



# OPINION

## Not Enough To Talk To Ourselves Anymore

In recent years, farmers have become more critical of their farm organizations. It's not enough to sponsor a tour to a neighboring county or publish a newsletter. Farmers now ask, and rightfully so, what does this organization do for me politically and economically? How am I helped in the marketplace? How am I helped in the state or national legislatures?

In the case of milk marketing, membership is mandatory. The law mandates that 15 cents from every hundredweight of milk the dairyman produces be given to farm marketing organizations to manage. Even these organizations, as we reported recently, have now begun efforts to work together. That's good news. We have advocated this merger of efforts for quite some time. A lot of duplicate creative work by advertising and public relations agencies can be saved.

In organizations where there is no law if you join or not, the justification for existence takes on a more immediate reality. If the cost of membership becomes higher than what the farmer perceives is his return of investment, the membership is dropped. That's the way it should be. And our only caution would be to make sure that dropping the membership is not just a short term view.

We can't help but think that to maintain a registered herd of dairy cows regardless of which breed you favor will have long-term economic value. And since the average cost of membership in your breed organization can be offset by the difference in member/non-member registration fees of about three calves, we believe you would want to take the long-view look before dropping membership in your dairy breed organization.

The dairy and livestock breed organizations are to be commended for the development of an export market that can be reached by very ordinary farmers. But in other areas improvement in real benefits to members could be undertaken.

Many activities take place where a lot of effort is spent for farmers to talk to themselves. For example, the dairy and livestock shows. Of course, since we cover about 200 shows each year, we obviously support the system. But if all the shows in the state were outlawed this year, we would still have a strong and healthy dairy and livestock industry.

However, if we don't start to sit down with some of the animal rights organizations and talk to them, we could be out of business overnight. Farmers need to tell these urban people that everything they do from morning until night is aimed at the welfare of their animals.

And if we don't start to talk to legislators and environmental organizations about the need for fertilizers and chemicals in food production, new laws may force us to go back to methods used fifty years ago. And we may face sixty bushels of corn per acre rather than the 200 bushels that can be produced with proper use of commercial products, balanced with on farm nutrients.

Even our fine good-will ambassadors, our dairy, livestock and commodity princes, princesses and queens, are required to spend more time talking to farm groups than to urban or city organizations. It makes us feel good to have these young men and women come and talk to our farm meeting. Besides, it's farmer's money that supports the program, so they have an obligation to come to the farm meeting, right?

We guess that's right. But when the prince, princess or queen talks to farmers it's just another case of talking to ourselves. We're waiting to report on page one about the first farm organization that instead of asking their good will ambassador to speak at their farm meeting, will arrange for them to speak at a town civic meeting instead.

So, when you are deciding which farm organizations to join or drop, take a long term view. And if you decide to join or renew your membership, do your part to help these organizations to get involved in activities that will have significant impact on the future welfare and profitability of agriculture. What many farm organizations are doing should continue to be done. But these other important things should not be left undone. It's just not enough to talk to ourselves anymore.



## NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin  
Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

### To Prevent Water Pollution

The quality of our water supplies is very important; in most cases it should receive more attention. Many people have wells with high bacteria count and/or with high nitrates. Both of these are undesirable for both domestic and livestock consumption. When feedlots and barns are cleaned out this spring, every effort should be made to incorporate this manure into the topsoil just as quickly as possible. With liquid manure, the soil injection type of applicator does an excellent job. With other types of surface spreaders, the manure should be disced or plowed into the topsoil soon after application; this is especially true on slopes above water supplies. The application of fertilizer warrants the same attention; mix it with the top soil very soon after application. Also surface water should be directed away from wells or any other water supply.

