



OPINION

No Hurry For BST

Thinking with one goal in mind, the use of a safe Bovine Somatotropine (BST) product, could be a boon to the small, dairy-intensive farmer. And the goal to get more milk for the same amount of effort is a good one.

But there are other goals to consider. First, society needs to accept the concept. We may need more time for this to happen.

From a scientific standpoint, it works and there are no apparent negative side effects. Science, in its pursuit of understanding, has uncovered a great source of information about BST.

But how should we apply this knowledge?

Every scientific endeavor must not start with the idea that someday it will make money for the sponsoring company or institution, but rather that the knowledge gained can be used to the benefit of those who learn it.

To start using this early information about the effects of injecting BST into dairy cows and turn it into an over-the-counter, pharmaceutical product for wide-spread use puts the dairy industry at risk.

There is much more to be done before we can accept the product. We have yet to spread education about what BST is. We have yet to see what long term effects there are on other biological systems within the dairy cow. We question the "hurry-up and do it now" attitude that seems to accompany this type of technology.

In the past, mankind adopted farming and took animals that were once wild, and over time domesticated them for a purpose. We then bred the species for more specific purposes. But we never, as a society, considered artificially altering the basic metabolic behavior of one animal for financial reward.

Knowing that genetically superior Holsteins produce more milk because of their breeding tells us one thing. They do it at safe levels for their bodies as they currently are created.

To take a drug and create an unnatural situation for the animal is something else. We can't help but wonder, with all the new knowledge of how BST works, why we can't just use this information to further refine the practices we now have in place?

Of course, before society at large even gets the chance to accept this new product, dairy farmers will need to accept it first.

Who will risk a long-term fight to maintain a stable industry for possible short-term increase in wealth? We may just find that we need to conclude that its just to early to accept the use of BST in our present dairy herds.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin
County Agriculture Agent

To Plan Legume Seeding

It's not too soon to make plans for seeding clover or alfalfa or winter grains. Many of our good stands have been obtained by seeding in late February or early March. The value of seeding at this time is to take advantage of the alternate freezing and thawing to work the small seeds into the topsoil. Wheat is usually the best grain to make late winter or early spring legume seedings. Barley and rye tend to develop too much growth and increase the potential for lodging which smothers out the small legume plants. Broadcast seeding when the soil is "honeycombed" in early March works very well, but the use of a band seeder may be a better way to establish a new legume stand.

To Consider Leaner Lamb For The Consumer

Tomorrow's red meat market, we are told, will hinge on how an industry adjusts to consumer demands. Historically the U.S. sheep industry continues to respond to an antiquated USDA grading system that rewards solely on line market weight to the producer, and carcass weight or dressing percentages to the packer. Many of today's retailers, who prefer purchasing a case-ready product, continue to receive an over finished lamb carcass that contains unwanted seam or intramuscular fat and must be trimmed of excess fat before an acceptable retail cut is displayed in the meat case. Naturally, the extra labor and preparation costs are being passed on to the consumer. These added processing costs make lamb even less competitive.

"Leaner lamb is the name of the game," states Dr. Paul Lynch, Animal Science Researcher, USDA, Beltsville, Maryland. "The decision is, do we as producers start pulling our industry out of the dark ages now or do we continue to let a more vertically integrated packing industry dictate and destroy the few free markets that still remain for commercial lamb trade?"

To Protect Your Lungs

Be it in the coal mines or on the farm ... dust can destroy lungs.

Farmers who are exposed to dust over long periods of time risk the disabling disease called "farmer's lung." As the dust accumulates in the lungs the tissue hardens. This can lead to a variety of respiratory ailments including bronchitis and asthma. If the condition is not diagnosed soon enough, irreversible lung damage may occur.

Preventing farmer's lung doesn't necessarily require any elaborate or expensive equipment ... a simple mask when dust can't be avoided ... for example when handling dry bedding, sweeping dusty walls or walks or grinding and mixing feed.

Keeping the overall level of dust down is also helpful. Therefore as soon as feed sacks or chemical containers are emptied they should be discarded in the proper manner. Regular house-cleaning of work areas is another good idea.

