



# OPINION

## A Change May Be In Order

The Pa. Farm Show Commission has asked the beef breed associations of the state cattle industry to get behind the Friday livestock youth sale at Farm Show. There should be no problem for these breeders to support the sale if they have some way to determine that the steers being sold are not all out-of-state purchases by our 4-H and FFA exhibitors. After all, Farm Show is supposed to be the display and exhibition of Pennsylvania farm products.

As you know, "club calves" sell for premium prices. It is not unusual for these project animals to require an initial investment of at least \$1,000. As a result, we've seen fewer and fewer young people electing to show beef projects. Instead, they are opting for lambs, hogs and goats that require a lower initial investment.

How would having a breed steer show help alleviate this trend? It would allow each breed of steers to show against themselves and would give their owners a greater chance to take home some premium dollars. Many of the purebred breeders have children who would love to exhibit one of their own steers in the show with a chance to compete for the over-all grand championship, which would put purebred champion steers against the crossbred champion.

In addition, maybe we should have a Keystone Classic Steer Class which would be limited to only Pennsylvania-bred steers. Local calf sales, that average far below \$1000 per head, could provide a marketplace for Pennsylvania breeders to sell calves to local youth at a price more reflective of the true beef market. Breeders could provide documentation that the calves they are consigning or selling by private treaty, as a youth project, are Pennsylvania bred and purebred. This type of class would help breeders promote the Farm Show Junior steer sale since they can assure potential buyers that these are Pennsylvania calves.

With the decrease in numbers of Farm Show steers being exhibited, it is apparent that something must change in order to keep young people interested in beef projects. The showing is beginning to reflect a trend toward over-rating the space between a steer's belly and the tan bark as the yardstick to determine champions. Today's standards are the reverse of the 1950s ideal which proliferated short, boxy steers for a decade or more. We don't advocate either extreme, but moderating toward a functional, lean beef animal that better reflects the marketplace in price and quality may be in order for the youth show and sale at the farm show.



### NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin  
Lancaster County  
Agricultural Agent

#### Plan Location For Tobacco Planting

We have been saying for years that animal and poultry manure are an excellent fertilizer. It still is . . . but not for tobacco. Research shows us that animal manure, particularly dairy, increases the chlorine content of the tobacco; this chlorine content reduces the "burn" quality of the tobacco, and buyers frown on that. Locate the area that you plan to transplant your tobacco, and be sure not to apply any manure to that area this year. We suggest that a soil test be taken as an indicator of your present nutrient level. Then apply fertilizer at the recommended rates. The fertility program, recommended by Research Agronomists, for a 2,000 pound tobacco crop, should consist of 80 pounds of nitrogen, 35 pounds of phosphorus (P2O5) and 165 pounds of potash from either sulfate of potash or potassium nitrate. This fertility program will increase quality and reduce buyer resistance.

#### To Check Pastures

With the arrival of March and moderating temperatures, our thoughts quicken to early spring pastures. We need to be concerned with pastures and exercise lots along rural roads for discarded junk. Unfortunately, people still throw bags of waste from their cars into nearby fields. Some of the materials may be poisonous to livestock. Every producer should remove these materials before starting to graze. Also, in hay fields the materials should be removed before growth begins. Bottles and cans will damage equipment and be a threat to the livestock eating the hay. Be sure your animals are not poisoned through someone's carelessness.

#### To Be Aware Of Safe Drinking Water

Private water supply is just that -- private. The quality of your water supply is the responsibility of the homeowner or farmer. State laws do not require testing and regulatory agencies do not monitor the quality of private supplies.

Therefore, the only way you, as a water supply owner, can be certain that the water is safe to drink is to have the water tested periodically. What Should Water Be Tested For? Comprehensive water analysis can be very costly. The following tests can determine the most common water quality concerns.

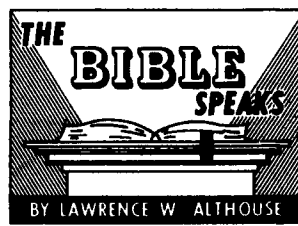
**BACTERIA:** A test for total coliform bacteria can determine contamination from septic tanks or manure.

**NITRATES:** Excessive levels of nitrates can be harmful to human infants and some animals, although the occurrence of this is rare level of 10 ppm nitrate nitrogen has been set for humans, for livestock. Water with a pH less than 6.5 or greater than 8.0 can cause plumbing problems. Corrosion shortens the life of the pipe and introduce dissolved metals into the water that can stain fixtures and pose a potential health hazard. To assure that a well supp-

ly is safe, it should be tested for bacteria and nitrate at least once a year, preferably during a wet spell. Only after accurate testing can a decision be made for treatment equipment.

