



OPINION

The Cattle Sale

Last night I went to my first livestock sale at the Aberdeen Sales Company in Churchville, MD. I had attended 4-H club livestock sales at the county and state fairs. But this was different because the entire dairy herd from our family farm was sold. It was a nostalgic time for everyone, especially for my 82-year-old Dad who had always loved working with the cows.

As the appointed hour of the sale arrived, farmers and other spectators found seats on the raised platform in the sales building. Each cow was weighed and led into the show arena while the auctioneer described the special assets of the animal, from the size of its udder to the number of previous freshenings. Some of the cows seemed to recognize their owners as they nudged their heads through the railing toward the men.

The bidding began, and with a nod of the head, the first bidder bought a two-year-old milker for \$950.00. When the bidding seemed low, the owner of the livestock sale would expound on the outstanding qualities of the animal, reminding the audience that someone wasn't looking closely at the cow. He pointed out that this herd came from a farm where the brothers had milked cows for seventy years.

Seventy years — a lifetime of love and labor — all sold within two hours. Dad and his brothers had milked cows by hand for eighteen years before milking machines were installed. Many times Dad recalled sitting by a cow and falling asleep while he milked her.

Seventy years of the sweetness and bitterness of dairy farming.....

— rejoicing in the birth of a heifer calf, or having seven bull calves born in a row

— walking up and down hills through sticky wild rose bushes to find a missing cow and her new-born calf, and coaxing the cow back to the barn

— nursing sick cows through milk fever, especially before the use of antibiotics

— providing room and board for the milk tester who stayed overnight once a month before the days of expressways

— rounding up stray cows from suburban neighbors' yards when they jumped through a broken fence

— calling the artificial inseminator at all hours of the day

— celebrating a period of high milk prices, or spending all the profits on feed or veterinarian bills

— dumping a tank of milk that had a hint of springtime garlic

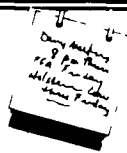
— starting the emergency generator when the electrical current went off in a storm

— leading a group of city school children through the barn to look at the cows

The barn is empty now, except for one lonely bull calf gazing out from its pen. The smell of fresh hay lingers around the deserted stanchions. Barn cats jump down from the rafters in search of spilled milk. A few swallows fly in and out the doors. The milk tank is hosed down and closed — a metal vessel devoid of nature's most perfect food.

Somewhere on an Amish farm in Pennsylvania, many of the cows from this herd are adjusting to new surroundings and new owners. But for their previous owners, the cattle sale closes the door on yet another dairy farm in Baltimore County. — Helen Twining Kadlec, Glen Arm, Maryland.

Farm Calendar



Saturday, June 27

12th annual Hickory Ridge Antique Farm Show, Horace Potter, Milford, Del., thru June 28.
Crawford County Dairy Princess Pageant, Bob and Chris Waddell Farm, Townville, 7:30 p.m.
Susquehanna County Dairy Princess Pagenant, Sun Area Pageant, Valley Mall, Selinsgrove, 7 p.m.
E. Berks Dairy, New Bolton Center, 8:30 a.m.
Crawford Co. Farm and Country Tour, eastern Crawford Co., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
Pa. Rabbit Breeders Association, Leesport Farmers Market, Leesport, 3 p.m.

Schaefferstown annual Cherry Fair, Alexander Schaeffer Farm Museum, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Cattlemen's Field Day, Linkland Farms, Greenville, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Sunday, June 28

Ephrata Adult Farmer annual family picnic, Ephrata Community Park, 12:30 p.m.
National Holstein Convention, Sale Lake City, Utah, thru July 1.
Pennsylvania Floral Industry Expo, Lancaster Host Resort, thru June 29.

Monday, June 29

Pennsylvania Floral Industry Expo, Lancaster Host Resort.



NOW IS THE TIME
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To File For Gas Tax Refund

The Pennsylvania Board of Finance will be mailing out claim forms this month for state liquid fuels tax refunds.

Fuels purchased for agricultural use by farmers are eligible for the tax refunds. Currently this is 12 cents per gallon.

This is not a government assistance program, but a refund of money you have already paid — a tax refund. If you have filed before, you are on the mailing list and should receive a claim form.

Farmers not receiving a claim form should write to Board of Finance and Revenue, Room 409, Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120. Deadline for filing is September 30.

Tuesday, June 30

National Holstein Convention, Sale Lake City, Utah, thru July 1.

Mercer County dairy princess banquet and pageant, Mercer Co. extension office, banquet 7:30 p.m., pageant 8:30 p.m.

Elk/Cameron Vegetable Producers Twilight Field Tour, Freeburg's Produce Farm, Ridgeway, 6 p.m.

Lackawanna County twilight Christmas tree meeting, Hull's Spring Hills Christmas Tree Farm, 6 p.m.-9 p.m.

Small Grains Field Day, McDowell Farm adjacent to SR62, south of I-79 interchange, 7:30 p.m.

Farmer to Farmer Tour, Jim Garner's Farm, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, July 1

National Holstein Convention, Sale Lake City, Utah.

