



OPINION

The Wrong Sow By The Ear

We just read the report that the Humane Society of the United States has printed 500,000 post-cards showing a bacon and eggs breakfast with the caption, "The Breakfast of Cruelty." The cards are being sent to egg and pork producers and grocery stores. The printed message on cards received by members of the United Egg Producers stated, "Until the United Egg Producers establishes more humane guidelines for the care and housing of laying hens, I will not be eating eggs for breakfast."

We suppose the Humane Society is only concerned about the welfare of hogs and chickens though we would want to know what other special interest groups may be behind the attempt to disrupt the wholesome breakfast food supply of ham or bacon and eggs. But the real point can be made by us who are old enough to remember chickens outside of cages and hogs in large pens. Maybe that's when the phenomenon called "pecking order" was born.

But we still remember that bird

in the low end of the pecking order scooting from one end of the chicken house to the other to get picked on the comb by every one of the hundred or so other laying hens within reach. You would think the cage bars that animal-rights activists say limit the movement of birds could also be thought of as protective shields from all the other hens in higher pecking order brackets.

In addition, we would guess that the multitude of pigs on modern American farms live "higher on the hog" than a huge percentage of peoples in underdeveloped countries or in ghettos of our crowded cities. While the terminology would not be correct, any way you look at it, these 500,000 postcards are "barking up the wrong tree." Though it would be better to say they got the "wrong sow by the ear."

Really in the end, what needs to be considered is the reality of what it means to "go to bed hungry" and to "have a chicken in every pot" not only on Sunday, but every other day of the week, too.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

To Be Aware of the LT Problem

It seems like there is always something showing up to keep poultry producers on their guard. Once again LT (Laryngotracheitis) is showing up in Lancaster County. It has been diagnosed in broilers, started pullets and layers so all poultry producers and supportive people need to be aware.

This means that we really need to maintain tight bio-security. A few important areas are (a) insist that sales people, deliverymen, customers and pick-up people absolutely stay out of houses, (b) provide obvious outside receptacles for feed slips, invoices and messages, (c) know your pullet source and their vaccination program, (d) do not visit other poultry farms and (e) control rodents - don't forget stray dog and cat control.

To Make Pastures Produce

The best way to improve your

permanent pasture is to apply lime and fertilizer, practice rotational grazing and clip them regularly. This is quicker, cheaper and involves less risk than tearing up the old sod and reseeding.

Most permanent pastures have sufficient seed of desirable grass species. The only thing they need is a little tender loving care and the opportunity to grow, and to recover from grazing pressures. Thus, fertility and rotational grazing are very beneficial. The more paddocks you have, the better it is.

If your acreage is limited for your size herd, restrict the amount of time cattle and livestock are permitted to graze. Don't let them trample the grass unnecessarily by allowing them to roam freely over the pasture while not grazing. After a paddock has been grazed, it can be clipped to control weed growth and to keep the grass young and nutritious. This is also a good time to apply fertilizer and necessary herbicides, while allowing the grass to recover prior to being grazed again.

To Plan For Oat Planting

I know some farmers are considering the use of feed oats for planting this spring, but this may not be a good idea. Feed oats may contain quackgrass, bindweed and other weed seeds. Planting feed oats will generally result in lower yields. You also have the problem that any weed seeds planted will be a problem for years to come.

Keep in mind that high quality seed is the smallest part of producing a crop. So, saving a few cents by using inferior or weedy seed doesn't make much sense. On the other hand, homegrown seed of

varieties proven successful on your farm can be cleaned, treated and planted if the germination is 80 percent or better. You can place the seed in a tray with moist soil, cover with wet burlap and keep in a warm place. Then count the seeds that germinate against the total and determine the percent of germination.

To Provide Farm Security

Thefts and vandalism on farms is on the increase. This is very difficult to prevent because of the various items around farm buildings and homes; also the number of buildings and places to enter are many. However, we suggest that every farmer take some steps in protecting his machinery, tools, livestock and supplies. The automatic lights that come on at dusk and go off at dawn should be of real value in discouraging burglars. There are also many new sensing devices that detect movement around the premises.

