

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Report Contaminants In Standard Units

American Agri-Women members are seeking support to help clarify residue reporting by government agencies. Letters have been sent to Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator, William Reilly, and to Food and Drug Administration Commissioner, David Kessler.

Claiming that much of the hysteria created by the so called "public interest" groups is fueled by misunderstood scientific data. AAW is asking the heads of these agencies to rule in favor of uniform reporting of residues.

"We're indeed fortunate to live in a society of advanced scientific techniques", says Sandy Greiner, American Agri-Women President, "but, unfortunately, this technology that enables today's scientists to locate the proverbial 'needle in a haystack' often causes unnecessary alarm in the public".

Ten years ago, residues and impurities were routinely reported in parts per million (ppm). Today, these same studies can determine parts per billion (ppb), parts per trillion (ppt), and in some cases parts per quadrillion (ppq).

Reporting all findings in the same units of measure will lessen any confusion among consumers, and will allow everyone to have better perspective of what is reported, according to Greiner.

Seldom do changes occur in government without some expense to the taxpayer. This request is an exception, says Greiner, an Iowa farm woman.

American Agri-Women members are not asking that current data be updated immediately, only that all further studies and updates be reported in similar units of measure.

USDA, EPA, and FDA are all involved in reporting food and water contaminants in some way. The reporting of tolerances is done in varying units of measurement. As technology has advanced, making it possible to detect parts per billion or parts per trillion, in some cases even parts per quadrillion, consistent, measurements have not been used. This has resulted in reports which are very confusing to the general public.

Few people understand the difference between 10 parts per million and 10 parts per billion, although it is great and quite significant when we are talking about contaminants in our food and water. If all reporting were done in a standard unit, the reports would be much more easily understood and more relevant to all interested. Comparisons and changes could be much more easily discerned. Statistics would become more meaningful for interpreting the significance of the presence of contaminants and for determining policy needs and directions.

As a result, consumers would have a clearer picture of levels of food and water contaminants. Even if contaminants were reported in parts per billion, as opposed to parts per million (some may feel that parts per million doesn't go far enough), it would be beneficial to society since it would make these reports easier to understand.

Farm Calendar

- Saturday, June 15**
Lancaster Co. Dairy Princess Pageant, Farm and Home Center, Lancaster, 7:30 p.m.
Sullivan Co. Dairy Princess Pageant, Dushore-Main St., 7:15 p.m.
Franklin Co. Dairy Princess Pageant, Savoy Restaurant, Waynesboro.
- Sunday, June 16**
Father's Day!
- Monday, June 17**
PennAg Grain Meeting and Feed Industry Seminar, Eden Resort
- Tuesday, June 18**
The crisis that is facing area dairy farmers will finally receive national attention on Tuesday, June 18. This is the day the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Livestock, Poultry and Dairy will conduct a hearing in Washington, D.C. The committee will receive testimony concerning various supply management programs being proposed by various groups.

- Tuesday, June 18**
Mercer Co. Dairy Princess Pageant, extension office, 7:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, June 19**
Lancaster Co. Holstein Club Field Day, John and Susan Howard Farm.

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Farm Forum

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The hearing is being held under the guidelines of the 1990 Farm Bill. The results of the hearings will be incorporated into proper legislation that will be presented

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NOW IS THE TIME
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Practice Good Management
Dr. Robert Owen, Penn State Veterinary Science Department, stated at the June Poultry Health and Management Seminar nothing replaces good management for animal performance.

I believe this is true for all phases of agriculture. Pesticides, antibiotics, computers, equipment, improved genetics, and animal and plant nutrition formulations are some of the tools available to today's farmers to improve their farming operations.

However, for these tools to be effective, you need to continue to practice good management practices. These practices include following a good soil and water conservation program; providing animals with clean housing, water and feed; planting and harvesting crops on time; and paying attention to details. By practicing good management you will improve the profitability of your farm operation while presenting a good image of agriculture to your non-farm neighbors.

