

Competitive caring, sharing makes difference

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

It's a scene typical of Farm Show.

Just after the selection of a grand champion, a wellspring of emotion and enthusiasm gushes forth. This genuine expression of emotion and happiness engulfs not only the youthful exhibitor, but parents and other relatives, friends, new-found acquaintances and fellow competitors.

One such scene comes particularly to mind

First, the young man with the grand champion market lamb burst into tears. A tearful mother was the first to reach him. Jubilant emotion was next expressed by his father and younger sister. The exhibitor of the reserve champion showed that she too truly shared in his moment. Her father offered his sincere congratulations. And on through a number of other people, this expression of mutual joy and happiness flowed.

This is what makes competition in agriculture so much different from the competitive nature of other walks of life.

Let's call this difference competitive caring and sharing.

Everyone enters a competition with the hope of winning. But in ag once the winner is named, the competitive aftermath takes on these characteristics of caring and sharing.

The mutual expression of happiness and

congratulations are very real in ag. It's not like the trite cliches spoken by coaches and players following a sports win. Before they are even interviewed, you know exactly what they're going to say. While accepting congratulations with phony humility, they always cite the "great team" they just managed to beat -- even though the score may have been 50 to 0.

But in ag what generally happens after the grand champion is named is a true, spontaneous outpouring on behalf of the winner. It's something that can't be scripted and rehearsed like those winning interviews after a football game.

In ag, the fellow competitors and others appear to really care about the winner and his or her good fortune. And, thus they truly share in the competitive honors received.

This sharing also goes well beyond those who may be in the showing and the relatives and friends standing closeby.

Additionally sharing in the honor of a grand champion may be a multitude of others not even present at the show. There could be an older brother or sister who helped the winner get started in competition. Or, an FFA advisor or 4-H club leader. Perhaps, a county agent. Or, an older neighboring farmer who offered advice. Possibly even the farmer who bred the winning animal and helped in its initial selection. This list can go on and on.

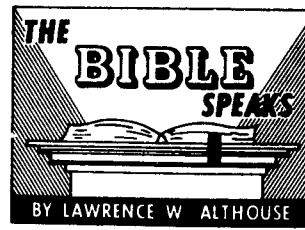
Due to this mutual expression of caring and sharing, it really proves the old adage there are no losers in ag competition. Any fellow competitor who feels he or she has shared in another's winnings and has learned from watching another be successful is a winner, too.

This competitive caring and sharing in ag contests did not develop just by chance either. It is symbolic of agriculture and those engaged in it.

In day-to-day production agriculture, farmers compete with each other for markets and in other ways. But while competing, it is rare indeed to find anyone in agriculture who isn't willing to share his or her knowledge and experience with others -- particularly with youth.

This competitive caring and sharing is just another of those things that make agriculture different and better.

Learning to compete is a lesson in itself. But being competitive in a caring and sharing way is a higher lesson about living in which everyone in agriculture can take pride.



YIELDING WILD GRAPES January 8, 1984

Background Scripture:

Isaiah 5.

Devotional Reading:

Isaiah 24:1-13.

There is no commentary on us and our world more appropriate than this comment from the Book of Isaiah:

And he looked for it to yield grapes,

But it yielded wild grapes.

In this simple analogy of the vineyard and the grapes there is caught a wealth of understanding about our human situation. God is like the loving and dedicated vinedresser and we are the vineyard.

MY BELOVED

There is a marked contrast between the vinedresser and his vineyard. The vinedresser loves his vineyard and he lavishes upon it his best concern and care digging and clearing it of stones, planting it with "choice vines," building a watch tower in the midst of it, and hewing out a wine vat. The vinedresser has done all he can do. Now it is up to the vines.

Yet, even while he waits for the vines to produce grapes, he does

not wait passively, but expectantly. He knows what he wants and he looks for his vineyard to fulfill his expectation: "He looked for it to yield grapes" (5:2).

And as it is in Isaiah's "Song of the Vineyard," so it is with God and his people. On his part, God does so much to guide us toward the fulfillment of his purpose. Like the vinedresser, he has his expectation... us.

Most of all, however, it is a relationship characterized by love. A human being is more than a mere thing that God manipulates for his own purposes. To be human is to be God's beloved.

