ancient tragedy of demanding "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." And, although that emotion is entirely understandable and hallowed by the civilization in which we live, one does not have to be blessed with great wisdom or prophetic powers to see where it has brought us -- not to mention where it could still take us.

PLOWSHARES AND PRUNING HOOKS

I am very grateful that President Reagan, although shocked and outraged with the rest of us, was able to withstand those emotions and lead this nation in a response that did not compound one tragedy with yet another. For, when the first tides of anger and horror recede, most of us realize that a vengeful response can only

plunge us deeper into tragedy. While experts may argue whether a nuclear war would kill all humanity or just a portion, all of us are aware that we live on the brink of our own self-destruction.

As never before in our history, we are torn between two emotions: a desperate yearning for that long-promised day when "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks" (Isaiah 2:4) and a growing despair for peace in a world divided by ideologies. The downing of KAL 007 makes us wonder how peace can be achieved when "the other side" is so ruthless and unprincipled.

Politically, we may sharply disagree on how to deal with the Soviet Union, on what is the best strategy to deter them from aggression and expansion. We will differ on the implications of all this for our own program of armament and defense. Yet, despite these honest differences, Christians must unite in resisting that terrible temptation to abandon our principles for theirs. For, if we become like them, if we adopt their paranoia, and if we live as though there were no God, no divine plan for this world, then what does it matter who prevails?

LEARNING WAR

If the world is not to "learn war any more," and "nation shall not lift up sword against nation," then it is we believing in a God who not only exists but is moving this world to fulfill his plan and purpose, who must with faith, patience and courage teach the world that our destiny is not mutual annihilation, but a world in which "the wolf and the lamb shall feed together" (Isaiah 65:25). The lion must be taught to "eat straw like the ox." And, by the power of God, I still believe it can and will be done.

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent
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To Tighten Farm Security

Rural crime is a serious problem in many parts of our country - Lancaster County included. We need to take every precaution to protect our property from theft and vandalism. This is more difficult on a farm because of the number of buildings and exposed items. A good place to start is to install automatic lights; also a good watch dog will signal the arrival of a stranger or something unusual happening.

Another preventive measure is to keep garages and workshops under padlock to make it more difficult for illegal entry. Farm machinery should be stored under cover or near farm buildings at all times. It's also a good idea to engrave all tools and equipment with your drivers license. Social Security numbers are non-retrievable so your drivers license number is a much quicker identification. Neighborhood watch is

very successful -- notify your neighbors if you see something unusual.

To Use Only Needed Fertilizer Elements

Fertilizer prices continue to be high, so we suggest that farmers act now in order to hold this production cost in line. A complete soil test now will reveal the exact fertilizer elements that are needed in certain fields for certain crops. The idea of applying the same amount of the same analysis of fertilizer each year might help but is not the best way to obtain the most from your fertilizer dollar. Some fields may have sufficient amounts of potash, or be in excess of some elements; in these cases it is not economical to apply more of these same elements. With higher fertilizer costs we suggest that farmers do soil testing and then apply what is needed for each crop.

To Protect Farm Machinery

Winter weather is very hard on farm machinery. As we travel throughout the county, we still see too many pieces of machinery sitting out behind the building or still in the fields. This is very costly to the owner. Moisture causes rust and shortens the life of the equipment. Machinery costs are very high and weather protection is one way to reduce the cost of replacement. Separate machinery sheds are suggested in order to keep everything from being stored in the main barn. Good care and maintenance is needed to lengthen the life of all farm machinery.

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Farm Calendar

Saturday, Dec. 3

Dairy goat meeting at 1 p.m. at the Daleville Methodist Church.

Tuesday, Dec. 6

Cattle feeder meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Union Grove School, Terre Hill.

Franklin County dairy reproductive management workshop at Lurgan Lions Club Building, Roxbury. Continues tomorrow.

Tomato production and marketing meeting from 10 a.m. to 3:30

Otis

