

# OPINION

## You May Want To Call Your Congressman About This

While the sponsor of Veal Calf Protection Act of 1987 that has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives may have the welfare of animals in mind, the implications of this legislation are extremely serious. This bill would make it unlawful for any person who raises a calf for the production of veal to prevent the calf from having physical contact with other members of the same species. We would assume you could not just raise one veal calf. You would need at least two calves in the same pen. In addition, you must feed the calf solid food after it's more than two weeks old. Farmers know that ruminating animals that receive hay or grain aren't very good for veal anymore. So we really couldn't keep our veal calves on milk replacer for more than two weeks.

The fine for violating this act is \$5,000 for each calf kept, fed, transported, sold or purchased.

Wow! What a large fine. But here is the real kick in the overalls. Any person may bring an action to compel enforcement of this act. And any person who brings an action, which results in the imposition of a penalty, is entitled to half of that \$5,000 per calf. Can't you just see people who know nothing about farming and the difference between a veal and a herd replacement sneaking around farms to report where calves are located in the hope that they might reap \$2,500 for each calf the government decides is in violation of this act. From there it would be easy to get the same kind of law enacted for swine and chickens and dairy cows.

The prospect for harassment of farmers with this kind of act that lets an informant share in such a large potential fine is incredible.

You may want to write your U.S. congressman about this.

### FARM FORUM OUR READERS WRITE

Editor:

The summer of 1987 has been extremely dry in small areas across the United States. Though these pockets of drought have been diminutive in total geographic size, the severity of the crop conditions and economic impacts will be felt by many farmers. There is a group of farmers in Jackson County, Michigan that is trying to locate these pockets. Through their efforts we have found large areas in Michigan, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, and others that have been affected by drought. The sad circumstances of this are that most of these areas were hit hard two of the last three years.

The "Food Security Act of 1985" has made qualification for emergency loans or disaster assistance unavailable to farmers, unless they are covered by the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC). The USDA has been telling the farmer that he needs to

become more responsible for the crop he plants by using crop insurance as a management tool in his operation. That would be fine if the yield base they use to calculate benefits on were realistic yields produced by today's farming practices. As it is now, when a farmer buys crop insurance, he feels as though he is buying a dead horse.

The "1986 Disaster Payments Program" was made possible by a special act of Congress. This gave eligible farmers for their 1986 crop losses "Commodity PIK Certificates" as a form of disaster assistance. This gave those farms some relief, but with a drought again this year, the devastating economic ramifications without some assistance are going to be more than some farmers can withstand.

What this committee has set as a goal is to organize enough support to get legislature to pass a special act of Congress, or amend the 1986 disaster payments program, to make PIK certificates available as

### Farm Calendar

Sunday, December 6  
Faith & Farming IV, Laurelville  
Mennonite Church Center, Mt.  
Pleasant, 12/6-8

Maryland Farm Bureau Convention, through Dec. 9, Ocean  
City

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## NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

### To Obtain Farmer's Tax Guide

We don't like to talk about taxes but it's a way of life. The Farmer's Tax Guide, for use in preparing your 1987 returns, are now available at the Extension Office. The Guide is extremely valuable when preparing your return. I realize that many farmers rely on an accountant or tax practitioner to file their return, so be sure to pick up a copy and give it to them. There are a number of changes in the tax regulations. It would be well to study them, so your records are accurate when you review your accounts with your preparer.

A few important tax dates for farmers. You may elect to pay your 1987 estimated income tax with Form 1040-ES by January 15, 1988. You can then file your 1987 Federal Income Tax return, Form 1040 by April 15. If you do not pay with Form 1040-ES at this time, your return will be due March 1, 1988.

### To Protect Christmas Trees From Thieves

Many Christmas tree growers become concerned at this time of year about the possible loss of valuable evergreens to Christmas tree "thieves." There is a solution; Cornell Plantations gardener, Gerardo

a form of assistance to farmers in need of relief for 1987 crop losses. Also we are asking Congress or the Secretary of Agriculture to waive the crop insurance criteria for emergency loans until FCIC starts using realistic yields of today's production as a yield base in calculating disasters payments.

