

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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To Exercise Breeding Animals
Many farm animals are kept in close quarters during the winter months. This is fine for animals being fattened for market, but may not be suitable for breeding animals. The flock of breeding ewes should have access to an exercise lot daily; there will be less trouble with paralysis in the ewe flock and stronger lambs born if ewes are exercised daily.

When the ground becomes frozen, or snow-covered, some shepherds will feed hay on the ground, in the exercise lot, in order to force the ewes to exercise. Dairy cows need exercise to maintain good feet and legs, and to provide opportunity for heat detection. Brood mares need the same daily exercise, if they are to remain in the best of health.

To Sort Tobacco
Tobacco stripping is underway in this part of the state and many hours will be spent removing the leaves from the stalk. The days of special handling and sizing seems to be over; however, it is still very important that growers sort the injured and ground leaves from the good tobacco. This will be required

if the crop is being sold on grade. With some "pull off" crops this is less important.

On the other hand growers should be fair enough to sort out the undesirable leaves. If this is not done, the buyer will be unhappy and look elsewhere for their tobacco supplies. Some sorting is necessary with every crop, regardless of the method of selling.

To Use A Real Tree For Christmas

This is the time of year that most people are considering the type of Christmas tree to buy. And I hear objections to using real trees as being wasteful. So let's take a look at this situation. Actually, the Christmas tree farmer is raising trees as a crop, and a source of income. This is much the same as the farmer who raises wheat, corn or soybeans to sell or use on his own farm. Christmas trees are raised on land not suited for other crops — not even pasture land. It's mostly rolling land and highly acid.

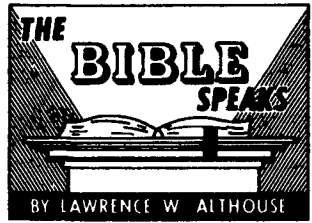
Also, remember that these Christmas tree farmers are putting this land to good use; by conserving the soil and providing

an excellent water shed. Keep in mind that Christmas tree farmers have a very slow turnover in their capital — from the time they plant the tree till it's ready for your living room can be from five to six years for small trees and 10 to 15 years on the larger trees.

Another fact to consider is there is nothing like the fresh aroma of a real tree in your home during the Christmas season.

To Take Inventory

An area of our operation that is very important at this time of year is inventory. With the close of the year most of our farmers close-out their records for the year. This means that if you are going to have a Farm Analysis made, you should take inventory of all your supplies. You'll need this to do any kind of farm analysis, because the amount of grain, hay and other supplies that are in storage will vary from year to year, and unless this is taken into consideration, you cannot have an accurate analysis of your year's operation. So, as accurately as possible, record the amount of hay, grain, feed, seeds and fertilizer that are on hand. This is the first step in an accurate farm analysis.



OVER TO BETHLEHEM
December 15, 1985

The Christmas story is very likely the single most familiar story in the world. There is hardly a culture anywhere that does not know it.

In fact, it may well be that the world is too familiar with the Christmas story—so familiar, perhaps, that we easily overlook many of the significant implications of it. For example, everyone knows that shepherds tending their flocks in the fields were visited by angels who proclaimed Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. But, when you go back and read the story in Luke 2, you find that the angels' appearance to the shepherds is no mere sidelight on the Christmas story. The shepherds, it would appear, were singled out—and apparently the shepherds alone—to receive the message from the angels and make the short journey to the Bethlehem manger "to see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us" (2:15).

WHY SHEPHERDS?

Apart from the wise men, who may have come as much as a year later—no one else got the message to go over to Bethlehem to see and adore the Christ child. The better part of Luke's account of the nativity of Christ is dominated by the shepherds, their experience of the angels and their visit to the manger. No kings, no merchants, no priests got either the message

or the invitation. Just a few humble shepherds tending their flocks by night.

Why shepherds? Well, of course, shepherds make for a more colorful and romantic story. But, although I can't claim to know God's mind on this matter, I am quite confident that God's choice of the shepherds was based upon something more than just a detail for a colorful tale. It would seem that his selection of the shepherds was in line with his decision to keep the principal components of the story on a humble level: a peasant family, an unknown maiden and her betrothed from an obscure village, and a stable and a manger in an inn that was already full. And then, it was to humble shepherds that the angels came. "LET US GO!"

It is as if God is emphasizing that the Christmas story and message is for everyone everywhere. One does not have to be learned, powerful or rich to receive and appropriate the Good News of Christmas. All that is needed is the humble responsiveness displayed so beautifully by the shepherds: "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened..."