To Support Local Businesses
Every year we hear about rural people buying worthless products and services from door-to-door or telephone solicitations. These range from painting the barn, coating the driveway, cheap pesticides, to mir-

acle products that cure ailments or improve animal or crop performance.

Be very cautious when doing business with people you do not know. Before buying, ask for references and contact them, request research data conducted at land grant universities, find out how long they have been in business, and do not buy on testimonials.

My best advice is to do business with local businesses and businesses you know. By dealing with people you know, you know the type of service to expect and they are there to follow up on any problems.

The success of any community is small independent businesses supporting each other. With each farmer being a small independent businessman, it only makes sense to do business locally whenever possible. By keeping the money in the community, everyone benefits.

To Clean Up Around the Farm

THE BIBLE SPEAKS
BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

CREATING YOUR OWN OBSTACLES
June 16, 1991

Background Scripture: Ezra 4:1-6; 5 through 6.
Devotional Reading: Isaiah 66: 1-14.

When I first read the scripture passages for this week, I determined to write a column about overcoming obstacles. But, then I had to go for an appointment and I thought about this scripture portion on the way to and from that appointment. The more I thought about it, the more I decided that this scripture speaks to me most about not creating your own obstacles in the first place.

For that's what the returned exiles of Israel did: they triggered the opposition of their neighbors to the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem. These neighbors were Samaritans, many of them the descendants of foreigners who were resettled in the land of Israel after the Assyrians conquered Israel in 722 B.C. Racially, they were a mixed group. When they learned that the Jews intended to rebuild the temple, they came, offering: "Let us build with you; for we worship your God as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria who brought us here" (4:2b).

A RUDE SHOCK
The response of the Jews must have come as a rude shock to the Samaritans. Ezra tells us that the Jewish leaders, Zerubbabel, Jeshua

and others replied: "You have nothing to do with us in building a house to our God; but we alone will build to the Lord, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia has commanded us" (4:3b). That doesn't leave any room for negotiation: "nothing to do with us," "we alone will build..."

It is amazing that, even in dry weather, the weeds continue to grow. Now is a good time to mow around buildings, fence rows, and roads. By controlling weeds, we are reducing breeding and living areas for insects and rodents.

Also, weed control will improve ventilation around your buildings, especially naturally ventilated barns. Now is also a good time to do a good general house cleaning and making necessary building repairs.

During this house cleaning, properly dispose of items that you no longer need or use. Make sure all chemicals are properly stored in their original containers and placed out of reach of children and animals.

Clean up around buildings and make necessary repairs. By keeping an attractive appearance outside your buildings, you are presenting a positive image of agriculture and building goodwill for your products while reducing complaints from neighbors.

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It is true that these returned exiles thought that this was what God wanted. Ezra and Nehemiah both were fanatics on the subject of racial purity. They wanted to have nothing to do whatsoever with foreigners. They were God's chosen people.

A DIFFERENT VIEW
At the same time, there was another radically opposing view that can be found in the Old Testament, too—the view of the Book of Ruth in which a foreigner, Ruth, becomes the heroine and great grandmother of King David. It is believed that this book was written around the same time as the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, to whose views it was diametrically opposed.

The reaction of the Samaritans is no more than we might expect: "Then the people of the land (the Samaritans) discouraged the people of Judah, and made them afraid to build, and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia" (4:4). This hostility which the Jews brought upon themselves long delayed the rebuilding of the temple and kept this dispute alive into the time of Jesus.

So, the trouble they faced when they returned to Jerusalem was largely of their own making. How often do you and I create our own obstacles?

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CAN YOU FILL IN THE BLANK SPACES TO FORM 12 DAIRY RELATED WORDS?

GOOD LUCK!

WE'VE FILLED IN A FEW LETTERS TO HELP YOU OUT!

DOUG CARPENTER...

ANSWERS ON PAGE A33