

THE BIBLE SPEAKS
 BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE
WHEN GOD COMPLAINS
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Lancaster County Extension director Jay Irwin discusses this year's corn crop with Extension program leader Marion Deppen. Irwin received the USDA's Distinguished Service Award from Secretary John Block on Wednesday.

Irwin receives Extension Service's highest honor

BY JACK HUBLEY

LANCASTER — For his work in coordinating the battle against avian influenza, Lancaster County Extension director Jay Irwin received the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Distinguished Service Award at ceremonies held in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday. He is one of only three Extension employees in the country to receive the honor this year, and the first Pennsylvania recipient since 1965.

Irwin played a central role in the fight against the deadly H5N2 virus that was responsible for the death or depopulation of 16 million birds in 250 Lancaster County flocks.

The Extension director notes that many people were responsible for the success of the eradication effort, which began with the initial diagnosis of the disease in Lancaster County by Dr. Robert Eckrode and his staff at the University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton Center in April, 1983.

He also praised former Penn State Extension poultry specialist Dwight Schwartz for his input. "Dwight played a key role because he came in here and put on training sessions for the USDA veterinarians," Irwin pointed out.

Irwin noted that the county's previous experience with Laryngotracheitis (LT) gave producers and the Extension office valuable experience in fighting contagious poultry diseases. "We already had developed LT guidelines during the late 1970's when we had 500,000 birds under quarantine," Irwin said. "So that gave us a jump on this (avian flu)."

Marion Deppen, the Extension Service's Southeast program leader, noted what he termed three dimensions to Irwin's work. "He oriented the Task Force on how to

act, both professionally and personally, in order to gain the respect of the community," Deppen said. "That respect was necessary if their authority was to be real."

And Task Force leader Dr. Gerald Fichtner concurs. "When we rolled into town (Lancaster served as Task Force headquarters) in November, the first person we met was Irwin, and he, more than anyone else, helped us understand how to be good citizens in the Lancaster community."

Deppen also praised Irwin's ability to deal with the stress experienced in the agricultural community during the crisis. Irwin met frequently with producers to explain the importance of the eradication program, and counseled 50 rural ministers on the situation in order that they might deal more effectively with congregation members experiencing severe losses in the epidemic.

Finally, Deppen pointed out that Irwin was instrumental in developing adequate biosecurity measures for the affected region.

"One of the most difficult parts of dealing with the virus was trying to find out how it was being spread," Irwin said, adding that the last recorded outbreak of the H5N2 virus occurred in 1929, and very little was known about the disease. "It's a real tribute to farmers that they contained it as well as they did."

Although USDA had predicted a three-year recovery period, Irwin pointed out that nearly all the major producers that suffered losses are currently back in business. "That shows the faith the

producers had in their industry," he concluded.

A graduate of Penn State University, Irwin joined the Lancaster Extension in 1967, and has served as director since 1981.

Background Scripture:

Micah 3:6.

Devotional Reading:

Micah 2:5-13.

Imagine, if you will, this scene:

JUDAH: "Well, Israel, why are you looking so upset?"

ISRAEL: "Oh, I just received this nasty letter from the Lord."

JUDAH: "A nasty letter?"

ISRAEL: "Yeah, it's a letter of complaint."

JUDAH: "What's the complaint?"

ISRAEL: "Oh, God's mad because I have such a bad memory."

JUDAH: "What did you forget?"

ISRAEL: "Really just two things: what he's done for me in the past and what he wants to do right now, that's all!"

FOR YOU TO KNOW

Israel couldn't understand why God was making such a complaint. So, they didn't always remember what God wanted them to remember! Nevertheless, were they not the chosen few, the only people in the world who acknowledged God as the Lord?

As far as their reasoning went, they were right. They alone were the people of God. But it was precisely because of this that God was making his serious complaint against them. Because they were "special" to him he expected

more, not less, from them. And his complaint was that he was getting substantially less, not more:

They covet fields and seize them; and houses, and take them away; they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance. (2:2).

As God's chosen people, as the leaders of the people, more, not less, was expected of Israel: "Hear, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, is it not for you to know justice?" (3:1). In other words, God does not judge us by the same standards with which he judges those who do not acknowledge him as Lord. In fact, he judges us more stringently because he expects more of us.

WHAT IS GOOD?

And what is this "more" that he expects? "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come to him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?" (6:6). Will my church pledge satisfy him? My hours of service on the committees of my parish? My attendance at prayer breakfasts? The snappy (perhaps smug) motto on the license plate of my car? Will any of these turn away God's complaint? After all, what does God want?

Good question! And now the answer from Micah:

He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. (6:8).

The problem is not that we don't know what he wants from us, but that we do know and conveniently forget, offering him something else. So long as we continue to forget this, God will continue to make his complaint.

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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To Control Flies

The good growing conditions we've experienced this spring for field crops also favor the build-up of fly populations. The needed moisture presents ideal conditions for maggots to develop into flies.

We suggest that livestock and poultry operators use residual insecticides on their buildings and pit walls to cut down on fly problems. Also, you may want to use different materials at different intervals to break the cycle. Flies are immune to most of the old-line materials. Fly baits along with the spray is also recommended. For laying hens, the recently approved Larvadex, as a feed through, is giving good results. Follow label instructions for rate of application.

One of the most important practices in keeping down the number of flies is to clean up the place and eliminate fly breeding areas. Manure packs and other debris are good fly breeding places.

Good sanitation along with insecticides goes a long way in keeping flies under control.

To Feed Dry Matter on Pasture

Pastures are very lush due to the good moisture content. This means that livestock can utilize some dry matter while on pasture. This can include hay, straw or silage. With the dry matter present, they will consume a moderate amount along with the fresh grass.

The dry matter slows down the passage of the lush forage through the digestive system. Also, it reduces the danger of bloating when there is clover or alfalfa in a forage mixture. If the animals are out all of the time, then a portable hay rack would be the best way to feed hay or straw. Dry matter intake is important when pastures are lush and high in water content.

To Check Lighting For Layers

One of the cardinal rules for poultry management is to never decrease the light period of flocks in production. Most flock managers would never intentionally decrease the day length to a flock in production but we are in the season of the year when this can happen accidentally.

Most layers are in light-

controlled not light-tight housing. The major sources of light leakage are the exhaust fans and air intake. Pullet flocks placed in the laying house during late fall, winter or spring can be given a 14-hour day. As summer approaches and natural day length exceeds 14 hours, layers in non-light tight housing will be exposed to an increasing day length due to the light entering the building through fans and air intakes.

This increase in day length causes no problem. The longest day occurs on June 21 and decreases until December 21. It is this decrease in day length that can cause layers to go out of production unless the time clocks controlling the lights are readjusted to provide the layers with the day length they received on June 21.

To Renovate Strawberries

Since the harvest of the strawberry crop is nearly over, it is a good time to plan for next year. In most cases, plants that have yielded two or more crops cannot be expected to do as well in the future. However, if the current planting is to be used for another year we suggest that the rows be worked by the use of mechanical cultivation and followed by top-dressing with fertilizer. These practices will keep berry plants in a row and encourage additional runners to increase next year's yield.

In the case of a new planting of strawberries, we urge you to fertilize them in June and again in early August. This extra plant food will enable the setting of runners and will help increase yield next year.

