



# OPINION

## An Apple A Day Still Keeps The Doctor Away

Television and other media in recent weeks has reported dangers from chemical residues on food, particularly produce. However a closer look at the situation shows our supply of fruits and vegetables to be safe for everyone, including children. These scare tactics make good entertainment and sell advertising for television but distort the facts and do far more harm than good to American children's diets.

We have been told repeatedly how "dangerous" chemicals on fruits and vegetables increase our risk of cancer (and more importantly, our children's risk). The main target of these attacks has been a plant growth regulating chemical named daminozide sold under the trade name Alar. Alar can be applied to apple trees during the growing season to increase the color and firmness of the fruits, to keep apples from falling off the tree prematurely, to improve storage life of the fruits and to improve bloom on the tree the following season. It has been used since 1962. Since the controversy over Alar use started in 1985, acreage treated has dropped dramatically to an estimated 5% of 1988 apple acreage treated with the chemical. Of this it can safely be assumed that the vast majority of fruit either have no detectable residue or residues which fall well within EPA tolerances for Alar.

Dr. John Wiesburger, Director Emeritus of the American Health Foundation and former head of the Carcinogen Screening Section at the National Cancer Institute, states the following about Alar and apples: "Consumers should not be alarmed about any alleged toxic effects of possible Alar residues." "The public should not be misled into thinking apples are endangering their health. Apples are as healthy as ever. The trace amounts of Alar present on some apples are toxicologically insignificant."

The controversy over alar has been used to question pesticide use and food safety in general. Pesticides are simply agents which are used to kill pests, whether those pests are insects (insecticides), diseases (fungicides), weeds (herbicides), rodents (rodenticides), or whatever. Alar is not strictly a pesticide, it is a plant growth regulator. There is a misconception among the American public that natural substances are safe and man made chemicals are dangerous. However the facts do not support this perception. When Dr. Ames developed his test for mutagenicity he was surprised to find that many common natural substances proved to be potential carcinogens.

You cannot even assume that produce which has been grown without pesticides is safer than pesticide sprayed fruits and vegetables. Dr. Ames notes that plants often generate large amounts of natural toxins in response to attacks by insects or disease. For example, light activated natural carcinogens in celery increase 100 fold when the plants are damaged by fungus. So what is safe? This does not mean that you should be afraid to get out of bed in the morning for fear of encountering carcinogens everywhere you turn. They are a part of everyday life and not a threat under normal circumstances. But it does point out that the world is full of substances with much more ability to cause cancer than minute amounts of chemical residues found on foods.

Pesticides are carefully screened and tested before they are labeled for use on any crops, particularly food crops. As with any agency or organization there is room for improvement but in general EPA and FDA have done a remarkable job in seeing that Americans continue to have the safest food supply in the world. If such substances as peanut butter, diet cola, coffee, tea and many others were subjected to the same scrutiny and registered for use as agricultural chemicals are, it is entirely possible that they would be banned. Of course these substances are entirely safe in normal use in the American diet. This is not to criticize the procedures used but to put dangers from residues of agrichemicals in their proper light.

So let the EPA take a long, hard, honest look at Alar to determine whether or not it should be used on food crops. Farmers do not want to endanger the health of anyone and will accept an honest decision. Certainly we should carefully scrutinize any substance to be used on our food. But let us not make scientific decisions in the heat of media hype and hysteria.

In the meantime the old adage "An apple a day keeps the doctor away" is just as true today as it ever was. Americans in general and children in particular will do far better to stick to fruits and vegetables (and their products) than to turn to sweets and sugared (or diet) beverages.



## NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin  
Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

### To Care For Foaling Mares

Following the birth of a newborn foal, allow the mare and foal to lay quietly with the umbilical cord still intact; the cord should break when the mare and/or foal rises. If it becomes necessary to sever the cord, tear it so as to leave a short stump. **Never cut the cord with a sharp instrument.** The cord should never be torn until all pulsations stop -- apply a tincture of iodine to the umbilical stump as soon as the cord breaks. Some prefer to use a strong solution of 7-1/2 %, others prefer a more tame tincture. In either case, a wide mouth jar is best and in this way the stump can be completely dipped without spilling tincture of iodine over the belly of the foal.

Consult with your veterinarian concerning the administration of tetanus anti-toxin and antibiotics. Foals usually nurse shortly after birth. If nursing is delayed beyond an hour, seek someone with experience for assistance. Note the mare's udder; full mammary glands indicate that the foal is not nursing. In addition watch the mare for signs of colic-like pain, heavy sweating, and pale membranes. First foal mares may resist nursing due to sensitive udders.