In order to accomplish this, we are asking for your support to help the farmers in need so they may regain some of their operating losses. We ask you to call your legislative leaders and give support in this goal. Those of you that are willing to work with us, we ask that you write us at, Cooperative Extension Service, 412 Erie Street, Jackson, Michigan 49202, or phone 517-788-4292 or 517-529-9032.

We have a good start in Michigan, and with help from other states, the accomplishment of this goal can be achieved. Can't never did anything, but with hard work and determination we think we can.

Hank Choate  
Committee for Crop  
Disaster Assistance

Sciara, has developed an "ugly mix." This easy-to-make concoction is designed to temporarily render treated trees unsightly. Here is the recipe: Pour 2 gallons of warm water into a large bowl. Mix separately 20 ounces of hydrated lime with 4 ounces of Wilt-Proof® or another anti-dessicant until a uniform paste is produced. Slowly pour this mix into the warm water while stirring constantly. When the mix is an even, light milky color, add 2 bottles of pink or brightly colored food coloring. Blend until the mixture is a uniform color. Then spray, brush or splatter the material on the trees you wish to protect. The weather should be mild and dry at the time of application. Rains will gradually wash the "ugly mix" off.

### To Be Patient With People

Farming in the best of times is a very stressful occupation. Than add to that reduced yields due to weather, low returns and high expenses.

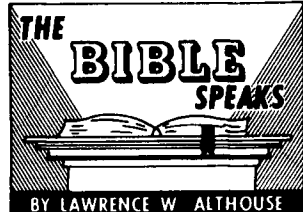
I point this out so that people working with our farmers understand the needs and cares of others. We all need to be patient and understanding and look at the many good things we have to be thankful for... our families, free-

dom and the ability to come back after being down. Take time to talk with your friends and neighbors and share the many good times you've had together. Let's enjoy the holiday season and be thankful for all the good things in life.

### To Be Aware of Fertilizer Value of Manure

The 1987-88 Agronomy Guide lists, on page 72, the real fertilizer value in our livestock and poultry manure. As fertilizer costs continue high, we need to make every effort to use and preserve these manure fertilizer elements. On the basis of the fertilizer content at current fertilizer prices, cattle manure has \$3.80 worth of fertilizer elements per ton, swine manure contains about \$5.00 worth and poultry manure contains about \$13.00 worth of fertilizer elements. This will vary depending on the moisture and bedding content. In addition, all types of manure and organic matter to the soil which is needed on most farms. For best results manure should be either incorporated into the topsoil or stored in a water-tight pit until it can be spread and mixed with the topsoil.

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COMING, READY OR NOT  
December 6, 1987

Background Scripture: Matthew 3:1-12.

Devotional Reading: Isaiah 40:3-11.

Christians may have consigned these "fallen" Christian leaders to the trash heap, we need to remember that the invitation to "come back" is open to all who have sinned and fallen short of God's plan and purpose. In other words, whether we are "fallen" or "still standing" in the Christian faith, the call to repentance comes to all of us.

John the Baptist is pretty hard on the Pharisees and Sadducees who came out into the wilderness to receive baptism from him: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Matt. 3:7). But note that John does not tell them they came for baptism in vain. If they are truly repentant, they can be baptized. The key, of course, is repentance. And, if they are repentant, they shall show it: "Bear fruit that befits repentance" (3:8).

Perhaps you've noticed that, of all the headliners who have gotten into trouble this year — religious and secular figures alike — almost none, if any, have said publicly that they were wrong and are sorry for it. For the most part, they have claimed to be misunderstood, the victims of lies and distortions, or at worst "mistaken." Nobody has said "I was wrong and I am sorry for it" or "Yes, I lied and I regret it."

### UNFRUITFUL TREES

Yet, if we are to respond to the challenge of Advent, God's annual "Coming, ready or not!", we must all take seriously the call to repent, to come back to what all of us have in some way forsaken — even we "good guys" who have not made the headlines and the nightly TV news. With the coming of Advent, this challenge comes to each of us anew to "bear good fruit." "Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees: every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (3:10).

This is the time of the year when we will hear over and over again that haunting question: "Are you ready for Christmas?" More to the point, we should be asking ourselves whether we're ready for the coming of Christ. The first step in getting "ready" is to hear the call to "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

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