



# OPINION

## Poultry Products Valuable To Consumers

A national survey of consumer satisfaction with items they purchase has produced some interesting and valuable information for poultry marketers. Fabian Linden, executive director of The Conference Board's consumer research center reported the survey's findings according to Milton Madison, Professor at PSU. Consumers rated their level of satisfaction for 150,000 products and services that are generally available to them. In a sample of 7,000 households, consumers were asked to give each item a rating of "good," "average," or "poor," indicating the value received from goods or services purchased.

The poultry industry can be proud of the way consumers perceive poultry products' value. Poultry purchased for home consumption received the best rating of all the items. The rating system used the percentage of consumers rating the product "good," plus half the percentage of consumers rating the product "average," to come up with point totals for each item. Poultry scored nearly 70 points on the rating system, which indicates consumers really think they get good value for money spent on poultry products.

The top ten items, led by poultry, were, video rentals, TV sets, fruits and vegetables, appliances, meat, pet food, haircuts, fish, and electricity. Restaurant meals came in next with a rating of 55 points. Other surveys have shown the number of poultry dishes being offered at restaurants growing rapidly in recent years and consumers' high level of satisfaction with meal value is good news for poultry marketers. While many food items for home consumption and restaurant meals are rated high, fast foods are not. Poultry has been a growing portion of fast food offerings over recent years. Consumers must be buying fast food because it's fast, not because it provides good value. In our opinion, poultry consumption will increase in the fast food area if it is easy to prepare, tasty, and convenient to eat with one hand while on the run or driving.

Yes, poultry products continue to be valuable to consumers.

### Farm Calendar

**Tuesday, January 1, 1991**  
Happy New Year!

9th annual pork and sauerkraut dinner, Churchtown Fire Hall, 11 a.m.

**Wednesday, January 2**

Penn State area tax meeting, Shadow Brook Dairy Barn, Tunkhannock.

**Thursday, January 3**

Lancaster Co. Tobacco Show, Farm and Home Center, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Bradford Co. Christmas Tree Management Short Course, University Park, thru Jan. 4.

Franklin Co. Dairy Day, Kauffman's Community Center.

Lycoming Co. 1991 area income tax meeting, Comfort Inn, New Columbia, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., thru Jan. 4.

Lackawanna Co. regional tomato growers meeting, Thompson's Dairy Bar, Newton-Ransom Blvd., 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Christmas Tree Short Course, Penn State, thru Jan. 4.

York Co. Forage Show, Kennard-Dale High School, 7:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Centre Co. Dairy Promotion Committee meeting, Willowbark Building, Bellefonte, 8 p.m.

**Friday, January 4**

Lycoming Co. 1991 area income tax meeting, Comfort Inn, New Columbia, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Christmas Tree Short Course, Penn State, thru Jan. 4.

**Saturday, January 5**

Pennsylvania Farm Show, Farm Show Complex, open for judging only.

**Sunday, January 6**

Pennsylvania Farm Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, thru Jan. 11.

**Monday, January 7**

Pennsylvania Farm Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, thru Jan. 11.

Annual Dairy Industry Conference, Stouffer Dublin Hotel,

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### NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin  
Lancaster County  
Agricultural Agent

#### To Attend Farm Show Events

Time has a way of creeping up on us, and here it is...nearly Farm Show time. The Farm Show will open this year on Sunday, January 6 and close on Friday, January 11. The theme for the 75th exhibition is "Pennsylvania Agriculture - Quality From Our Home To Yours." Well, we are proud of our agriculture because of the hard work of our family operated farms. And here is an opportunity for our farmers to show the consuming public the high quality products raised on our farms today.

Active farmers should recognize the many educational meetings and banquets that are held during the week. Many of these are state-wide organizations and should have economic benefits to the producer.

#### To Properly Feed First Calf Heifers

Most beef producers in the Northeast follow a spring calving system, according to Chester Hughes, Extension Livestock Agent. Feed requirements for the cow herd are highest during the pasture season and decrease into late fall and winter when more expensive harvested feeds must be fed. Remember, however, that relative to summer, requirements are increasing for replacement heifers. Not only must the heifer continue to gain body weight for herself, but her developing calf also requires extra nutrition.

It's generally recognized that the last trimester (last 90 days) of gestation is the most critical time for calf growth. June bred heifers would just now be entering this period in their gestation. While it's important to provide adequate feed, it's also important not to overfeed because fat deposits in the udder will hinder a heifer's milk production potential.

