

Recharging battery

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

Farming activities are finally moving from the meeting rooms and banquet halls into the fields. The warmer, drying-out weather earlier this week did much to signal the end of the meeting season and the beginning of another planting preparation season.

During the past winter meeting season hundreds of speakers uttered millions of words at ag gatherings throughout the area. Some of these utterances have been remembered; many have not. A few may even fall into the category of being memorable.

For me, the best remembered of any of the speeches are those that are really not speeches at all. The words that remain with me the longest are those spoken at the less formal sessions that include individuals or farmer panels explaining their operations. Such talks are given in plain, down-to-earth English (and occasionally in a bit of Dutch) and aren't cluttered with the flowery, unnecessary phrases so often found in prepared speeches. These types of talks are geared toward building understanding with the audience, not trying to merely impress them. As a listener, you feel these speakers are talking with you, not just at you or often over you.

The other night one of these informal speakers gave one of the simplest yet one of

the most understandable analogies concerning farming and life that I heard all year. He compared his outlook particularly during the trying times recently in agriculture to that of a battery.

"A battery has both positive and negative poles," he said.

And thus, he drew a comparison to farming and life. In both, there are the positive and the negative aspects -- the good and the not-so-good. But both are always present.

"If you use only one or the other pole on a battery, it just doesn't work," he said "You get nowhere."

And similarly, it is so in agriculture and life. One can't dwell entirely on the one or the other, solely on the positive or the negative. The entire focus can't be entirely on the one, forgetting the other. One can't be a perpetual Pollyanna and likewise one can't be a continual defeatist.

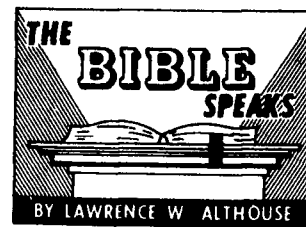
An on-going search for the positive is good but it can't be realistically done at the expense of completely ignoring the negative. And, the opposite is true, too. Often, we learn from negative experiences and these learning episodes can become important guideposts to help us better along the road toward the positive.

The arrival of warmer weather and sunshine are synonymous with the positive optimism that comes forth across farmfields each spring. And, this is the way it should be. A positive attitude is essential to help balance out all those variables that must be faced between the time that the first earth is turned and the last bushel is in the bin.

But this future positive outlook tempered with at least remembering a sprinkling of the negative of the past is not all that bad.

After all, when walking through life it's just as important to remember the places we stumbled, as well as the places we sailed smoothly along. The stumbles should be remembered, if only for the purpose of being able to recognize and avoid them again.

So, as you recharge your ag battery this spring, hook up both poles. Draw heavily from the positive, but don't ignore the negative completely.



WHOSE WILL?
April 15, 1984

Background Scripture:

Mark 14.

Devotional Reading:

Mark 14:3-9.

Abba, Father, ...remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt" (14:36).

So Jesus prayed in Gethsemane. He was not looking for martyrdom. I assume he must have wondered if his disciples could carry on without him. He was a young man and surely must have loved life so much that the thought of ending it was most unattractive to him.

Yet, although he surely did not seek the cross, neither did he run from it. If he had to choose between the cross and failing to do God's will, then his choice was clear: what thou wilt.

THIS CUP

When Jesus was finished praying in this manner, he was arrested and it wasn't long before he was dying on the cross.

What does all of this suggest about the prayer, he prayed? Does it mean that God was unable to save him from the cross? Or that God didn't care about it? Furthermore, does it mean that God's will for Jesus was the cross, its terrible shame and suffering?

To all of the above, I would answer with a resounding "No!" I do not think God was helpless or indifferent. Nor can I believe that it was God's will for his Son to suffer and die for the sake of enacting a cosmic drama. I am convinced that God wills for all of us to be righteous and I do not believe that he caused men to perform a heinous so that his own Gospel of Divine Love might be proclaimed.

Yet, although God desires us to be righteous, he does not compel us to be so. Although he wills for his children to do good, he allows them to do evil, if that is what they will. But, having done so, his children do not have the last word. Our sin cannot ultimately thwart his will, only impede it in the short run. As he demonstrated again and again in the Bible, God is able even to use the disobedience of his children to accomplish his own will.