Watch dogs are also very useful in detecting strangers around the property. Shops, garages and other smaller buildings should be kept locked when possible. The identification of animals by tags, branding and photographs is very helpful. It is also a good idea to mark all machinery and tools with a permanent ID number. The best number to use is your drivers license number preceded by DL PA (Drivers License, Pennsylvania).

Remember, Social Security numbers are non-retrievable so it's best not to use it. Farm thefts are on the increase so farmers should take steps to protect their property.

FARM FORUM OUR READERS WRITE

Dear Editor:

A public and formal declaration of Pennsylvania Farmers' Association and the American Farm Bureau Federation principles has just been released in Policy Book form. Pennsylvania Farmers' Association is a grass roots organization and a firm believer of Americanism. Our farmers policies are based on moral and religious ideas, individual opportunity rather than guaranteed security. There are guidelines on family, law enforcement, national security and property rights.

If you who read this letter to the editor are not a farmer but support PFA's or AFBF's objectives, you can become an associate member. Imagine what strength the group would have if you joined the 3.3 million members now in Farm Bureau.

To quote Paul Harvey who spoke at the AFBF Convention in

January in California, "If AFBF would grow to 30 or 40 million members, AFBF could organize our disorganized majority against all our enemies, foreign and domestic."

Here in our Pennsylvania Farmers' Association we have the largest Blue Cross/Blue Shield group plan in the state with more than 10,000 of our member families using the service. This could be 40 or 50 thousand people. Group rates are 30 or 40 percent less than single rates and have better coverage. For this reason alone many members have come into PFA which is affiliated with the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Anyone who supports PFA's or AFBF's objective can become an associate member.

Sincerely

Mabel G. Bream

Adams County Information Director
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through April 2.
Agricultural Area Security Act Meeting, 4-H Center, Bair Station, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 31
Clarion-Venango-Forest Christmas Tree Meeting, Washington House, Fryberg, 7:30 p.m.
Pa. Young Farmer Association Volleyball Tournament, Ephrata Jr. High School Gym, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, April 1
Annual Meeting, Headwaters Farm Credit Service, Potato City and Whitneyville.
Lancaster County Conservation District, Farm and Home Center, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, April 2
Manor Young Farmers, "Chesapeake Bay Cleanup," 7:30 p.m., Penn Manor High School Ag Department.
Kent County DHIA Meeting, Kennedyville, Md., 7 p.m.

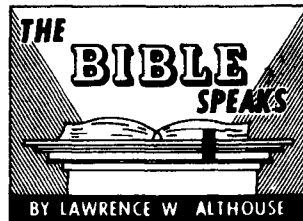
Friday, April 3
Pa. Relief and Quilt Auction, Farm Show Complex; continues tomorrow.
Solanco FFA Parent-Member Banquet, Solanco High School Cafeteria, 7 p.m.

Saturday, April 4
Penn State University Dairy Judging Contest, Penn State University.
Spring Livestock Judging Contest, Penn State University.
Pennsylvania Maple Festival, Meyersdale; also held April 5

and April 8 through 12.
Delaware State Grange 36th Annual Scholarship Dinner, Capital Grange Hall, Dover, Del., 6:30 p.m.

Monday, April 6
Queen Anne County DHIA Meeting, Price, 7 p.m.

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SAFETY FIRST?

