

## Let's get together

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

The USDA released figures this week showing a big increase in the number of small farms of less than 50 acres between 1978 and 1982. They increased some 17 percent during that four-year period, up 94,000 from 543,000 in 1978 to 637,000 in 1982.

This comes as nothing new to long-time farm residents who have watched the influx of urban and suburban people into rural areas onto these small farms, which they operate parttime as they maintain fulltime jobs off the farm.

The USDA farm census also showed that farms from 50 acres to 1,999 acres continued to drop in number, while those of 2,000 acres or more increased.

This also should have come as little surprise to the typical farm family, which has faced increasing difficult times to survive. Some expand to try and make it and others sell out.

Many of us point to such figures and quickly say: "See. I told you so. The real small guys and the real big guys are taking over farming, squeezing the mid-size farmers out." And, there's some truth to this.

While the small farms of less than 50 acres generally don't compete with typical commercial farms, they do bring other problems to rural areas. More residents and traffic put more demands on schools and roads and increase requests for municipal services, which affect both the tax structure and traditional makeup of a rural community.

But the negatives that come with the increase in small parttime farms can also be turned into a plus for all of agriculture.

Most of these parttime farmers hold fulltime jobs off the farm. In such off-farm jobs, these small weekend farmers often hold quite influential positions in business, industry or the professions. The influence of these positions could be put to work for the good of all agriculture. After all, it's the agricultural nature of the rural areas that attracts parttime farmers and they should work just as hard to

preserve its welfare as fulltime farmers who make their living solely from agriculture.

Agriculture can't afford a wedge driven between fulltime and parttime farmers. Ag can use all the help it can get and parttimers can play a sizable role in its preservation.

With very large farming operations it's an entirely different story. These are in direct competition with the mid-sized family farms and are contributing significantly to putting them out of business. Large operations are often backed by agribusiness or syndicates of professionals who are in it merely for tax incentives. They borrow money at rates much cheaper than regular farmers can get and use this money to put them out of business.

While some good can come out of the influx of the real small farms, there are no redeeming advantages to the continued increase in the number of big farms.

### WILL TV TAKE OVER AG?

Will TV take over agriculture as much as it has taken over other segments of our society?

TV essentially decides who is elected president. Selection of candidates, campaigns and election strategy are built almost entirely around TV. And people in the West are told who won in the East even before the polls close.

Television has had enormous impact on such basics as education and family life.

Now, it seems that TV is making bigger and bigger inroads into traditional ag areas.

Recently, a big cattle auction was held out West, some 25,000 head. Was it held at a stockyard or large auction house? No way. It was held in the plush, air-conditioned comfort of a Holiday Inn lounge.

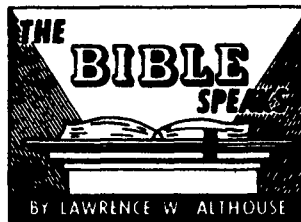
Bidders showed up in their Sunday best, including boots of lizard or snake skin instead of the work type.

Instead of bringing the cattle to the bidders TV camerapersons went right out on the range and photographed the cattle to be sold. Their videotapes were shown over monitors in the lounge and the auction was held.

In addition to the plush comfort, bidders cited the elimination of stress that the cattle go through to get them to the auction where they can be mixed with other cattle. Less weight losses and less opportunity for the cattle to come down with something.

Just think of the possibilities. The TV camera could eliminate all auctions and even dairy and livestock shows. Instead of bringing the animals to a show the TV camera just goes to the farm and photographs the animal from all angles. The judge sits in an armchair and watches a monitor and then makes his decision.

But it just wouldn't be the same would it? Too much of our lives have been turned over to the tube, let's hope things don't go that far.



**EMBARRASSED CHRISTIANS**  
September 9, 1984

**Background Scripture**  
Romans 1:1-17.

**Devotional Reading:**  
Romans 16:17-20.

Paul says it plainly, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel..." (Romans 1:16). And, if asked if I have ever been "ashamed of the gospel" and I answer quickly, I can probably say "No."

But if I take a long, deep breath before answering and let my mind give more than just a glancing thought to that question, I'm afraid honesty might compel me to acknowledge that, although I may never have been outright "ashamed" of the gospel, there have been times when it has been of some embarrassment.

