



# OPINION

## Love Cribs

To equate modern livestock farming practices with laboratory research projects is unfair. Vivid media photo segments that show test animals receiving shots with huge hypodermic needles should not be shown in association with, for example, modern veal production facilities. The emotional quotient is too great and not merited.

We may not be in a position to know when animals are needed in medical research projects to protect human life and when they are not needed because the experiment has no redeeming value. But we do know that the objective of modern livestock and dairy production facilities is to house the animals in as much comfort as is practical.

Admittedly, some farmers have not adopted the latest guidelines for proper space and facilities for their animals. And we are appalled at the situations where farmers neglect their animals or mismanage their operations so that their animals are hurt. For example, the farmer who walked away from his operation and allowed his animals to starve. Or where neck chains were not enlarged as the animal grew and the chains became embedded in the animal's flesh. To us, these kinds of situations are irresponsible, nauseating and unthinkable. And the persons responsible deserve the greatest punishment the law allows.

But the good farmers have become the victims of public relations campaigns that use emotional words to replace more common farm terms.

Some of these words and their farm meanings are as follows:

- "Anemic meat" for "white meat."
- "Tear a little calf away from its mother" for "wean the calf."
- "Confinement boxes" for "comfort stalls."
- "Animal exploitation" for "livestock husbandry."
- "Tethered" for "tied."
- "Happiness" for "contentment."
- "Chop them up in little pieces and eat them" for "dress or butcher."
- "Factory farms" for "homesteads."

The veal industry has taken the blunt of the first assault by people who want to change the way farm animals are cared for. Unfortunately, some of the claims for animal rights are not true. For example, picketers at a Harrisburg restaurant recently protested milk-fed veal on the menu. This group told news reporters that veal producers keep their animals in total darkness 22 hours a day.

But in fact, modern special-fed veal producers understand that it is simply an "old wives' tale" that calves must be reared in the darkness to produce light pink meat. The American Veterinary Medical Association helps to clarify this misperception in their booklet entitled "Guide for Veal Calf Care and Production."

We quote: "Throughout the hours of daylight the level of indoor lighting, natural or artificial, should be such that all housed cattle can be seen clearly. In addition, adequate lighting should be available for satisfactory inspection at any time. Contrary to information circulated to the general public, it is recommended calves be raised in well lighted areas."

Actually, today's veal houses employ artificial lighting or receive natural light through skylights and windows.

And since the good farmer rises in the middle of the city folks' night to give his babies their formula; and since this farmer provides a warm, cozy home for his babies in the middle of the winter; and since he keeps his babies inside protected from wild dogs in summer; and since he disciplines his babies so they don't turn around and eat their bedding that has been soiled with pee-wee; and since he calls the doctor to come as soon as one of his babies runs a fever or is otherwise sick; and since he fondles his babies' ears while they drink their formula; and since he does all this from morning until night, day in and day out, until his babies are grown, we think the good farmer could rightfully call himself or herself a parent.

Fortunately, when farmers let the true facts be known about how they care for their animals, the general public responds favorably. This happened in Massachusetts last fall, when farmers took legislators to their farms in response to the animal rights referendum that was later defeated. And it happened again in Maryland when veal producers showed home videos of their

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## NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

### To Plant Asparagus

Asparagus is a popular perennial vegetable that many home gardeners grow.

\* Located asparagus at the side of the garden since it is a perennial and will not interfere with other garden operations.

\* Select an area of the garden that has deep, loose and friable soil.

\* Incorporate adequate amounts of organic matter before planting.

\* Avoid soils that are heavy, or stony since they will tend to produce a higher proportion of crooked spears.

\* The best variety to plant in Pennsylvania is Rutgers Hybrids.

\* Plant one-year old crowns any time throughout April.

\* A good method is to dig a trench eight-inches deep and set the crowns at the bottom.

\* Space rows four or five feet apart and the crowns in the row 18 inches apart.

\* Cover crowns with about two inches of soil then gradually through the first season cover the trench to the full eight-inch depth.

\* It will be two years before you can cut spears.

\* By allowing the plants to become well-established during the first two seasons, the plants will produce 15 to 20 ears once harvest begins.

\* Harvest will be over a six to eight week period when they come into production.

\* Maintain asparagus patch by keeping the beds weed free and fertilizing early in the spring each year with two to three pounds of a complete garden fertilizer per 100 square feet.

\* Work fertilizer into the soil.

\* After harvest, adding one to two pounds of 10-10-10 fertilizer per 100 square feet will insure healthy summer growth.