Advent and Christmas are a time when the whole world has the opportunity to hear the angels and to make the timeless pilgrimage to Bethlehem to see for ourselves the good news that God has sent to all humanity.

USDA cracks down on packer's payment delays

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Agriculture has ordered Beef Nebraska, Inc., of Omaha, Neb., to cease and desist from its practice of using a country bank account to delay collection of its checks for slaughter livestock.

The meat packer, which purchases livestock in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa, has until Jan. 27 to request review of the order by the U.S. Court of Appeals.

USDA Judicial Officer Donald A. Campbell issued the order after Beef Nebraska appealed the ruling of Administrative Law Judge William J. Weber, based on testimony at a hearing in September 1983, at Omaha.

Campbell found that Beef Nebraska's use of checks drawn on a "controlled disbursement account" with the State Bank of Palmer, about 125 miles west of Omaha, effectively created a one-day delay in the collection of funds by livestock sellers.

Campbell said evidence showed that State Bank of Palmer never saw or processed the checks.

"Instead, under an 'intercept' agreement, Omaha National Bank intercepted (these checks) at the Omaha Federal Reserve Bank, and processed and accounted for them as if they had been drawn on Omaha National Bank.

"This had advantages for all

concerned except the livestock seller," Campbell continued. "The scheme resulted in an additional day's delay in the check clearing process."

Campbell said any delay in the check clearing process increases the packer's float, thereby increasing the risk of loss to livestock sellers in case of the packer's bankruptcy.

Campbell said legislative history showed that Congress intended to prevent this sort of delaying tactic when it amended the Packers and Stockyards (P&S) Act in 1976 to require packers to pay promptly

for livestock.

Congress approved the amendment after American Beef Packers (ABP) filed for bankruptcy in January 1975, leaving producers in 13 states holding bad checks for about \$20 million worth of livestock. ABP had used bank accounts in North Carolina and Washington State to pay for its livestock purchases.

The P&S Act is an antitrust, fair trade practice and payment protection law. It is designed to maintain integrity in the marketing of livestock, poultry and meat, and economic law and order in the marketplace.

Kaye Sweigard to be College of Ag 'marshall'

UNIVERSITY PARK — Kaye Sweigard, of Halifax, will be the College of Agriculture student marshall for Penn State's winter graduation Jan. 5. She was chosen to represent the college because of her high academic achievement.

Kaye will receive a bachelor of science degree in animal production. She transferred to Penn State in the middle of her sophomore year from the Harrisburg Area Community College to enroll in the College of Agriculture.

Finding the transition easy,

Kaye became involved in her studies. "My livestock judging classes, taught by Dr. Erskine Cash, have been the most important. Cash, professor of animal science, was 1979 winner of the AMOCO Foundation Outstanding Teacher Award.

Last year, she assisted Dr. Cash with class preparations and under his direction helped the Penn State Livestock Judging Team prepare for the North Central Livestock Competition. The team placed first in live animal evaluation.

Animal judging comes naturally

to Kaye. During high school she was a member of the Upper Dauphin Livestock 4-H club, worked on a neighboring farm with show and sale beef cattle, and now keeps three Angus cows herself. For the past two summers she has worked for Genetics Unlimited, Inc., assisting with embryo transfers, herd management and show cattle.

At Penn State, Kaye won the champion Jersey Showman award at the 1984 Dairy Expo, was a member of the 1984 Livestock Judging Team and placed sixth in

individual beef judging competition at the national collegiate competition.

Kaye is an active member of the Block and Bridle Club and was chosen the outstanding member in both her junior and senior years. She was elected to the Coaly Society and to Gamma Sigma Delta agricultural honor societies and to the Golden Key National Honor Society.

During her two and a half years at Penn State, she received five separate scholarships in the College of Agriculture scholarship and awards program, including the Hatfield Packing Scholarship, the Pennsylvania Meatpackers Association Scholarship, the Arthur Bigelow memorial scholarship, the Herman R. Purdy Award and the American Society of Animal Science Scholarship.

After graduation, Kaye hopes to work with Angus cattle in herd management and eventually move into farm management. Kaye is the daughter of Kenneth and Marie Sweigard of Halifax.



Farm Calendar

Monday, December 16
Ag Legislative and Land Preserve Meeting, sponsored by Manheim Young Farmers, 7:30 p.m. at Manheim Central High School ag department. The public is invited.

Tuesday, December 17
Swine Marketing Meeting, Berks

Ag Center, 9:30 a.m., Leesport.
York Crops Day, 4-H Center, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 18
Mid-Atlantic No-Till Conference, Timonium, Md., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Swine Marketing Meeting, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 9:30 a.m.