March 29, 1987

Background Scripture:

Luke 22:31-34; 54-71

Devotional Reading:

John 18:19-24

One could make a good case in defending Simon Peter from the charge that he had betrayed Jesus. There is no question that Peter denied knowing Christ, not once but three times and unequivocally at that: "Women, I do not know him" (22:57). But one could argue that Peter did the smart thing, in fact, perhaps the only wise course he could have taken. After all, suppose Peter had said, "Yes, that's right, I was with him." Would that have saved Jesus from the cross? What good purpose could have been served? In fact, wouldn't such a confession from Peter and one or more of the others have caused more martyrs to die with Jesus? Wouldn't that have denied to the Christ the leadership

he needed in the early post-Easter church? Wasn't it best for Peter to practice "safety first" and save himself for a life of apostleship? **HE WEPT BITTERLY**

So far as we can tell from the Gospels, however, no one ever condemned Peter for his three-time denial of Christ that night. No one had to, for Peter condemned himself. It might well be argued that Peter wisely chose to save himself from a needless martyrdom, but Peter knew in his heart that his denial had nothing to do with wisdom, Peter "went out and wept bitterly" because he knew in his heart that behind his denials of Jesus was his fear and panic to save himself.

There are many times when we are faced with situations in which the circumstances are quite different from those faced by Peter, but in which the principle involved may be much the same. There are times when we realize that our discipleship for Christ may be better served by picking and choosing (if we can) the times, places and circumstances in which we will stand up and be counted for him. If we are to risk some kind of martyrdom for Christ, let it be over the most important kind of issues.

HE TURNED & LOOKED

But, if we pick and choose the crosses we will take up for Christ, ourselves about our motivations. If the decision rests on better discipleship, fine. But, if we are merely rationalizing to play for "safety first," then we are just as guilty as Peter was.

There is something else that we must learn from Peter's experience. If we betray Christ—as Peter did by word and action—we are not consigned to condemnation, so long as we have the courage and honesty to admit that we have failed him and resolve henceforth to put Christ, not safety, first.

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Farm Calendar

Saturday, March 28

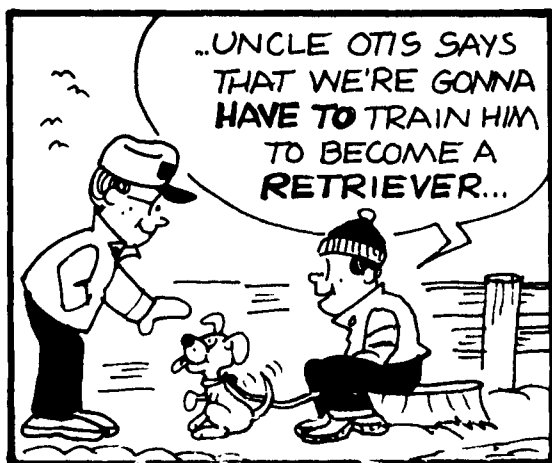
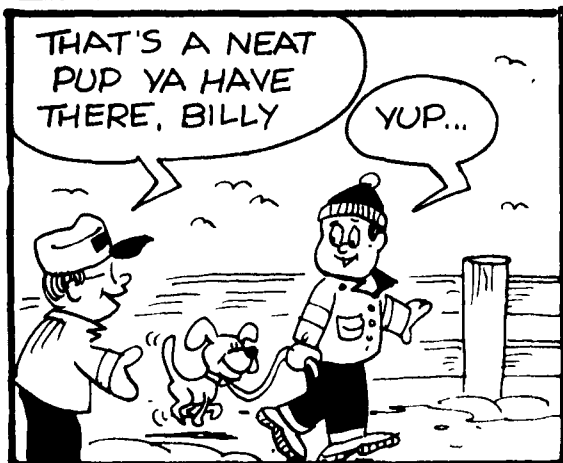
Colonial Charolais Association annual meeting, EconoLodge, Frederick, Md., 2 p.m. Spring Sale, Frederick Fairgrounds, 6 p.m.

Bucks Co. Unit of National Farmers Organization annual dinner, 7 p.m., Plumsteadville

Firehall, Plumsteadville. Tickets at \$7 each are available from Bill Garges, Warrington at 215-348-5514.

Monday, March 30

United Egg Producers Legislative Meeting, Grand Hotel, Washington, D.C., continues



DAVE CARPENTER