



OPINION

Boarish Optimism

Because you often get squeezed into your seat with not much elbow room on some of those commuter airplane rides out of Lancaster Airport, some travelers call these shuttle flights cattle cars. Edward Zuckerman, a writer for "Spy" magazine decided to share a ride with real cattle to judge the accuracy of this metaphor.

According to "USA Today" Zuckerman rode with a train of cattle cars from Florida to Texas and found that each cow was allowed 13.3 square feet. That would be equivalent to 2.7 square feet for a 160 pound person. People on air commuter flights are allowed 5.8 square feet per person. So people fair better than cattle. Unfortunately, Zuckerman says most of the air passenger space is taken up by tiny seats and passengers are forced by flight attendants to sit in them.

Of course since we flew to In-

dianapolis this week to see the Greenfield Swine Research Lab and to attend the American Pork Congress, it would not be appropriate to call the airplane a cattle car. Pig car maybe. Or does swine shuttle sound better? We don't know. But we had a good flight. The stewards and stewardesses fed us apple juice and cheese and the airways were smooth.

But most importantly, the American pork producers are in an upbeat mood. They have a new promotion program financed by new checkoff moneys. And pork prices are high enough to make farmers a little money for once. The convention's theme "On The Move" was proclaimed to signify an industry in motion and involved in change.

It certainly was worth the trip on Sow Air just to get a little dose of that boarish optimism.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

To Check Pastures

With March arriving and temperatures moderating, our thoughts quicken to early spring pastures. We need to be concerned with pastures and exercise lots along rural roads for discarded junk. Unfortunately, people still throw bags of waste from their cars into nearby fields. Some of the materials may be poisonous to livestock. Every producer should remove these materials before starting to graze. Also, in hay fields the materials should be removed before growth begins. Bottles and tin cans will damage equipment and be a threat to the livestock eating the hay. Be sure

your animals are not poisoned through someone's carelessness.

To Plan Area For Tobacco Planting

We have been saying for years that animal and poultry manure is an excellent fertilizer. It still is... but not for tobacco. Research shows us that animal manure, particularly dairy, increases the chlorine content of the tobacco; this chlorine content reduces the "burn" quality of the tobacco, and buyers frown on that.

Locate the area that you plan to transplant your tobacco, and be sure not to apply any manure to that area this year.

We suggest that a soil test be taken as an indicator of your present nutrient level. Then apply fertilizer at the recommended rates. The fertility program recommended by our research agronomists for a 2,000 pound tobacco crop should consist of 80 pounds of nitrogen, 35 pounds of phosphorus (P₂O₅) and 165 pounds of potash from either sulfate of potash or potassium nitrate. This fertility program will increase quality and reduce buyer resistance.

To Plan Weed Control Program

Weeds continue to be one of the major factors in reduced crop yields. This is true in the garden as well as in the field. The battle to control weeds is not a new one; years ago cultivation was the only

method of weed control. Now, herbicides are widely used for weed control.

However, we still have too much crop damage from weeds. An agronomist once said that for every pound of weeds produced, the crop yield was reduced by the same weight. Some weeds are so prevalent that they amount to several tons per acre; this means that much less of the desired crop. Follow the recommendations in the Agronomy Guide and plan for a better weed control program this year.

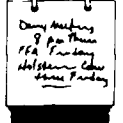
To Prune Fruit Trees

Whether you have a few or several hundred fruit trees, orchard pruning need not be delayed until spring. It may be started in colder weather. But it is a good practice to work on the hardest trees first.

Early pruning can involve some problems from winter injury, but in many cases an early start will be necessary to complete pruning of large orchards before spring. By confining work to the older, harder trees, fruit growers keep injury to a minimum.

Apple and pear trees are the hardest of the fruits, with plums and sour cherries next in order. Because peach and sweet cherries are most tender, delay their pruning, particularly the younger trees, until later in March.

Farm Calendar



Saturday, March 7

Cecil County Annual Farm Bureau Banquet, Huntingdon County Annual Holstein meeting, Juniata Valley Elementary School, 7 p.m.

Dauphin Nut Tree Workshop, Lower Dauphin High School, 9 a.m.

Monday, March 9

National DHIA Convention and Trade Show, Adam's Mark, Philadelphia; continues through March 12.

Cumberland County 4-H Dairy Banquet, 7 p.m.

Atlantic Co-op, Lampeter Firehall, noon.

Future of Ag Conference, Lewisburg, Union County.

Bradford County Extension estate planning meeting, Extension office, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

NW Jersey Fruit Growers meeting, Watchung View Inn, Route 206, Pluckemin.

Tuesday, March 10

Lancaster County Dairy Day, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Farm and Home Center.

Pesticide Recertification Meeting, Ephrata High School Ag Department, 7:45 p.m.

Pa. Turkey Conference, Sheraton Inn, Gettysburg (Route 15 South), 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Future of Ag Regional Conference, Greensburg.

Swine Management Seminar, Mifflintown Firehall, Mifflintown.

Bradford County Extension meeting on DHIA and AM/PM

testing programs, Extension office, 8 p.m.

Bradford County Maple Festival Committee meeting, 8 p.m.

Maryland State Holstein Board of Directors Meeting, Extension Office, Westminster.

Wednesday, March 11

Annual Meeting, Farm Credit Banks of Baltimore, Marriott in Washington, D.C.