### To Be Aware That Calcium Reduces Blood Pressure

According to studies made by the Oregon Health Services University in Portland, there is a link between hypertension/high blood pressure and calcium metabolic disorders. A random sampling of about 1,500 people revealed that those with high blood pressure also showed a 22% reduction in dietary calcium. Researchers at the Center stated that if everyone in the U.S. consumed enough dairy products to meet the daily allowance of calcium recommended by the National Academy of Science, hypertension in this

## Farm Calendar

- Saturday, March 11**  
Fourth Annual Northeast Regional Christmas Tree Growers meeting, Split Rock Lodge Galleria, Lake Harmony, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Maple Sugar Festival, Springton Manor Farm, Glenmoore, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  
Sheep Short Course, Sudlersville Fire Hall, Sudlersville, Md., 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Register by March 8, contact Rich Barczewski at 302/451-1125.  
Westmoreland County bred gilt sale, New, Wilmington Live stock Auction, 1:00 p.m.  
Angus On Parade Sale, Penn State Ag Arena, State College, noon.

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country would be reduced by 50%. The potential health benefits of dairy products is being recognized by many researchers; they are exploring the effect of dietary calcium in body fats, cancer, heart diseases and cataract formation. We look to continued research in these areas.

### To Practice Safety Around Liquid Manure Pits

Many manure pits will be cleaned out at this time of year for field application. This by-product of the livestock and dairy business is very useful as fertilizer. However, the pit can be a safety hazard because of poisonous and explosive gases. When the mixture is agitated in order to be removed, these gases are more plentiful and much more dangerous. Good ventilation above the pit is very important. Also, anyone who goes down in the empty pit should be wearing a gas mask. These gases are dangerous and can be fatal to both humans and animals. We urge all farmers to caution their employees of this potential danger.

### To Check Ventilation Systems

We are into the season of the

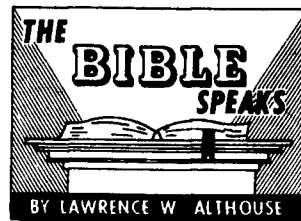
year that ventilation is very important. The fans in our poultry houses and dairy barns have been working hard through the winter months. They have accumulated dust on the louvers and screens and developed loose belts, so they are less efficient — in other words they are not moving as much air as they are rated.

This is a good time to go through your buildings and clean the fan blades, the louvers and screens. Tighten the fan belts, and be sure to check the inlet screens. Many times, in our poultry houses in particular, we're not getting air circulation because the air cannot get into the building. Clean these inlet screens so they are not restricting air.

Also, check the thermostats to make certain they are working properly.

Poor ventilation can cause health problems in poultry houses and "off" flavored milk in dairy barns. This is a good time to take care of some of these inside jobs.

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**TIMELY INTERCESSIONS**  
March 12, 1989

ers he prayed for the Colossian Christians: "...we have not ceased to pray for you" (1:9). What were these intercessions on their behalf? For one thing, "that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding." That's one of those short-run daily needs that helps to shape the long-run picture: to know God's will in our daily life. All of us need that, don't we?

Paul's next intercession is no less practical and timely: that you "may lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work..." (1:10). We may not know specifically what we need on any particular day, but the prayer to lead our lives "worthy of the Lord" is always a practical necessity. I'm not trying to win a Pulitzer Prize with this column, but I do pray that it may be "pleasing to him" and bear fruit with you, the reader.

**WITH POWER**  
Paul's third petition is also one we need on a daily basis: that you may "be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy..." (1:11). Disappointment, failure, rejection, sin — all of these are challenges to our patience and endurance. Even though Christ has transferred us from darkness to light, we still have to find the power to meet the trials and challenges of daily living — a power that must come from beyond ourselves when our own resources have failed.

To discover God's will, to live fruitful lives, and find the power to endure — these are timely intercessions that never become obsolete.

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**Background Scripture:** Colossians 1:1-14.

**Devotional Reading:** 1 Peter 2:1-10.

I don't know of a better expression of the meaning of Christ's saving love than Paul's statement to the church at Colossae: "He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have the redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1: 13,14). Without the love of God in Christ, life for me would be a "dominion of darkness." With Christ's redemption it is to me like coming out of a dark tunnel and emerging into the brilliant light of day.

Yet, wonderful as Paul's allusion is we find there is more to living as a follower of Christ than being "transferred" from "the dominion of darkness" to Christ's kingdom. Much as most of us would like to stop with what Christ has done for us — the long-run view, there is also the concern of daily living — the short-run view. It does not matter what Christ has done to bring us into his kingdom, if, in our daily lives, we still struggle in the dominion of darkness.

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Paul knew that and his comprehension is reflected in the pray-

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