



# OPINION

## Nagging Question

The U.S. Department of Commerce made its final ruling last week that Canadian pork product subsidies qualify to be addressed by a countervailing duty. The decision places a duty of 3.6 cents Canadian (approximately 3 cents U.S.) per pound on shipments of fresh, chilled and frozen pork as soon as today's decision can be published in the Federal Register. The new duty is up 0.1 cent from the preliminary Department of Commerce decision issued in May. The case now returns to the International Trade Commission (ITC) which is expected to make its final ruling in early September.

The National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) and co-petitioners filed for the countervailing duty on subsidized Canadian fresh, chilled and frozen pork on January 5. The ITC made a preliminary ruling in favor of the U.S. in February. The Department of Commerce issued a preliminary decision in May, placing an original bond of 3.5 cents Canadian per pound of Canadian pork product shipped into the United States.

"We are pleased that we won this latest decision because it moves us closer toward having fair trade between the United States and Canada," said NPPC President Don Gingerich. "If we get a positive final decision from the International Trade Commission, U.S. pork producers can look forward to a more level playing field with Canada on trade. We are still concerned, however, that the duty be sufficiently high to do the job it's intended to do. We'll just have to wait and see."

U.S. pork producers receive no pork subsidies. Meanwhile, they compete against Canadian producers who are currently receiving an equivalent of \$31 (U.S.) a hog in subsidies. A countervailing duty petition addresses unfair subsidies and not quotas, tariffs or trade barriers. Therefore, it does not conflict with the Free Trade Agreement signed in January between the United States and Canada. NPPC supports the Free Trade Agreement, according to Gingerich.

Because of trade inequities between the two countries, a countervailing duty was placed in 1985 on subsidized live Canadian hogs. An effort by NPPC to extend that duty to Canadian pork products was not successful at that time. U.S. pork producers expressed fears at the time that Canadians would attempt to bypass the duty on live hogs by processing the animals into pork products and then shipping the product into the U.S. duty free.

According to NPPC, that is what has occurred. Canadians have increased their exports of pork products to the United States by more than 52% since 1984. Last year, approximately 470 million pounds of Canadian pork was exported into the United States.

Glenn Grimes, University of Missouri agricultural economist, calculated that hog and pork imports cut U.S. pork producer revenues by as much as \$3.37 per cwt. last year. Overall, the Canadian exports cost U.S. producers as much as \$697 million in 1988.

We're pleased that the U.S. pork producers have won this round in the countervailing duty case on Canadian pork products imported into our country. But the nagging question remains. Why wasn't the loophole to bypass the duty on live hogs closed back in 1985?



## NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

### To Be Aware Of Blue Mold

This hot and humid weather is ideal conditions for virus infection on plants. And one bad infection that's rapidly spreading in the county is Blue Mold on tobacco. Tobacco is a \$20 million cash crop to our farmers so we really need to be alert for it. Blue mold can be identified by a purplish mold growing on the underside of the leaf and can be observed early in the morning.

Control measures would depend on the age of the plants. For young tobacco plants, use 1 quart of Ridomil per acre and cultivate it in. For larger tobacco plants, use mancozeb 80WP at the rate of 1.5 to 2 pounds per acre. Mancozeb would include Dithane M45; Manzate 200 or Manex.

We are experiencing ideal conditions for the spread of Blue Mold. Let's do all we can to protect this \$20 million crop.

### To Attend Ag Progress Days

Most farmers do not need much prodding to visit an agricultural show whether it is in the county or halfway across the state.

Each year thousands of people have jammed Penn State University's Rock Springs Agricultural Research Center, nine miles west of Boalsburg on Route 45, to attend the Annual Ag Progress Days. The dates are August 15-17. Activities will start at 9:00 a.m. and end at 5:00 p.m. each day.

This year's theme, "Improving Your Life Through Education," celebrates 75 years of Cooperative Extension work in the United States. Bus tours to the research farms always have been a highlight of Ag Progress Days. A popular new addition last year — the special topics research tours — will return.

Machinery demonstrations, which had to be curtailed last year because of the drought, will return with a full schedule.

Take a day out of your busy schedule... you've earned it... and plan to attend Ag Progress Days. Parking and admission are free.

### To Practice Farm Safety

I want to remind everyone, during this busy hot harvest season, that safety is very important at all times.

Reports show that human errors are responsible for about 85 percent or more of all farm accidents. Many accidents that are blamed on mechanical failures could have been prevented if someone had

checked and repaired the equipment as the need arose. It is human to make mistakes but it can also be dangerous.

I'd like to offer some suggestions to help eliminate many of the problems associated with accidents:

\*\* Give extra supervision to inexperienced operators.