To be sure, sometimes it has been the church for which I've felt some embarrassment, not the gospel and particularly at those times when the church has been least true to the gospel. One cannot but view the stupid, unreasoning violence and bloodshed in Northern Ireland and Lebanon today without being embarrassed over what Christians are doing to each other.

### THE SHADOWED CROSS

There have been times, too when I have been embarrassed and even ashamed when Christians have committed grave injustices and crimes in the name of Jesus Christ. In touring Spain last year we were

not proud to learn that when the Catholic Kings expelled the Moors, the society they brought, was far less humane and tolerant than the one they destroyed. And, in touring the memorial to the Holocaust at Yad Vashem in Israel, one cannot overlook the fact that every infamous concentration camp existed in the figurative shadow of a steepled cross.

But, having said all that, I must admit that there have been times when it has been nothing less than the gospel itself—not some distortion of it by someone else—that has been a cause of embarrassment. And, of course, the problem is not with the gospel, but with me!

If this has never happened to you, I am glad for you and you should count your blessings. But I must confess that there have been times when the stigma of being a Christian has gotten in the way with something I have wanted to do, or be something I have wanted to be. To put it simply, there have been times when being a Christian has seemed to "crimp my style," as we used to say.

### UNDER OBLIGATION

Perhaps, there have been times when I have felt that being identified as a Christian was too limiting and restricted too much my lifestyle. We all want to be cosmopolitan today and Christianity may seem to get in our way.

Yet, Paul was a very cosmopolitan person and he could say, "I am under obligation both to Greeks and barbarians..." (1:14), yet it did not keep him from saying also, "I am not ashamed of the gospel"! For Paul knew what I must constantly be reminded of: faith is never limiting; it is, in fact, the one thing above all others that is empowering and sets us free of all littleness and narrowness. If I have anything over which to be embarrassed or ashamed, it is my tendency to forget that.

## NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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### Saturday, September 8

York Fair continues through next Saturday.

### Sunday, September 9

Annual Conference, Pa. Florists Association, Keller Conference Center, Penn State.

### Monday, September 10

Hunterdon County, N.J. Sheep Breeders meeting, 8 p.m.,

### Extension Center.

Poultry Servicemen's Seminar on "Endocrinology," 6:30 p.m., Holiday Inn North, Lancaster.

Bellwood Antis Township Fair, continues through Thursday.

Claysburg Area Farm Show, continues through Thursday.

Green Township Fair, continues through Saturday.

### Tuesday, September 11

Delmarva Boiler Housing Seminar and Flock Supervisors Conference, Carousel Hotel, Ocean City, Md.

Pesticide Applicator Training in CORE, Hunterdon Co., N.J., Extension Center, 10 a.m. and 8 p.m., certification credits.

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### To Protect Show Animals

September, in Lancaster County, is Fair time. It is also a time to be concerned about the health of show animals. Fairs should be a place where we can exhibit our animals; they should not be a place for spreading diseases and other ailments. Be considerate of other exhibitors and of other show animals. If your animals have any infectious or contagious problems, leave them at home; it's like keeping a sick child out of school to protect those who are healthy. If you do show, consult your veterinarian about necessary tests and protective vaccines.

When you return your livestock to the farm after the show, isolate them from other animals on the

farm before introducing them to their herd mates.

### To Install Drain Tile

Farmers who have wet spots in their fields might use the early fall months as a good time to install drain tile or drain pipe. These areas will be more workable now than in the spring. When the tile is put in place now, winter grains can be seeded on the area with little loss of crop production. Many farms have one or more wet spots in crop land that gives trouble in the majority of crop seasons. These can be corrected with tile drainage systems. In most cases the cost of draining wet spots in crop land is a good investment. Under current production costs, every acre should be managed to produce maximum yields.

### To Check Feed Bins

We are coming into the fall season where we see considerable temperature change from day to night. This causes a lot of moisture condensation, as we see it on car windows in the morning. This same type of condensation takes place in the bulk feed bins on our farms. It causes the buildup of molds on the bins and in the feed.

When feed bins are cleaned out, they should be inspected thoroughly, right down to the boot. Also, when you are taking feed out of the bin, keep a close watch for chunks of feed; it will tell you if a problem is developing.

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### Otis

