



OPINION

A Bad Day To Plant Corn

The one thing you can't do with a beef referendum is ignore it. This national vote that will be taken in May will determine if producers are willing to permanently foot the bill for promotion and research in the beef and veal industry. Over the last ten years we have had a lot of experience on which to base our vote. Twice, in 1977 and 1980, the checkoff was defeated. Then in the 1985 Farm Bill a checkoff was mandated as a 22-month trial to see how it would work. So we know what it's like not to have it and we know it's like to have it. And producers are to be called on to judge the results.

Some producers talk about the increase in public awareness of beef that has come from the increased advertising. Others talk about the inequities in the program that requires \$1 per head regardless of age and the fact that dairy

animals sold back to the farm are also included. Some say change the program before you agree to it, others say don't miss the chance to get it on the books-- the inequities can be changed after the vote.

Whatever you think, if you owned or acquired ownership of cattle during the period of October 1, 1986-March 31, 1988 you need to get out to your county agent's office on May 10 and vote in the referendum. If you are eligible but will not be able to get to vote in person, then get an absentee ballot from your county agent, complete it, and send your vote by mail before the May 3 deadline.

To have the future course of the beef industry set by the voice of only a small percentage of the producers would be very disconcerting. We think May 10 will be a very bad day to plant corn, unless, of course, you do it after you have voted in the beef referendum.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin
Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

To Prepare For Corn Planting

We are fast approaching corn planting time and if your planter is not "ready to go" then put this high on your list for jobs that must be done. If you plan to change the row width, be sure to calibrate your planter to the plant population you desire. This should be done well ahead of time -- so if you need new plates -- they can be picked up and installed. Also your pest control programs should be worked out.

If you are on a no-till program and have a cover crop of rye, wheat or barley, then it should be sprayed when the vegetation is 18-24 inches tall. Paraquat plus a surfactant and does an excellent job.

As far as insect control goes, research data collected from numerous sites over the past several years indicates that soil insecti-

cide treatments for corn rootworm control have not significantly increased yields except in a small percentage of the fields. If rootworm was not a problem in the past, treatment will not be necessary. If the field was in anything but corn last year, there should not be a rootworm problem because they only survive on corn roots.

To Think Ryelage

Many farmers plant rye as a forage crop for their cattle. Rye can provide a lot of much needed high quality forage -- if it is handled properly. For top quality feed value, rye should be cut around the boot stage of maturity, and wilted before ensiling. After this stage, feed value drops rapidly. Some of our rye fields will be heading out soon. That means we should be thinking about cutting rye, perhaps even before we start planting corn. Be sure your equipment is ready to go.

To Evaluate Sewage Sludge Before Using

Many farmers are being approached to have sewage sludge applied to their land. Several things must be evaluated before considering this step. First of all, many of our farms are presently producing more animal and poultry manure than they have land to

apply it on, so we just don't have the acreage. You should also be aware of potential pitfalls in sewage sludge. Sludge is a by-product of wastewater treatment and can contain many different elements and compounds from municipal and industrial sources. The wastewater goes through several stages of treatment, but the sludge that is removed from the effluent may contain heavy metals and trace elements such as copper, zinc, lead, nickel, chromium or cadmium. These elements can be toxic to plants at low levels and some represent a hazard to the food chain.

To Develop Safe Habits

Farming is now the most hazardous occupation, yes passing mining which held that position for many years. In fact the average farm worker can expect that once every four years he'll be injured so severely that medical attention is needed. Farmers have a work accident rate that's two and a half times greater than the average for all industries. The problem is, that unlike industry, farmers work with a minimal amount of supervision and they may not be properly trained for the job. We urge farmers, during this busy season, to take time to be safe.

FARM FORUM OUR READERS WRITE

Editor

Regarding your article in the April 16 issue "Beef Check-Off Will It Die or Survive The Vote?"; the article was very well written but before beef producers vote May 10th perhaps they should view the other side of the coin.

We live in central Pa. and have 6

to 12 head of beef cattle depending on our estimate of our feed supply. The calves are sold as feeders as they come to size.

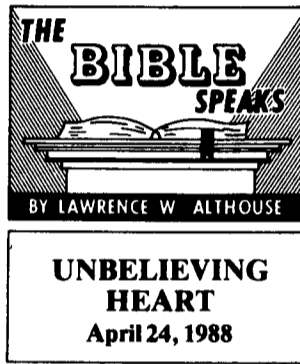
On 2/18/88 I wrote the Pa. Beef Council requesting a refund of my beef check-off dollars - the refund amounted to \$8.00. Now you and I both know \$8.00 isn't a lot of

money but on 2/15/88 our farm truck used to haul hay to auction was involved in a traffic accident and suddenly \$8.00 was one of the few checks we had coming in.