#### Prune Fruit Trees

Whether you have a few or several hundred fruit trees, orchard pruning need not be delayed until spring. It may be started in colder weather. But it is a good practice to work on the hardiest trees first. Early pruning can involve some problems from winter injury, but in many cases an early start will be necessary to complete pruning of large orchards before spring. By confining early work to the older, hardier trees, fruit growers keep injury to a minimum. Apple and pear trees are the hardiest of the fruits, with plums and our cherries next in order. Because peach and sweet cherries are most tender, delay their pruning, particularly the younger trees, until late.



IS CHRISTLIKE LOVE POSSIBLE?  
March 4, 1990

#### Background Scripture:

John 15: 1-17.

#### Devotional Reading:

1 Corinthians 13: 1-13.

Have you ever thought about just how impossible it seems to live up to the command of Christ to "love one another as I have loved you"? Daily I am confronted by people to whom I find it difficult to be nice. Perhaps you experience much the same thing. How can we force ourselves to love the seemingly unlovable. How can we make ourselves feel differently than irritable or hostile? I have certainly had a lot of experience trying to feel and act differently. But, usually when I try, I do not succeed in loving, but only in hiding my true feelings. And the very reality of those feelings haunts me when I hear Christ saying: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

Jesus must have known how difficult it is for us to love other people. So, did he knowingly give us a commandment that we can't possibly obey? Did he set for us a standard that we cannot reach? Are the cards stacked against us so that we cannot sincerely obey that commandment?

#### RELATIONSHIPS

When I read John 15, however, I see a possible way through my dilemma — and I trust not mine alone. He does not begin with this hard commandment, but rather with the statement: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-dresser" (15:1). Jesus begins this discourse with some important truths about the relationship

between the Father, the Son and the disciples.

Jesus uses an Old Testament image — Israel, the vine planted by God to be fruitful — to communicate the nature of the three-way relationship. Because Israel had failed to be fruitful, Jesus was now the "true vine" of God and the Father is as the vine-dresser: the one who plants, nourishes, and cares for the vine. And the disciples are like the "branches" of the vine. "I am the vine, you are the branches" (John 15:5). The branches are important to the vine's fruitfulness, but without the vine itself the branches would be useless. Producing "fruit" without being attached to the vine would be as difficult as trying to love the unlovable on your own power alone.

#### ABIDE IN ME

Then he goes on to use another image: to *abide*. This word can mean to remain, to continue, to stay, to dwell, to reside, to wait and to endure. The word "*abide*," which is not commonly used in today's speech, indicates a close relationship that remains close regardless of what happens. There is a strong suggestion of perseverance on the part of the disciple and tender care on the part of the Christ.

This mystical relationship, then — of God with Christ, of Christ with us, and of us with each other — is the key to the commandment, for we cannot manage to "love one another" by the sheer power of our own will. Trying to love the seemingly "unlovable" on our power alone is about as unlikely as producing "fruit" without being attached to the vine. So that which makes love possible to others around us is the closeness of the relationship we have with Christ within. On our own, we cannot do it, but if we live so close to Christ, we cannot help but find the power and inspiration to love even the most unlovable.

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## Farm Calendar

### Saturday, March 3

3d Annual Outreach Luncheon, Fellowship of Christian Farmers, Friendly Farm Restaurant, Westminster, Md., 12:15 p.m.-2:30 p.m.

Warren Co. information program, drugs and alcohol, 4-H Center, Warren Co. Fairgrounds, 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

Mercer Co. regional pesticide update meeting, Mercer Co. extension office, 10:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

### Sunday, March 4

Frederick Co. Ag Promotion, Frederick Towne Mall, Frederick, Md.

### Monday, March 5

Capitol Region Christmas Tree Growers meeting, Adams Co. Capitol Region fruit weed control

meeting, York Co. extension office, York, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Milk quality meeting, Dawson Carrol Farm, Ridgely, Md.

### Tuesday, March 6

Lancaster County Dairy Day 2, Farm and Home Center, 9:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Tri-county soybean meeting, Shippensburg Memorial Lutheran Church, Shippensburg, 9:30 a.m.

Weed control in vegetables, York Co. extension office, York, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Christmas Tree Growers meeting, Penn State Fruit Research Lab, Biglerville, 7:00 p.m.

Adams/Franklin/Cumberland

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