York County Potato Growers Meeting, Centre Presbyterian Church, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Cumberland County Mastitis and Milking Update, 10 a.m.

Franklin/Cumberland Mastitis and Milking Machine Update, Shippensburg, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Future of Ag Conference, Greensburg.

Bradford County DHIA Supervisors meeting, Extension office, 11 a.m.

Montgomery County Md. Holstein Meeting, Ag Center, Gaithersburg.

NW Jersey Turf and Ornamental Institute, Extension Center, Route 31, Flemington. Call 201-788-1338 for details.

Thursday, March 12

Lancaster County Farm Transfer Meeting, Farm and Home Center, 7:30 p.m.

Clarion-Venango-Forest Dairy Day, Salem Community Building, Lamartine, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Lampeter-Strasburg FFA Annual Banquet, Lampeter Firehall, 7 p.m.

Bradford County 4-H Leaders Banquet, Wysox Presbyterian

Church, 7:45 p.m.
Farm Transfer Seminar, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 7:30 p.m.

Future of Ag Conference, Mercer. Wayne County Dairy Day, Wayne County Memorial Armory, Tyron Street, Honesdale, 9:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Pa. Egg Marketing Meeting, Olde Hickory Inn, Lancaster.

Friday, March 13

York County Extension Annual Meeting, Porters Firehall, 7 p.m.

NE 4-H District Dairy Meeting, 10:30 a.m.

Lancaster County Farmers Association Spring Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Farm and Home Center, Lancaster.

Pa. Flying Farmers Annual Convention, Sheraton Inn, Greensburg; continues through March 15. For additional information call: 717-867-2384 or 412-258-4906.

Saturday, March 14

Annual Meeting, Pa. Ayrshire Breeders Association, Holiday Inn, Grantville.

Delaware Ag Industry Dinner, Clayton Hall, University of Delaware. Call 800-282-8685.

NE Regional Christmas Tree Growers Meeting and Trade Show, Split Rock Ledge, Gallerio, Lake Harmony, Pa., 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Berks County Guernsey Breeders Annual Meeting, Shartlesville Grange Hall, 11 a.m.

Maple Sugar Festival, Hibernia Park, Chester County, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Tioga-Bradford Jersey Club, Alba Church, noon.

Monday, March 16

Egg Marketing Order Meeting,

Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 7:30 p.m.

National Agriculture Week. Continues through March 21.

Maple Sugaring Festival, Hashawha Environmental Appreciation Center, Carroll County, Md., 1 to 5 p.m.

Horse Symposium, Extension Center, Route 31, Flemington, 8 p.m.

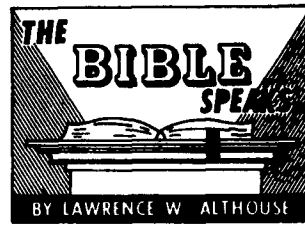
Tuesday, March 17

Franklin County Beekeepers' Meeting, County Administration Building, Chambersburg, 7:30 p.m.

Ephrata Area Young Farmer monthly meeting, Ephrata High School Ag Department, 7:45 p.m.

N.J. State Board of Ag Open

(Turn to Page A31)



TROUBLE IN THE VINEYARD

March 8, 1987

Background Scripture: Luke 19:47 through 20:26.

Devotional Reading: Luke 21:34-38.

The trouble in the vineyard was with the tenants, not the vineyard itself. They had been granted the privilege to tend their own places in the owner's estate, but, once he went away they began to act as if it were their vineyard, not his. Oh, they knew he had title to it, but he had gone away on a trip and they were there and they felt that they, not he, had control over it. Apparently they thought he was going to be away for a long time or, perhaps, that he would never get around to returning.

WHOSE VINEYARD?

After Jesus had told this parable, Luke tells us: "The scribes and the priests tried to lay hands on him at that very hour...for they perceived that he had told this parable against them" (Luke 20:19). And

they perceived rightly! Jesus was telling this parable against them.. and anyone else who, like the scribes and pharisees, forgets whose vineyard it is. Given the responsibility and the authority to teach the people the Jewish faith, they had tended to forget that the religious heritage belonged to God, not to them. They were conveniently forgetting that they were but tenants in the vineyard, not the owners.

"How could they do such a thing?" we wonder from the perspective of the 20th century. From this distance we can all see what a mistake they made. (Despite all the revisionist histories that have been written, I've never read one that defended the scribes and pharisees as being "right" and Jesus "wrong.") But, if we can see their mistake in rejecting Jesus, we often are equally blind in failing to realize that we do much the same thing they did. Like them, we tend to regard the church - or whatever we may call our repository of religious truth - as our "vineyard." We tend to forget our tenant status and even if we realize there is somewhere an Owner of the vineyard, like the scribes and the pharisees, we behave pretty much as if we doubt that he'll ever return.

THE REJECTED STONE

So, God sends us prophets from time to time, but, like the scribes and pharisees of old, we don't heed them and we may use some violence to send them on their way. We may acknowledge that the church is Christ's vineyard, but we act as if it really belongs to us. Often, what we do in his church may have little or nothing to do with the "fruit" he expects from his vineyard. There are many times when Christ is still the rejected cornerstone of the churches we build in his name. If there is trouble in the vineyard, the trouble is with us.

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