Folks living in Lancaster County may find it hard to believe, but the unemployment rate in Huntingdon County is 11 to 12%. This means a family losing their main source of income can't go out and find an off-the-farm job to fill in financial gaps. About 2 weeks after I wrote for our refund we received no not the expected \$8.00 check, but a leaflet from the Pa. Beef Council listing all the things they are doing for Beef Producers and suggesting we contact our neighbors telling them the merits of the Beef Check-Off. Well I figured the check would be along any day. Wrong! No check was received. I wrote again on 3/31/88 and again about 2 weeks later instead of the requested refund more Beef Check-Off propaganda. I hate to tell you but this type of paper is not accepted as legal tender at the local IGA. (as of 4/17/88 I still have not received a refund check.)

So before folks climb on the Beef Council's bandwagon, they need to check out how if the Beef Council is living up to their obligations. Is the small percentage of refunds a true picture or are refund requests being thrown in someone's wastebasket? Would the Beef Council spending beef check-off dollars on research result in a better return on the Beef Produc-

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Background Scripture: Hebrews 13:1 through 4:13.
Devotional Reading: Psalms 95.

"Take care, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God" (3:12).

Good advice! But what does it mean? What is an "unbelieving heart"? How can one will his mind to believe more firmly? How can we discipline ourselves to have more faith? Surely we'd all have more faith if it was simply a matter of deciding to have it. And in the gospels, what about those who admitted difficulties with their beliefs -- "doubting Thomas," the man who said to Jesus, "I believe; help thou my unbelief"? **YET REBELLIOUS**

I had to read this passage from Hebrews quite a few times before I realized what the writer means by "unbelief." It finally dawned upon me that nowhere here is the writer of Hebrews talking about what people say they believe or don't believe. Creeds, doctrines and theologies have nothing to do with the "unbelief" against which Hebrews warns.

Instead, the writer of Hebrews is concerned with behaviour. The falling "away from the living God" is a matter of hearts "hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (3:13).

Sins usually have much more to do with wrong actions that wrong words and ideas. When the writer of Hebrews refers to the Israelites with Moses in the wilderness, he doesn't accuse them of subscribing to the wrong beliefs or failing to verbalize the right articles of faith. Instead he tells us that they were "rebellious" (3:16), they had "sinned" (3:17), and were "disobedient" (3:18). Then he sums up the whole passage saying: "So we see that they were unable to enter [God's rest] because of unbelief" (3:19). The problem with these people was not that they failed to agree to the right beliefs, but that they failed to live by them.

BEYOND DOUBT

Unbelief, therefore, is something that goes beyond honest doubt and questioning; it is belief that fails to influence our behaviour. It is professing that we believe in God, while acting as if God did not exist or matter. It is calling God our "Lord," and then disobeying his commandments. It may mean saying the right words, yet doing the wrong things. That is what the writer of Hebrews means when he says "... but the message which they [the people of Israel] heard did not benefit them, because it did not meet with faith in the hearers" (4:2).

Faith is essentially trust. The problem is that while many of us have no trouble agreeing with and professing certain beliefs, that doesn't mean that we have the faith to entrust our lives to those professions. After all, it is that to which we entrust ourselves, not that which we profess, that saves us from unbelief.

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Farm Calendar

- Saturday, April 23**
Bradford Co. Holstein Tour, 7:30 a.m. Towanda Plaza.
PSU Dairy Expo, Ag Arena State College, 8:00 a.m.
Maryland State Jersey Sale, Sunset View Farms, Uniontown, MD. Contact James Stoneiseifer 301/756-6640, 11:30 a.m.
Cook College Field Day, New Brunswick, NJ.
- Biodynamics As Applied To Commercial Vegetable Production and Home Gardening**, Cinnaminson, New Jersey, for information, call 609/786-2777.
- Monday, April 25**
Waverly Invitational Jersey Sale, Frederick Co. Fairgrounds, Clearbrook, VA, 11:00 a.m.
Poultry Meeting, Farm & Home Center, 6:30 p.m. For more information, call Steve Combs, 295-8737.
- Red Rose FFA Banquet**, White Horse Fire Hall, 7 p.m..
- Tuesday, April 26**
Spring Homemaker's Day, Stanton Grange, 10:00 a.m. Tickets

- \$9. Contact Diana Mack, 201/788-1342.
- Wednesday, April 27**
International Horticulture Conference, Willow Valley.
- Thursday, April 28**
Pennsylvania Poultry Federation Banquet, Hershey Convention Center, Hershey, 5:30 p.m. social, 7:00 p.m. dinner.
- Friday, April 29**
Washington Co. Holstein Calf Sale, Washington Co.
- Saturday, April 30**
Brown Swiss Mid-Atlantic Calf Sale, 12 noon, Frederick Fairgrounds, Frederick, MD.
- Monday, May 2**
State Grange Banquet, Penn Harris, Camp Hill.
- Tuesday, May 3**
Berks-Schuylkill Christmas Tree Meeting, PSU Schuylkill Haven Campus, 7 p.m.
- Saturday, May 7**
Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival, Howard Co. Fairgrounds, 7 p.m. West Friendship, MD.

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