### To Consider New Sheep Practices

Technological advances in management practices have contributed to the flexibility of the commercial sheep enterprise. Two

## Farm Calendar

Saturday, April 15

Northeast Poultry Show, Eastern States Expo grounds, W. Springfield, Mass., 8:00 a.m. Little International livestock show, Penn State Ag Arena, State College, 8:00 a.m.; call 814/238-1235 for information.

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promising practices allow part-time shepherds the opportunity to economically handle larger commercial units. Electrical fencing systems have replaced the traditional woven wire on most sheep farms. Previously, sheep fencing was an expensive and labor intensive project, mainly thought of as a permanent investment. Modern electrical systems usually require less than half the expense and can be used as portable or temporary installations. This allows the use of much more pasture rotation and aftermath harvest.

There has been a great effort over the past 10 years to select ewe flocks for out-of-season, short interval lambing traits. The goal for many commercial ewe flocks today is to lamb every eight months and produce two marketable lambs per year, plus their own replacements. This trait, when developed in a flock, greatly increases the total cash flow of the operation and allows more effective use of labor and facilities.

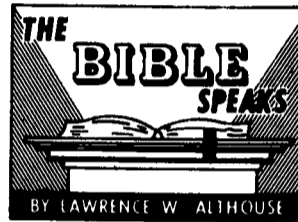
### To Prepare For Ryelage Harvest

Winter grains are growing rapidly and before we know it ryelage harvesting time will be upon us. When that time comes,

you want to be ready to roll with the harvester because you have so few days in which to harvest the crop at the precise time for top quality feed. If you miss these few days due to inclement weather or poor timing, quality declines very, very rapidly! Line up your harvester now, get the silo ready and as the harvest date approaches, keep a close watch on the fields and be ready to roll at a moments notice when the weather breaks.

### To Stay Off Wet Ground

Don't let spring fever get the better of your good judgement. As you yearn to get into fields and gardens, remember what you are trying to accomplish. You want seeds to germinate rapidly and seedlings to emerge quickly. The longer it takes for this to happen the greater the opportunity is for disease and insects to attack, weaken or destroy the seed and planting. Follow weather predictions closely and delay planting until soil moisture and temperature conditions are favorable for good germination, and until the risk of frost injury has passed. To prevent soil compaction and surface crusting don't work soils when they are too wet.



MAKING IT  
April 16, 1989

### Background Scripture:

Philippians 3; I Timothy 1:1-2, 18-20; 2:1-6.

### Devotional Reading:

Psalms 34:1-8.

In the business world, we say a person "has it made" when they rise to a top position that can command an extraordinary style of living. In athletics, we figure an athlete has "made it" when he or she is courted by the pros. In just about every field of human endeavor there are accepted canons of success.

But what about spiritual matters—how do we "make it" there? In the ministry, it is commonly accepted that being elected a Bishop or Senior Minister of one of the largest, most prestigious congregations is "making it" to the top. Among the laity, it might be serving as Chair-person of the Board or lay delegate to the church judicatory. Among still others, it might be a matter of belonging to the "right church," subscribing to the "right beliefs" or getting saved in the "right way."

### REASONS FOR CONFIDENCE

In Jesus' and Paul's days, many people thought that the only way to "make it" with God was to be a Pharisee and that meant living strictly by the religious laws of

Israel. Although this was a lot to live up to, if a person was truly diligent (or perhaps fanatical), it could bring a tremendous amount of satisfaction—even pride.

If that's what it took to "make it," Paul reminded the Philippians that "If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more..." (3:4). What could be more impressive than Paul's religious pedigree?

But Paul didn't believe that he had "made it." In fact, "...whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ..." (3:7). "Making it" that way, said Paul was an illusion, for one cannot "make it" that way: "...not having a righteousness of my own, based on law..." (3:9). The righteousness we accumulate with our religious pedigrees, no matter how impressive it may seem, just doesn't, cannot add-up to what is the real "prize" of our spiritual quest — "the righteousness from God that depends on faith."

### PRESSING ON

In a sense, we don't "make it" with God, because that implies that we have achieved the prize by our own merit or efforts. Instead, to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ means that we are dependent, not upon what we have achieved, but are constantly in the process of growing towards a goal that is always beyond our reach. "Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect," says Paul, "but I press on to make it my own...I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (3:12,14).

So, "making it" as a follower of Christ means that in this life we do not arrive, for we are always pressing on.

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