



OPINION

Let The Public Know

Where Good Food Comes From

One of the major farm production situations that face us American farmers in the new year revolves around exports and imports. At the recent 1987 Agricultural Outlook Conference in Washington, speaker after speaker postulated on the shrinking export market. We were told that countries that can afford to buy our farm products have developed the technology to produce their own foods and feed stuffs. Many examples can be given where this technology was copied from U.S. farmers and agribusiness enterprises. Part of this has come about because foreigners who attend our farm trade shows and informational seminars stay awake and take notes.

Dr. Dave Kohl, professor of agricultural finance and economist at Virginia Polytech, told the Lancaster Farm Credit press briefing participants recently that he held a seminar where all the foreigners in the class were wide awake and taking notes and all the U.S. farmers were falling asleep. He stopped his lecture and told these American farmers that they were a perfect example of why foreigners have gained much ground in agricultural technology in recent years. Needless to say, the farmers stayed awake after that.

But while it seems bad enough that we have at least in part given our production secrets to the competition, there is more salt in the wound. Our own American food processors and fast food services have gone to foreign sources for products.

In a recent issue of the Journal of Commerce the president of a major vegetable processor was quoted as saying that during their last fiscal year, they had imported 261.6 million pounds of food or food products. Ten years ago that figure was 63 million pounds. And while

this company has the image of being as all-American as apple pie, yet that "soup that's good food" may not necessarily have come from tomatoes grown in New Jersey, Pennsylvania or Maryland. The home-grown winter-warming plate of high nutrition may very well have its roots in Mexico where tomatoes cost \$20 to \$40 a ton less than our own U.S. product. Of course, the all-American hamburger at any of the local fast-food eateries may have come from Argentina, too. And the fries were likely done in Malaysian palm oil rather than the more expensive vegie oil from Illinois.

The National Food Processors Association in Washington calls this phenomenon world-sourcing of commodities. They say it must be done because U.S. land and labor costs are high. Of course no one will say if the imported farm products have the same high quality as the U.S. produce and meats. In fact most food processors don't want to talk about buying food overseas. And while it makes good business sense to them to buy abroad, they don't want to lose their all-American image. And they don't want a fight with U.S. farmers. They want to trade on the good reputation of American farmers to produce succulate, high-quality foods while substituting products that come from countries with lower standards and longer shipping times from farm to table.

We think one of our major New Year's resolutions should be to get the message out to the American consumer. Let's let them know that really good food comes from the American farmer and all the agribusiness firms who get the food from the farm to the American table quickly and in excellent style.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin
Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

To Attend Farm Show Events

Time has a way of creeping up on us, and here it is ...nearly Farm Show time. The Farm Show will open again this year on Sunday, Jan. 11 and close on Friday, Jan. 16. The theme for the exhibition is "Pennsylvania Agriculture — Progress Through Technology". Well, we are proud of our agriculture because of the hard work of our family-operated farms. And here is an opportunity for our farmers to show the consuming public the high quality products raised on our farms today.

Active farmers should recognize the many educational meetings and banquets that are held during the week. Many of these are state-

wide organizations and should have economic benefits to the producer.

To Separate New Animals

The addition of a new animal to the herd or flock, is a common practice. However, there is always the chance of bringing new infections into the herd. Too many diseases and problems have been brought onto the farm by the owner. At this time of year and in this part of the state, the Pa. Farm Show provides an opportunity for showing and purchasing new ones. To those who are exhibiting animals, and to those who might buy a bred gilt, or other animals, I'd say be sure to separate these animals from the rest of the herd or flock for at least 30 days. The other alternative is to treat all animals in the herd or flock for the same infections as the new animal has received. Sanitation and separation are very important items in good health programs.

To Be a Better Manager

As we look ahead to 1987, it is difficult to realize just what major problems will confront the average farmer. It remains to be seen what affect the Farm Bill and tax changes will have on agriculture. However, it is evident that profits will be difficult to realize and some very good management will be needed to come out in the black.

Today's farmer must be a better businessman than his forefathers. A farmer must be able to handle

labor, money, equipment and keep up-to-date on all regulations and cultural practices. A farmer must be able to plan ahead to be organized with all the responsibilities. A farmer should practice good public relations with neighbors and respect the rights of others. Good management is just as important in farming as it is in any other industry or business. Work at it and it will pay dividends.

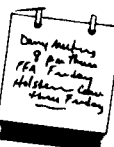
To Be Sure Ice is Safe For Skating

Farm ponds make great ice skating rinks...that's as long as the ice is strong enough. The general rule on thickness is that two inches will support one person and three inches will support a line of people. Thickness is not always the most accurate guide though. Other factors include color and age. New ice is stronger than old ice. And clear blue ice is stronger than slush ice. Be especially cautious with ponds that are either fed by a spring or have a fast moving current. The thickness of these ponds will vary considerably.

