



Faith and Farming

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

Is there any light at the end of the long, dark tunnel that ag has found itself mired in during the past few years?

You gotta squint real hard but there may be a flickering speck about the size of a lone lightning bug flying around inside a huge football stadium.

How can that be, you might rightfully ask when

--The Wall Street Journal on successive days carries stories on the sale of IH and the hoped-for sale of Harvestore.

--Mennonite farmers from throughout the U.S. and Canada gather to mutually discuss their problems.

--The level of ag business, except for bare essentials, is at a near standstill.

--Talk everywhere centers on speculation of which ag businesses and which farmers are going to make it.

But actually it is in all of this negative news -- gloom and doom as the conservative optimists with the rose-colored glasses like to call it -- that lies that spark of hope.

Finally, the non-ag media and the public at large are truly recognizing the plight of farmers.

Because, it is only with such recognition, that something will finally be done.

Before, those who dared to point out such things were a bit like those who failed to take the advice of songwriter Jim Croce, who said: "Never spit into the wind."

Before, the good-time profiteers made such words come back to slap you in the face.

But now the ill winds of ag are blowing so hard that almost everyone is getting slapped in the face

At least, these slaps are finally waking some people up.

In the midst of all of this, we'd like to pay tribute to that Mennonite gathering in Western Pa. this week. For it is through such plain and honest dialogue as took place at the Faith and Farming Conference that eventual solutions will come.

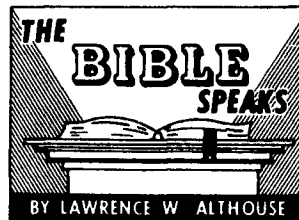
Permanent solutions to problems are impossible without grassroots involvement

Sure, government and others can help

But you the individual farm family must want realistic solutions that will involve some tough decisions

It's up to you.

It's your farm, your way of life and your future at stake.



THE ARROGANT SPIRIT December 2, 1984

Background Scripture:

Psalms 199:97-105;

1 Corinthians 2; 2 Timothy 3.

Devotional Reading:

1 Corinthians 2:6-16.

In Umberto Eco's brooding, best-selling novel, *The Name of the Rose*, the medieval plot comes to a climax with a dramatic confrontation between two monks locked in mortal conflict. Each of them, William of Baskerville and blind Jorge, believes he speaks for God. Each sincerely and passionately believes the other is really the Devil incarnate. "You are the Devil," William accuses Jorge, who says, "You are worse than the Devil."

The reader can hardly fail to side with the humane William against the villainous Jorge and delight in William's grand denouncement:

The Devil is not the Prince of Matter; the Devil is the arrogance of the spirit, faith without smile, truth that is never seized by doubt. (Harcourt, Brace, Javonovich, 1983)

I LOVE THY LAW

William is right, of course, but his "rightness" is not enough, for in the ensuing physical struggle, a tumbled lamp sets fire to the monastery library and the world's greatest repository of knowledge is reduced to ashes. It is the year 1327 and the destruction of the abbey

and its treasure marks the onset of Europe's Dark Ages, an era from which the continent will not soon emerge.

I do not pretend to know all that Echo meant by *The Name of the Rose*, but it is apparent that he is warning us that it is not enough to defend truth from error. We must be careful, lest in fighting error, we destroy the truth as well.

Many people I know today are obsessed with their struggle to make sure that truth prevails over error. They have the truth and those who do not agree with them are blasphemously in error. Their opponents, they are certain, are possessed by Devil. The Bible thus becomes a weapon to be used to prove others "wrong," a condition that is tantamount to intentional evil.

FOR EVERY GOOD WORK

The problem, of course, is not with the scriptures, but with what people do with them. If dedication to God's word--such as that indicated by the Psalmist (119:97-105)--produces a humble and joyful spirit, then a person can say with him, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (119:105). But, if one's dedication to the scriptures produces an arrogant, self-righteous spirit, that is probably the greatest blasphemy of all.

