

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent
Phone 717-394-6851



THE BIBLE SPEAKS
BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE
THOMAS THE COURAGEOUS
April 14, 1985

To Start Grazing Gradually
With the amount of moisture in the soil this spring, warm weather will bring growth very rapidly in most pasture areas.

This will also be true with producers that are planning to graze winter grains such as rye or barley.

The herd or flock should be controlled at first, and not allowed on the area for more than a half hour; bloating and scouring may result if they consume too much of the lush forage the first few days.

Also, it's best to feed the animals some dry matter such as silage, hay or straw before turning them out to pasture the first few times.

Dairy farmers should keep milking cows from the grazing area at least 4 to 5 hours before the milking period.

To Consider Others

This is the time of 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 reactions 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 Manage Alfalfa Stands

With nearly every species of livestock, the feeding of top quality alfalfa hay or silage is highly recommended. At dairy meetings we hear how good alfalfa is in the ration, and at sheep meetings we learn that good alfalfa hay is the backbone of the ewe feeding program.

Alfalfa meal is often used as a source of protein in other rations. It all adds up to the fact that alfalfa is one of our most important forage crops.

Every farmer should make a special effort to produce maximum amounts per acre. This takes management along with

proper lime, fertilizer, insect and disease control.

Since we are now at the beginning of another cropping season, more attention to alfalfa might benefit many farmers. Don't be satisfied with a poor stand. The crop is worthy of our best effort.

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 they 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.

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

Background Scripture:
John 20:24 through 21:25.

Devotional Reading:
John 21:1-14.

I think the Apostle Thomas has had to take a bum rap from fellow Christians across the years. Although I have known of a few churches named St. Thomas, he is much more widely known as "Doubting Thomas." Whenever his name comes up, Christians are apt to respond with a dismissing smile or self-righteous disdain. If he is held up as an example, it is almost always as a negative one.

Everyone remembers that he refused to accept the testimony of his fellow apostles, saying: "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe." Some Christians also remember that, when Jesus proposed to go up to Jerusalem after the death of Lazarus, Thomas was pessimistic about the outcome (John 11:16). They may also recall that when Jesus said to his disciples, "And you know the way where I am going," Thomas protested, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" (14:5).

LET'S GO!

What we may forget is that, even though he was fearful of the outcome of going to Jerusalem, it was

Thomas who said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." And in John 14, it was Thomas' challenge to Jesus that occasioned Jesus' immortal words: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me" (14:6). And, when the Resurrected Christ appears to him in John 20, it is Thomas' response that is the most ringing of all commitments: "My Lord and my God!" (20:28).

I think that, on these grounds, this much-maligned apostle is just as deserving of the title, "Courageous Thomas," as he is "Doubting Thomas." To me it is not so important that he entertained skeptical questions in his mind, but that he overcame his skepticism and put his life on the line in a manner that served as an example for those who found it easier to say "Christ is Lord," than to act as if it were so.

FAITH AT WORK

Some of the other apostles found it relatively easy to put their faith into words, but Thomas is exceptional because he turned his questions into positive actions that should speak louder than his words. Actually, I wouldn't call Thomas a "Doubter" as much as I would a "Questioner" and that could very well make him the patron saint of our age. Today, with the advent of science and high technology, people have more, not fewer questions. Just as the Gospels do not tell us that Jesus ever rebuked Thomas' questions, so I would not chastise those who have the courage to ask the hard questions that must be asked. Hard questions generally produce better answers.

Lots of people have "all the right answers," but live as if they are untrue. I'll take the Thomases of this world who ask hard questions, and live courageous answers.

Farm Calendar



Saturday, April 13
Maryland State Holstein Show, Cow Classes, Timonium, 10 a.m.
Benefit auction for Dauphin Co. Agriculture and Natural Resources Center, Gratz Fairgrounds, 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, April 16
York Farmers Forum April meeting, 6:30 p.m. at Moser's Restaurant.

Wednesday, April 17
York Co. ASCS Spring Banquet, 7 p.m. at Springettsbury Fire Hall.

Thursday, April 18
Annual Fund Raising Banquet, Pa. Poultry Federation, Hershey Convention Center.
Commercial Fruit Growers Meeting, 7:30 p.m., York

County Extension Office.

Saturday, April 20
Little International at Penn State.

Monday, April 22
Sheep Industry tour, continues through Thursday.
1985 NASDA National Food and Agriculture Exposition, Kansas City.

Potato ban extended in upstate New York

WASHINGTON - An additional area of upstate New York has been included under federal regulations to prevent the spread of the golden nematode, a destructive pest of potato crops, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture official.

"Monitoring by USDA and state personnel indicates the golden nematode has spread beyond its former boundaries in upstate New York," said Bert W. Hawkins, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. "To help prevent further

spread, part of Livingston County, N.Y., has been added to those areas already regulated."

The golden nematode is a small worm that attacks the roots of Irish potatoes and a few other plant species. Golden nematode infestations can drastically reduce yield and even destroy an entire potato crop if unchecked. The nematode's range currently is confined to parts of upstate New York and Long Island.

Hawkins said the golden nematode is the most serious pest threat to the U.S. potato industry.

"In order to protect uninfested potato-producing areas, federal regulations prohibit the interstate movement of potatoes, soil and other items that could harbor the pest from infested areas," he said.

Regulated areas now include all or part of Cayuga, Genesee, Livingston, Nassau, Orleans, Seneca, Steuben, Suffolk, Wayne and Yates counties in New York. Sections of Livingston county now included in the regulated area are the towns of Avon, Caledonia, Genesee, Groveland, Leicester, Lima, Livonia, Mount Morris, West Sparta and York.

State Grange head backs RCMA

I am concerned about the future of our Pennsylvania dairy farmers.

The milk support price is scheduled to drop to \$11.60 later this year. That would bring the price down to 1979 levels. In the meantime, costs of production and costs of living in general continue to rise at the rate of 3 to 4 percent a year.

To a dairy farmer, a 50-cent drop in the support price will mean a decrease of 65 cents an hour from March, 1985 prices. If a farmer sells 50,000 lbs. of milk a month, he will receive \$325 less in the month's milk check. At 100,000 lbs., that means \$650 per month less in income.

In federal order 4, the milk price has already dropped 77 cents per cwt. from January to May, 1985.

But there is one bright spot on the horizon. Dairymen now have a chance to help themselves get a better price for milk by joining the Regional Cooperative Marketing Agency (RCMA). RCMA has been called a "super cooperative" that

is organizing throughout the northeast to bargain for over-order prices for milk. Its membership is made up of both independent and cooperative farmers. Many major dairy cooperatives in the northeastern states have already joined the effort.

RCMA is seeking to sign up 95 percent of all dairy farmers in the northeast after which it would bargain for over-order prices so dairy farmers can maintain some sort of income. There are no dues for RCMA and no assessments. Normal operating costs (averaging one-half cent per cwt.) would be deducted from the over-order price collected from handlers and returned to the farmer.

I don't see higher milk prices coming out of the 1985 Farm Bill with the Administration planning to scale down its involvement in the dairy price support program. If dairy farmers don't take the initiative to help themselves, they can be assured of lower prices in 1985-1986.

As a dairy farmer myself, I know how hard it is to make the milk check reach. I urge all independent dairy farmers to join RCMA as they are contacted by dairy farmers in their counties. Let's all work together for better milk prices.

Charles E. Wismer, Jr.
Master
PA State Grange