MY VINEYARD

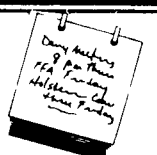
That is not the end of the analogy, however. For, as the vineyards of the loving vinedresser often yielded wild grapes and thus disappointed him, so we too are often distressing to our God because we fail to produce the fruit that he looks for in our lives.

This is not just the case of grapes that don't live up to the vinedresser's exacting standards, but of grapes that are bitter and useless. It is much more than disappointment for God, but profound sorrow. "What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" (5:4).

It is interesting to note that Isaiah asks the people of Judah to judge their own infidelity: "Judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard." It is that same challenge that Isaiah lays upon us today.

Each of us may look to our own lives and ask that age-old question: "Why did it yield wild grapes?"

Farm Calendar



Sunday, Jan. 8

Farm Show opens. Continues through Friday.

Farm Youth benefit night at the Farm Show.

Monday, Jan. 9

Secretary of Agriculture night at the Farm Show.

Milk Diversion Program meeting at 12:30 p.m. at Price, Md., Community Hall.

N.J. Polled Hereford Association at 7:30 p.m. at the Mercer County Extension Center, Trenton, N.J.

Poultry servicemen at 6:30 p.m. at the Holiday Inn North, Lancaster.

Tuesday, Jan. 10

Flemington County Board of Ag bus trip to Farm Show, leaving Extension center at 7 a.m. and

the old A x P parking lot, Clinton, at 7:20 a.m.

Master Farmers night at Farm Show.

Milk Diversion Program meeting at 12:30 p.m. at the American Legion, Chestertown, Md.

Dairymen's banquet at 6 p.m. at the Penn Harris Motor Inn, Camp Hill.

Wednesday, Jan. 11

Horsepulling and sheep to shawl contest night at Farm Show.

Thursday, Jan. 12

Agronomy Day in Chestertown, Md. Begins at 8 a.m.

Del Apple meeting from 7 to 9 p.m. in Mt. Pleasant, Del.

Pony Pulling and Bid Calling contest night at Farm Show.

Friday, Jan. 13

Junior market steer, lamb and hog sales at Farm Show.

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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To Attend Farm Show Events

Time has a way of creeping up on us, and here it is... next week is Farm Show week. The Farm Show will open again this year on Sunday and close on Friday. The theme for this year's exhibition is Agriculture - The Pride of Pennsylvania. Well, we are proud of our agriculture because of the hard work of our family operated farms. And here is an opportunity for our farmers to show the consuming public, the high quality product that's produced on our farms today.

Active farmers should recognize

the many educational meetings and banquets that are held during the week. Many of these are state-wide organizations and should have economic benefits to the producer.

To Be Sure Ice Is Safe For Skating

Farm ponds make great ice skating rinks... that's so long as the ice is strong enough. The general rule on thickness is that two inches will support one person and three inches will support a line of people. Thickness is not always the most accurate guide though. Other factors include color and age. New ice is stronger than old ice. And

clear blue ice is stronger than slush ice. Be especially cautious with ponds that are either fed by a spring or have a fast moving current. The thickness of these ponds will vary considerably.

The most important thing is to have rescue equipment at the pond site. It is wise to have a straight ladder, rope and inner tube nearby -- it could save a life. I would urge owners of farm ponds to use caution in permitting skating unless the ice is thick enough.

To Separate New Animals

The addition of a new animal to the herd or flock, is a very common

practice. However, there is always the chance of bringing new infections into the herd. Too many diseases and problems have been brought by the owner. At this time of year and in this part of the state, the Pa. Farm Show provides an opportunity for showing animals and the purchase of new ones. To those who are exhibiting animals, and to those who might buy a bred gilt, or other animals, I'd say be sure to separate these animals from the rest of the herd or flock

for at least 30 days. The other alternative is to treat all animals in the herd or flock for the same infections as the new animal has received.

A special caution to any poultry farmer planning to attend the Farm Show -- be sure you and your vehicle are clean when you leave your premise and the same when you return -- enough said.

To Transfer Silage

Livestock and dairy producers who have silage stored in temporary structures might be planning to move this feed into upright silos in the next month or so. Many producers use the temporary storage until some of the material is fed out of the upright silo. By transferring into the upright silo, mechanical feeders can be used. The objective is to move the silage in cold months -- January and February preferably. When transferring during warm weather (above 50° F) there is danger of more heating of the silage. No preservative should be needed. The faster the material can be moved into the upright silo, the better it will settle and remove the air.

Otis