For the purpose of God's word is not to make us content or even proud in knowing, but humble and faithful in doing. It is in noble deeds, not noble thoughts that God's truth is made manifest. If the scriptures speak to us, they will focus, not on the truth we possess, but the truth we are called to be. Thus, the writer of Timothy finishes his passage on the scriptures: "...that the man of God may be...equipped for every good work." (3:17).

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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To Plan Work Schedules In Layer Houses

If you are planning to work with your layers, such as applying a miticide to control lice or mites or do any noisy repairs to the feeders, fans or waterers--this work should be done in the afternoon. The reason for this is--it's after the hen has laid her egg for the day, and she is a lot less susceptible to injury and damage to the future eggs. Your everyday chores won't upset them because they are accustomed to them, but these unusual conditions can upset their regular cycle.

Just a word on the number of birds per cage. It may seem like a good idea to add one extra bird per cage, but this could lower your hen-housed production. There are over 20 cage density experiments and they all show a lowered production per hen when you add that extra hen. Keep in mind that very small differences in production can result in large economic differences over time in large flocks. With an over supply of eggs, we really don't need that extra bird anyway.

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 a good idea to engrave all tools and equipment with your driver's license. Social security numbers are non-retrievable so your driver's license number is 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 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 high fertilizer costs we suggest that farmers do soil testing and then apply what is needed for each crop, and be sure to include the nutrient value of manure when calculating your needs.

To Observe Withdrawal Time

The use of drugs and antibiotics are needed in many cases with livestock, poultry and dairy production. Their use is quite common in many farm operations. However, the misuse of these materials is where trouble can start. When these items are administered to animals or poultry, the owner should read the label for directions relating to withdrawal periods for milk cows, or time between treatment and slaughter for meat. It's only good common sense that these regulations should be followed. To short-cut the period of time is only jeopardizing the product and the entire farming business. Don't take chances with

Farm Calendar

Saturday, Dec. 1

Lehigh County 4-H Livestock Awards Dinner, 7:30 p.m., Germansville Fire Company.

Monday, Dec. 3

Housing and breed selection poultry session, 7:30 p.m., Berks County Ag Center.

Tax Week at Penn State, University Park campus, continues through Friday.

Maryland Farm Bureau annual convention, Hagerstown, Md.

Milk Marketing Update, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Chambersburg Holiday Inn.

Tuesday, Dec. 4

Food and Ag Policy Conference, Washington, D.C., continues through Thursday.

Housing and breed selection poultry session, 7:30 p.m., Berks-Lehigh Valley Farm Credit Service Center.

our valuable food products. Also, keep accurate records of all treatments. In cases where excess tolerances are found, it might save time and money.

The Extension Service is an affirmative action, equal opportunity educational institution.

110th annual Delaware State Grange meeting. Today's session at Midland Grange Hall, Georgetown; annual banquet tomorrow in Cape Henlopen High School.

Wednesday, Dec. 5

Bradford County Extension Annual Meeting, 8 p.m., Friedenshutzen Restaurant, Wyalusing.

Thursday, Dec. 6

Peninsula Horticultural Society meeting for commercial vegetable growers, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Wicomico Youth and Civic Center, Salisbury, Md.

Grain Producers Marketing Strategy Session, 8:30 a.m.-noon, Sheraton Inn, Dover, Del. Pa. Dairy Promotion Advisory Board, 10:30 a.m., Room 309, PDA Building.

Friday, Dec. 7
York 4-H Dairy Banquet.

Milk production down

HARRISBURG -- Pennsylvania's October milk production totaled 775 million pounds, two percent below last year's production, according to the Pennsylvania Crop and Livestock Reporting Service.

The number of milk cows in the commonwealth during October averaged 738,000 head, 1,000 more than a year ago. Milk production per cow averaged 1,050 pounds in October, down 20 pounds per cow from a year ago.

U.S. milk production during October 1984 totaled 10.9 billion pounds, four percent less than October 1983. Total milk cows in the United States averaged 10.8 million head, three percent less than October 1983. Production per cow averaged 1,010 pounds, 14 pounds less than a year earlier.