To hear more on this subject from a specialist, attend Poultry Progress Day on March 1; it will include a presentation on "Protect-

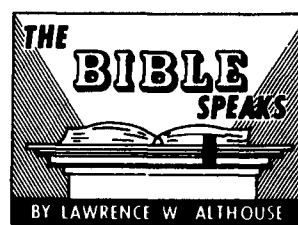
ing Your Lungs From Dust, Molds, Gases, Pesticides and Other Parasites" by Dr. William Porter, Department of Pulmonary Medicine, Lancaster General Hospital. Also, contact your local Lung Association for more information on how to protect your lungs.

To

Transfer Silage

Some farmers use temporary silos to store the extra silage for their dairy and feeder cattle. Our Agronomy Specialists tell us that any silage to be moved from a temporary storage to an upright storage should be done in cold weather. When moved in warm weather (over 40° F.) there will be more chances of heating and molding. Make the transfer in cold weather and do it as rapidly as possible. No additives or preservatives should be needed in this process.

By transferring to the upright silo, you can utilize the mechanical feeding equipment in your upright silo.



ARE WE ALSO BLIND?
January 28, 1990

Background Scripture:

John 9.

Devotional Reading:

John 9:1-5.

One of the unique aspects of the Gospel According to John is that many of the incidents recorded have various levels of meaning. On one level, John 9 is the story of a man who is healed of blindness by Jesus and the controversy this healing generates between Jesus and the Pharisees. On a deeper level, however, John 9 is an exposition on spiritual blindness and Jesus as the Light of the World.

The passage begins with one disturbing theological question and quickly turns to another. "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (9:2). The prevalent belief in Jesus' day was that illness or physical handicap was almost always a punishment for sin.

NOT PUNISHMENT

But Jesus did not subscribe to that theology. In the gospels it is apparent that Jesus does not look upon sin as the cause of illness and impairment. Not once does he refuse to heal someone because he might interfere with God's punishment of that person. That does not mean that there are no consequences to sin. If I drive recklessly and have an accident, I may sustain a serious injury as a consequence of my hazardous driving, but not as punishment placed upon me by God. So, Jesus replied to

the question of his disciples: "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him" (9:3).

No sooner do we read these words than we find that Jesus has solved one question with the posing of still another. When Jesus says this, is he saying that God sent blindness to this man in order to display God's miraculous power? A footnote in Oxford Annotated Revised Standard Version of the Bible suggests an answer: "Jesus... shifts attention from cause to purpose; this is an opportunity for God to act." If this is correct, it would mean that, although God does not cause illness and injury, he can use human affliction for his own redeeming purpose. In other words, God uses, but does not cause it.

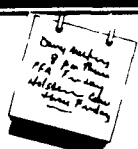
OBSESSED WITH SIN

Yet, note how the Pharisees are preoccupied with sin. The man born blind they pronounce a sinner: "You were born in utter sin..." (9:34) and they also regard the one who healed him in the same manner: "We know that this man is a sinner" (9:24). The Pharisees were obsessed with sin (at least the sins of others) and they were really much more concerned with their traditions than the recovery of the man's sight. They are angry, jealous and resentful. Isn't it strange how religious people can be so blind?

Because of their preoccupation with the possible sins of Jesus and the man born blind, they were unable to see the wonder and glory of what Jesus did for this man. Nor were they able to see their own sin. "If you were blind," says Jesus, "you would have no guilt; but now that you say 'We see,' your guilt remains" (9:41). It is our pride that blinds us both to others and ourselves.

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Farm Calendar



Saturday, January 27

McKean County Livestock Day, 4-H Center, E. Smethport, 9:00 a.m.-noon.

York County 4-H Beef Banquet, Seven Valleys Firehall, Seven Valleys, 7:00 p.m.

Tioga Co. Maple Producers meeting, Harrison Community Bldg., Potter Co.

Monday, January 29

Berks, Schuylkill, Lebanon Counties Beef Day, Midway Diner, 5:00 p.m.

Ninth Annual Keystone Cornucopia, Harrisburg Marriott Hotel and Resort, 6:00 p.m.

COBA/Select Sires District 6 meeting, University Inn, (Turn to Page A37)

Farm Forum

Editor:

Farmers who deal with ASCS are not being informed as to their rights and what information they have a right to from the agency. The local and state ASCS people want you to know as little as pos-

sible. After four requests to the state office which were unsuccessful I wrote to the head of the agency and received at no charge a copy of handbook 12-DS (Revi-

(Turn to Page A39)

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