### To Prevent Johne's Disease

Johne's Disease is an intestinal infection of ruminant animals that can cause severe diarrhea and weight loss. The primary method of transmission is by young animals less than one year of age ingesting fecal material from older, infected animals. Therefore it is very important to provide cows with a very sanitary maternity area and to separate the newborn calf from its dam immediately after

## Farm Calendar

- Saturday, April 8
- Northeast Bison seminar, Nativity Hall, Tunkhannock, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Swine artificial insemination workshop, Central Maryland Research & Education Center's Swine Research Facility, near Clarksville, 8:30 a.m.
- Pennsylvania Holstein Association Supreme Creations Calf Sale, Ag Arena, State College, 9:00 a.m.
- Learning Projects for Young Children workshop, First

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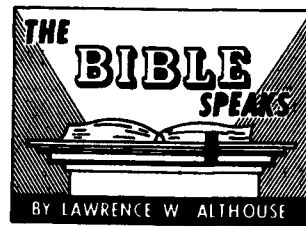
birth. House the calf in an individual pen away from older animals and away from any fecal-contaminated run off. Also avoid tracking manure from older animals into the heifer area. Do not graze heifers with or after older cattle. Do not feed heifers pasture clipping, hay top-dressed with manure or manger sweepings. Cull infected cows.

### To Remove Bagworm Cases

Right now is a good time to check evergreens and shrubs for overwintering bagworm cases.

These insects are especially fond of arborvitae, junipers, and cedars, but may be found on other plants. Where only a few infested plants are involved it may be practical to remove and destroy the bagworm cases. Each case may contain up to 500 eggs. Young caterpillars will hatch from these eggs in late April if the cases have not been destroyed.

If there are too many overwintering bagworm cases to remove by hand, wait until after the eggs have hatched and then use a spray. Check for young caterpillars in late April and early May. It is best to control them when they are still small.



**STRONG ENOUGH TO BE HUMBLE**  
April 9, 1989

### Background Scripture:

Philippians 1:27 through 2:30.

### Devotional Reading:

Philippians 2:1-13.

Most people seem to equate humility with weakness. A humble person, they assume, is one who is not strong enough or important enough to avoid demeaning service to others. Of course, that's another popular assumption; that serving others in a humble capacity is demeaning to the person doing the serving — the more menial the task, the more demeaning the result.

When I was growing up, society at least upheld humility as a virtue in general, if not too specifically. Today, however, it seems we no longer even give live-service to humility. Those who are most greatly admired today, it appears, are those with rather substantial egos — people who are aggressive enough to get what they want out of life. Humility is what is left for those who are considerably less well-endowed.

### EQUALITY WITH GOD

None of the views indicated above are compatible with the New Testament's concept of humility. Jesus performed many humble acts, perhaps none more indicative than his washing of the disciples' feet. But his humility was a badge of his strength, not

### To Consider Forsythia For Spring

Forsythia is one of the most common spring shrubs. It's inexpensive and easy to grow from cuttings. The forsythia is seldom, if ever, bothered by disease or insect pests so it's not hard to care for.

There are a number of varieties to choose from. Some are more upright than others and some are trailing or have an arched effect. The trailing forsythia is excellent for a woody ground cover on slopes, banks or walls. It doesn't have as many flowers of as good quality as other varieties. But it spreads easily, is easily pruned and helps prevent erosion.

Most varieties are similar -- they have yellow blooms which appear in early spring. Some have larger blooms and some have more blooms. Some varieties are more hardy than others and will produce loads of beautiful flowers even after a severe winter.

But no matter what variety of forsythia you choose, it will add a breath of spring to your landscape.

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his weakness. He could have commanded the disciples to wash his feet and they probably would have done it, for they acknowledged him as the Master. Of all people, Jesus was probably the most self-sufficient person who ever lived. And in his letter to the Philippians, Paul says of Jesus, "though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant..." (2:6,7).

So Jesus acted humbly from a position of strength, not weakness. In fact, that's the only way we can be humble — regarding ourselves not as "nothings," but as "someones" loved and valued by God. Humility can be practiced only by someone who has something to lose, or better, give. Jesus had more to give than anyone and that's why his acts were often such humble ones.

### EMPTIED HIMSELF

Actually, humility is not something that happens to us or is done against us. Humility is our own free choice to serve someone else in their need. It is a highly willing act, not one of necessity. Jesus wasn't humbled, as Paul puts it, "he humbled himself" (2:8), "he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (2:7). He wasn't forced reluctantly to the cross, but "became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (2:8b).

Humbly serving other people, therefore, never took anything away from him; it only added to his stature and Paul says, "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name..." (2:9).

Are you strong enough to be humble?

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