\*\* Permit only the operator on equipment while it is in use. Under no conditions should children or adults be permitted to ride along.

\*\* Keep small children out of work areas unless accompanied by a responsible adult.

\*\* Give teenagers work which they can handle safely.

\*\* Avoid excessive fatigue — take a mid-morning and mid-afternoon break; it could be the most important time of your day.

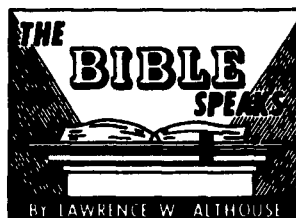
Let's be safety conscious and practice safety every day.

### Be Aware of the Pollen Count

The "hay fever" season is here. Despite its name, "hay" is not normally the cause of hay fever. Ragweed is the chief cause. Ninety percent of all allergic reactions to grass and weed pollens are due to ragweed.

Hay fever is a seasonal disease. It's a disease that many people tend to minimize despite the fact that one out of every three sufferers develop its serious form — chronic asthma.

In Lancaster County it is widespread from early August through September when the weeds flower. The best way to destroy ragweed over large areas is by the use of a weed spray such as 2,4-D. Cutting the plant low, near the roots is recommended for small areas.



### CHOOSING THE BRAMBLEBUSH

July 30, 1989

#### Background Scripture:

Judges 8:22 through 9:57.

#### Devotional Reading:

Ezekiel 28: 1-10.

The story of Abimelech and Jotham is not so obscure as it may seem. Gideon, the successful general, is offered the first kingship of Israel, but refuses, not only for himself but for his 70 legitimate sons as well. Why did he do this? Inasmuch as God had clearly indicated his choice of Gideon as leader of Israel's army, wasn't he the logical choice?

Rightly or wrongly, Gideon refused, ostensibly because the idea of a kingship he regarded as a Canaanite practice: "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the Lord will rule over you" (8:23). This point of view is reflected at various other places in the early Old Testament narrative. We call it a theocracy: rule directly by God. Gideon obviously believed that if he were to become king, he would be interfering with the rule of God. Is that what God wanted, or was Gideon just being too cautious again?

#### PLAYING THE HARLOT

The next part of the story is very obscure. As an alternative to accepting the kingship, Gideon asked the people to give him a portion of their booty from the fighting and he used these gifts to make an ephod. No one today knows just what an ephod was, but it is suspected that it was some kind of graven image, for the writer of Judges indicates that "it became a snare to Gideon and to his family" and even the rest of Israel "played the harlot after it there." It is hard to believe that Gideon would have followed his

great accomplishments with disloyalty to God, but, of course, with human nature, anything is possible.

Even though he refused to be their king, it appears that Gideon continued to give some leadership until his death. Because of him, the people reminded relatively faithful to God so long as Gideon lived. Once he died, however, "the people of Israel turned again and played the harlot and the Baals..." (8:33). Not only did they forget their covenant with God, but the people of Israel forgo the debt of gratitude they owed to Gideon and his family.

#### THE WRONG REASONS

Gideon had 70 legitimate sons, but he also had a son, Abimelech, by his concubine, who was probably not an Israelite, but a Canaanite. Gideon's family turned down the kingship, but Abimelech sought it aggressively and shrewdly. He is a master at selling himself. They wanted a king and he is willing to be their king. They wanted someone from the house of Gideon and he was Gideon's bastard son. Yet, he was also one of them, a Canaanite, so that they said, "He is our brother" (9:3b). And, in all probability, he shared their religion, named as he was: "son of Melech," one of the Canaanite gods. So, for all the wrong reasons, they rallied to Abimelech to make him king — just as many of us still choose our leaders today.

Jotham, upon learning of Abimelech's murder of his 70 brothers, climbs atop Mt. Gerizim and tells his listeners the fable of the trees and the bramblebush. Because the trees and the vine were "too busy" with their own affairs to serve as king, they ended up with the bramblebush, whose only qualification was that he wanted to be king.

Jotham is obviously referring to Israel and Abimelech and pronounces a curse upon them. But he need not have done that, for when we choose the bramblebush to lead us, that is curse enough.

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## Farm Calendar



### Saturday, July 29

Maryland Brown Swiss field Day, Frederick fairgrounds, Frederick, Md., 10:00 a.m.

### Sunday, July 30

Pennsylvania Angus field day, T&J Farm, Dover, Mercer County Grange Fair, Mercer; runs through August 5. Union County West End Fair,

Laurelton; runs through August 5.

Cecil County Fair, Cecil County fairgrounds, Fair Hill, Elkton, Md.; runs through August 4.

Carroll County 4-H/FFA Fair, Carroll County Ag Center, Westminster, Md.; runs

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