

NOW IS THE TIME

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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 a much quicker identification. Neighborhood watch is very successful — notify your neighbors if you see something unusual.

To Control Weeds In Alfalfa
Have you been bothered with some of the winter time weeds such as chickweed or Shepherd's purse in your alfalfa stands? If so, now would be a good time to apply a herbicide to knock out these

weeds. Too many alfalfa growers wait until they see a heavy growth of these weeds and then think of spraying.

All weeds are easier to kill when small and before they choke out the alfalfa plants. The period between Thanksgiving and Christmas is excellent for applying herbicides to alfalfa stands. The material to use will vary with the age of the stand and whether or not any grass is there as a companion crop. We suggest that growers refer to the Agronomy Guide, or to their local pesticide dealer for suggestions relating to materials. The important thing is to do the spraying while the weeds are small.

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, do this work in the afternoon. By afternoon 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 a number of 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 oversupply of eggs, we really don't need that extra bird anyway.

To Protect Farm Machinery
Winter weather is very hard on farm machinery. As we travel throughout the county, we still see too many pieces of machinery sitting out behind the building or still in the fields. This is very costly to the owner.

Moisture causes rust and shortens the life of the equipment. Machinery costs are very high and weather protection is one way to reduce the cost of replacement. Separate machinery sheds are suggested in order to keep everything from being stored in the main barn. Good care and maintenance is needed to lengthen the life of all farm machinery.

THE BIBLE SPEAKS
BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE
GOD'S SPECIALTY
December 1, 1985

Background Scripture:
Isaiah 9:1-7; Luke 1:26-56.

Devotional Reading:
Luke 1:46-56.

Zechariah the priest and Mary, his wife's kinswoman in Nazareth, both pose pretty much the same question that countless people have asked from the beginning of time and it is a question which many of us continue to ask today. To be sure, there are many different ways of putting the question into words, but essentially all the questioners want to know how it is possible for God to fulfill all that he promises — or at least all that people tell us he has promised.

Although his wife had long proven barren and both were "advanced in years," Zechariah was promised by an angel that his wife, Elizabeth would bear him a son. And, although this had long been Zechariah's unceasing prayer, he could not help responding "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years" (1:18). "HOW SHALL THIS BE?"

Later, when the angel Gabriel assured Mary that she too would bear a son who would be God's anointed, she responded, saying: "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" (1:35). Both Zechariah

and Mary are saying, in effect, this is wonderful news, too wonderful to be true. We cannot blame them for being dubious. Zechariah and Elizabeth had tried for so many years and all they had to show for it was a sense of disappointment and failure. Why should they believe it would happen now when they were well past the child-bearing age? And Mary: Why should she believe that God would choose her to be the mother of the Messiah? She wasn't even married.

Often, that's the way God's message and promises seem to us. He speaks to us of his plan and purpose for creation, but the world seems chaotic and bent on self-destruction. He speaks of world brotherhood and peace and his kingdom come on earth, but we can't help looking at the world and asking, "How can this be?"

NOTHING IMPOSSIBLE
The answer that Gabriel gives Mary is the same answer that he gives us and the whole world: "For with God nothing will be impossible" (1:37). That's the theme of both Advent and Christmas: not that God does the impossible, but that with God, nothing is impossible.

At youth camp we used to sing this song:

Got any rivers you think are uncrossable? Got any mountains you can't tunnel through? God specializes in things thought impossible; He'll do for you what no other power can do.

God's specialty is what we think is impossible.

(Based on outlines copyrighted by the Division of Christian Education, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Released by Community Press Service.)

Production concentrated on large farms, study says

WASHINGTON — Agricultural production is increasingly concentrated on farms with sales of \$500,000 or more, according to the Commerce Department's Census Bureau.

Although these farms made up only 1.2 percent of all farms in 1982, they accounted for about one-third of the value of agricultural products sold. The leading states were California, Texas, Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa.

Farms with at least half a million dollars in sales gradually are increasing their share of the market. They accounted for 22 percent of all farm sales in 1974 and 28 percent in 1978 as measured by the bureau's agriculture censuses.

How the relatively few farms with sales of at least \$500,000 dominate the market for major crops is illustrated clearly by figures from the 1982 Census of Agriculture. These larger farms accounted for:

- Four percent of farms selling vegetables, but 69 percent of vegetable sales.
- Three percent of fruit, nuts, and berry farms, but 52 percent of sales.
- Seven percent of cotton farms but 46 percent of cotton sales.
- Five percent of nursery

products farms but 62 percent of nursery sales.

The dominance also is apparent in the livestock industry. Farms with sales of a half-million dollars or better reported:

- Forty-nine percent of cattle and calf sales by 1 percent of farms selling cattle.
- Thirty-three percent of sheep, lamb, and wool sales from 1 percent of sheep farms.
- Forty-one percent of horse sales from 1 percent of farms selling horses.

Poultry industry production also is concentrated on large farms,

particularly on turkey farms where 69 percent of turkeys sold were from farms with sales of \$500,000 or more. For all poultry operations, 51 percent of sales came from 4 percent of the farms.

The Census Bureau points out that these data are subject to statistical variability and non-sampling errors. Single copies of the Volume 1, Geographic Area Series, Summary and State Data, from the United States may be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Delaware to hold 'Smart Farming' meetings

NEWARK, DEL. What does it cost to grow an acre of corn? What are your break even costs? How can you cut your production costs? What can you eliminate? Can you afford the land rent you're presently paying?

These are some of the questions Delaware extension agriculture agents hope to answer at the upcoming series of statewide farmer meetings, Smart Farming for Tough Times.

The informal sessions are designed to help farmers identify

accurate production costs for every field they farm. With these figures in hand, they will be prepared to spot areas where they can trim costs for greater efficiency. Those who attend the meetings will also learn how to make critical marketing decisions based on their production costs and the current market outlook. The result we're after, say program planners, is a maximum return to each producer.

The program for all sessions will be the same. The meetings will be

held in December as follows:

Dec 9 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Larry Jester farm shop on Bunker Hill Road, Middletown

Dec 9 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at Richard Lester, Jr., farm shop on Road 411, just north of St. Georges (second farm on left before Gunning Bedford School)

Dec 10 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Snow's Hunting Lodge on Rt. 328 north of Leipsic

Dec 10 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Warrington's farm shop just west of Lake Forest High School on

Road 384, near Felton

Dec 16 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Carlisle Brothers farm shop on Rt. 36, Greenwood

Dec 16 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Alton Hastings farm shop, Rt. 494 (Old Sharptown Road), near Laurel

Dec 17 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Harry Isaacs farm shop on Road 231 just northeast of Milton off Rt. 30

Dec 17 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at C. E. Townsend farm shop on Rt. 26 near Dagsboro

Dec 17 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the University of Delaware Substation meeting room on Rt. 9 west of Georgetown

For further information about these meetings contact the county extension office in Newark, Del. (451-2506)