How much, then, should a heifer gain during this period? A realistic goal is probably 100 to 125 pounds, allowing good calf development and reasonable gain of the heifer.

#### To Service Farm Machinery

This is the time of year to be preparing your farm equipment for spring work. In the first place,

this machinery should not be out in the weather. I know that buildings are expensive to construct, so if you are out of building space, cover the equipment with a tarp; this will reduce weather damage.

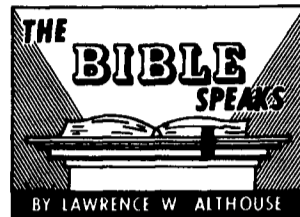
Preparing farm machinery for the coming spring and summer is necessary during this slower season. You can make use of the off-season labor supplies. Machinery is a huge investment and should be kept in good condition at all times. We had a policy on my father's farm to always give a good grease job to all equipment going into storage for the winter ... this kept moisture out of the bearings. Rain and snow will soon develop rust on equipment; this will shorten the life span and is a primary cause of many unnecessary breakdowns.

#### To Use Sawdust On Icy Walks

Freezing rain, sleet and hard packed snow on walkways and driveways are quite slippery and dangerous. The next time you have this condition, try using coarse sawdust to reduce the hazard.

Ammonia nitrate and other fertilizers have been used for melting ice and they may be effective, but the chemical reaction will ruin a concrete surface in just a year or two. Sand and grit from the deteriorating concrete, when tracked into the house, is a nuisance to clean and it marks and scratches finished floors.

Coarse sawdust spread on slippery sidewalks provides a relatively skid-free surface. It has no harmful effect on concrete or plant life. It is much easier to pick up with a vacuum cleaner if tracked into the house.



**EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK?**  
December 30, 1990

**Background Scripture:** Matthew 19:27 thru 20:16.

**Devotional Reading:** Luke 5:1-11.

Let's get it straight from the very beginning: this parable, commonly called the "Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard," is not about employment, economics, labor policies, or human rights. It is about the grace of God and the story -- on the surface a tale of seeming unfairness -- is merely the vehicle.

I was about to say also that Jesus would probably have been better off if he hadn't used this particular parable. It gets people so upset and for the wrong reasons! It takes so much careful explaining and even then some people go away grumbling. But maybe that's why Jesus told this particular parable: it gets people's attention and perhaps brings them to an understanding of grace that they won't quickly forget. "NOT FAIR!"

The controversy over the story is in the payment policies of the vineyard owner. Needing to have his crop picked swiftly, he hires laborers at nine a.m., noon, three and five p.m. and then proceeds to pay everyone the same wage. Those who started early received the same wages as those who started late. Those who worked but one hour received the same pay as those who worked all day. It's not fair, is it? The laborers should have been paid on the basis of how long they worked.

Or should they? Suppose that a denarius was an over-payment for even those who worked all day. In other words, suppose what they were paid was not what they were worth to the vineyard owner, but

considerably more. If the vineyard owner were just being "fair," perhaps he would have paid them less than a denarius. That would mean that everyone's pay that day was not a wage, but a gift. And since it was a gift, "Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?" (Matthew 20:15).

As I said before, this parable is not about fair or unfair employment practices. It is about the grace of God. And the grace of God cannot be put on a "piece rate" or a time clock.

#### THE MERIT SYSTEM

Something else we need to get straight is that, although most of life is based on the merit system, one's relationship with God is not. Generally, schools, scouting, athletic teams, organizations, businesses -- just about everything is which we engage in life -- offer advancement on the basis of merit. The best high school students have the best chances of getting in college. The best salespeople are more likely to rise to the top of their companies. (A possible exception is the field of politics.)

But the favor that God bestows upon us is a matter of grace -- love that we receive even though we do not deserve it on a merit basis. God's love, like the wages given to the workers in the vineyard, is far in excess of what we deserve. Thank God that none of us gets what we deserve!

In the parable the owner of the vineyard says, "Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me?" That is God speaking about his grace to those of us who are upset by the thought that he might give the same grace to someone we deem unworthy of it. "Or do you begrudge me my generosity?" The answer is that sometimes some of us do begrudge God giving others the grace he bestows upon us. The parable is God's answer to those of us who are so presumptuous.

"Equal pay for equal work" is a good and necessary principle in much of life. But when the grace of God is concerned. Then it is all grace.



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