THE CROSS

So, it is with the cross, I believe. Although he did not will the cross for Jesus, neither did he prevent men from erecting it on Golgotha. For he knew that the cross was not the last word in the matter. Jesus would be saved, not from the cross, but through it.

There was at stake here an issue that was even higher than saving Jesus from the crucifixion just as there may often be unseen higher issues at work in our lives when we pray, "remove this cup from me." God's will for Jesus was that he should remain faithful to the Gospel, even if it led to a cross at the hands of the Lord's disobedient children. More important than the bitterness of the cup is the price we would have to pay to escape it. It is then that the will of God is infinitely more important than the cup it may cost us.

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent
Phone 717 394 6851



To Consider Others

This is the time of the year when relations become a bit strained between farmers and non-farm residents of the rural community. This does not have to be this way if each person tries to understand the feelings and intentions of the other person. When livestock and poultry waste is spread on the farm land, which is an excellent practice, some people think they are going to be permanently injured by the odors. When farmers understand the possible reaction from others in the community, they should attempt to spread this waste on fast-drying days and then incorporate it into the topsoil just as soon as possible. On the other hand, non-farm people should understand this practice is a part of modern farming and a part of rural living. It may be unpleasant for a short time, but as far as I

know, rural odors have never been proven to be health hazards. We hope everyone tries to understand the needs and cares of others.

To Plant Trees

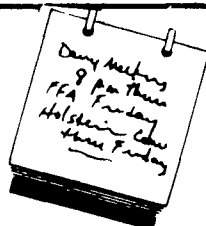
Trees are a very important part of our landscape; this is true in the urban areas as well as in the rural areas. This time of year is best suited for planting all kinds of trees. Some are used for landscape purposes, some for shade and some for windbreaks. Trees are important to our environment and add grace and beauty to many areas. Trees provide shelter for many kinds of birds and wildlife, as well as the ability to conserve soil and moisture. If you desire to plant trees, it should be done before hot weather arrives. Trees should be moved with a ball of soil wrapped in burlap. After planting be sure to keep the soil moist throughout the summer. Be a tree planter, you'll feel better for it.

To Check Water Supplies

Your water supply should be checked at least once a year for nitrates and bacteria. Nitrates can get into ground water from several sources -- from a septic field, a barnyard or feedlot, silage seepage or from nitrogen fertilizer on surrounding cropland. Nitrogen can travel further through the soil than bacteria, with the likelihood that more wells may be polluted with nitrates than with bacteria. And, nitrates can be dangerous. Nitrogen in drinking water reduces the ability of the blood to carry oxygen and causes symptoms of oxygen deficiency in people and animals. If your drinking water hasn't been checked within the last

(Turn to Page A12)

Farm Calendar



Saturday, April 14

McKean County All-Ag Banquet, 7:30 p.m., Eldred Legion Hall, Eldred.

Md. State Holstein Show continues at Timonium with the cow classes.

Delaware feeder pig sale, 10 a.m., Carroll's Auction, Felton.

Apple Blossom Queen Contest, 7:30 p.m., Bendersville Elementary School.

Monday, April 16

Adams County Beekeepers, 7:30 p.m., Penn State Fruit Research Lab, Biglerville.

Tuesday, April 17

Ephrata Young Farmers, 7:45 p.m., High school ag shop.

Wednesday, April 18

Hunterdon County, N.J. Ag Development Board, 8 p.m., Extension Center.

Christmas tree meeting, 7 p.m., Berks Ag Center, Leesport.

York ASCS banquet, 7 p.m., Springettsbury Fire Hall.

Goatherders meeting, 7:30 p.m., Berks County ag center.

Frederick County, Md. sheep breeders, 7:30 p.m., county

Extension office.

Conservation demonstrations, 1 p.m., Evergreen Rd. and South Lincoln Ave., Lebanon.

Thursday, April 19

McKean Producers, 7:30 p.m., Extension Center, Smethport.

Fayette County Holstein tour to Westmoreland County.

Saturday, April 21

Little I livestock exposition, 8 a.m., Penn State Ag Arena.

York County Sheep and Wool Producers Field Day, 9:30 a.m., York Fairgrounds.

Otis