The most important thing is to have rescue equipment at the pond site. It is wise to have a straight ladder, rope and inner tube nearby...it could save a life. I would urge owners of farm ponds to use caution in permitting skating unless the ice is thick enough.

The Cooperative Extension Service is an affirmative action equal opportunity educational institution

Farm Calendar



a.m. to 4 p.m.

Farrowing Short Course, Penn State University, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Regional Tomato Growers Meeting, Thompson's Dairy

Bar (Lackawanna County). Phone 963-6842 for information. Adams County Extension Banquet. Mercer County Dairy Nutrition

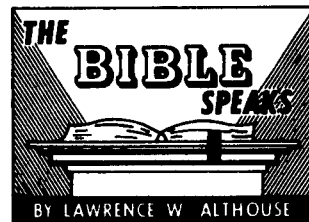
(Turn to Page A36)

Monday, January 5
Hunterdon County Sheep Breeder's Association monthly meeting, Extension Center, 8 p.m.

Tuesday, January 6
Ephrata Area Young Farmer's officers banquet meeting, Ephrata Jr. High School Conference Room, 7:30 p.m.
Franklin County Dairy Day, Kauffman Community Center, 9:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.
Eastern Regional Nurserymen's Association trade show, Monticello, N.Y.

Wednesday, January 7
Hunterdon County board of ag monthly meeting, Extension Center, 8 p.m.
Bucks County Federal Income Tax Meeting, Meyers Restaurant, Rt. 309 Quakertown, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Schuylkill County Dairy Day, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Penn State Schuylkill Campus, Schuylkill Haven. Contact J. Allen Shoener, extension agent, 717-385-3431.
Franklin County Dairy Day, Kauffman Center.

Thursday, January 8
Christmas Tree Pest Management Short Course, Buckhout Lab, Penn State University; continues tomorrow.
York County Commercial Dairy Day, 4-H Center, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Income Tax Meeting, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 9:30



WHO'S LOOKING?
January 4, 1987

Background Scripture: Matthew 5:17-20; 6:1-18.
Devotional Reading: Isaiah 58:1-7.

Most religions and especially Christianity make an appeal to altruism — unselfish concern for or devotion to the welfare of others. Nevertheless, Jesus began his teachings at a level where all of us can respond: the common expectation of getting something in return for what we give.

Do you want to be first? Well, then you can do so by being last. Do you want to save your life? Then you must be willing to give it up. Do you want to be on the receiving end? Ah, then you must be ready to start on the giving end. Shall we not feel "good" about helping someone who is in need? Shall we feel no sense of victory in having overcome temptation? Even Jesus, dying on a cross, felt a sense of satisfaction in doing God's will. He felt "good," not about dying, but about obeying.

SOUND NO TRUMPET
If we give alms, fast or practice

our piety, Jesus promises us a reward: "your Father . . . will reward you" (Matt. 6:4,6,18). But the reward we shall seek in doing these things is not acclaim and recognition from others. So Jesus warns us, "Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them" and "when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you" (Matt. 6:1a,2a). "And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward" (6:16).

Jesus does not ask us to respond to his teachings without looking for some kind of reward. Instead, he makes sure that we seek the very highest reward of all — to please God, not other people. This is the reward we must seek and, if we are satisfied with the mere praise of people along the way, Jesus warns us that "you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven" (6:1).

The reward which God gives us is a prize that is earned and given in secret — "so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (6:4). Similarly, we are to "pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (6:6).

YOUR AUDIENCE
It is not a question of whether we play to an audience, but that we play to the right audience. The Pharisees were criticized because they played to the wrong audience. They wanted the praise of men and they got it. And in doing so, they missed the highest prize of all — the approval of God and the satisfaction in knowing that our deeds have been witnessed by the only one who really counts. Nothing is more fleeting than human acclaim and nothing is more satisfying and lasting than Divine approval.

There is always someone looking when we are obedient to God. Let us make sure that it is God who is watching and it is him whom we are pleasing.

(Based on copyrighted Outlines produced by the Committee on the Uniform Series and used by permission Released by Community and Suburban Press)

FARM FORUM OUR READERS WRITE

Dear Editor:

Rabies Rabies Rabies

Who is to blame for the Game Commission trappers' license? Those who trapped and caught anything, stray dogs, cats, skunks, just anything. And the majority was disposed of.

What does the Commission

want? More money to buy up more land for which they are tax exempt—every acre, farm or mountain.

Our tax goes up to feed the overfed Game Commission.

Sincerely,
Joseph Borkoski
Dornisfe