Five-Acre Corn Club deadline. Southeast Pa. Twilight Small Fruit Growers Meeting, Weaver's Orchard, Morgantown, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, July 2

Friday, July 3

Keystone Ram and Ewe Sale, Penn State Ag Arena, thru July 4.

Saturday, July 4

Independence Day
Keystone Ram and Ewe Sale, Penn State Ag Arena.

Cumberland Valley Jersey Breeders, Shippensburg Fairgrounds.
Pot of Gold Sale, Pa. Jersey Cattle Club, Shippensburg Fairgrounds.

Sunday, July 5

Monday, July 6

Eastern Junior Judging School, Shippensburg Fairgrounds, noon, thru July 7.

Tuesday, July 7

County Fashion Revue, Lancaster Farm and Home Center.

(Turn to Page A27)

To Watch Debt

Roland Freund, area farm management agent, writes, "We repeatedly see the problems created by premature investments and too much debt."

Many farmers have been encouraged to look at how much debt the farm may service or support rather than how much income the investment will generate.

Freund states our present economic climate should induce us to look at how much debt we are retiring. Equity growth (particularly in periods of low inflation) is dependant upon repayment of principal. In order to survive, farm enterprises need to be profitable enough to finance the periodic update of facilities and equipment.

In today's economic environment, we need to develop a "show me" attitude when evaluating farm investments and expansion plans. When making these decisions, we need to use realistic assumptions and conservative budgets rather than the best case or ideal situation.

To Keep Cows Cool

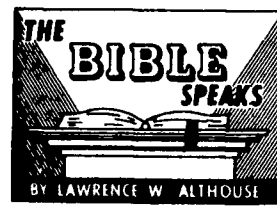
Conception rates may drop drastically during periods of hot weather. To help improve conception rates, keep cows as cool as possible and avoid unnecessary excitement.

Shade, good ventilation, and easy access to lots of cool water will help keep cows cool. Good heat detection and proper timing of insemination is also important in maintaining high conception rates.

Observe cows twice daily, once in the evening and once in early morning hours when it is cooler and cows are more active. Marking cows observed in heat rumps with crayons will help you later spot these cows.

Normally when you see a cow in heat, you try to have her inseminated a half day later. Also, by keeping a record of each cow's heat periods, you will be able to develop and use heat expectancy lists.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "If you love your work, you are likely to be its master; if you hate it, it is your master."



A CORPSE IN ARMOR
JUNE 28, 1992

Background Scripture:
Nahum.

Devotional Reading:
Psalms 47:1-9.

I was 15 years old when World War II ended. From that day until last year we have lived under the threat of Communism. Now, children no longer go to bed fearful that someone will wake them to say, "The Russians are coming, the Russians are coming." It is strange to me that, having waited so long for this day, people seem so blasé about it. To be sure, there has been a little celebration, but hardly when we might have expected after living with this bogeyman for 45 years.

Maybe, in light of the subtlety with which the world seems to have reacted to the break-up of the Soviet block, we might have a hard time understanding the enthusiasm of the prophet Nahum. What he is celebrating is the immanent destruction of the Assyrian Empire. Nineveh has not fallen yet, but he is so certain of its fall that he speaks as if it had already taken place: "The chariots rage in the streets, they rush to and fro through the squares"(2:4).

His relief at this prospect is easy to understand for the eastern world had suffered under the violent yoke of Assyria for two and a half centuries. Damascus had fallen to the Assyrians in 732 B.C., Samaria in 722, Mussair in 714, Babylon in 689, Sidon in 677, Memphis in 671, Thebes in 663, and Susa around 639. Only Tyre and Jerusalem remained free of Assyrian control in the year 612, probably the year of Nahum's prophecy.

GREAT IS THE FALL

Nahum's prophecy scorns the weakness of militarism. When we are suffering under it, nothing seems more powerful than military might. But, as Nahum, tells us, eventually military power fails—every time! "The officers are summoned, they stumble as they go..."(2:5). Eventually, all military might stumbles and falls, and, when it does, great is the fall

of it.

A few weeks ago when we were in Berlin, I was shocked to find that the once all-powerful Soviet military presence there had become an object of pity. In the shadow of the Brandenburg Gate Russian soldiers in civilian clothes lined the sidewalk so that they could sell Soviet uniforms, insignia and memorabilia to the souvenir hunters. I talked to a young Russian couple and found they come there every day because they cannot make ends meet in the new united Berlin, where prices have soared. Their government cannot bring them back to Russia for the immediate future because they have nothing for them to do and nowhere to house them. A few years ago I could not even have approached these people. But things have changed. And that's what Nahum is saying, too: God is the sovereign of this world and eventually the predators of this world will be put down and military power will be smashed.

REJOICE & TAKE HEED

It is important for us to realize that just because Assyria was being destroyed, it did not mean that Judah's future was assured. In fact, Judah, although it witnessed what happened to the military might of Assyria, did not learn the lesson and in less than 25 years it too would fall, the victim of its own corruption and dependency upon national might. So, while the people of Judah rejoiced in Nahum's scathing prophecy, they failed to profit from it—pun partly intended.

Could that not happen to us, too. Rejoicing in the decay of international communism and the crumbling of Soviet power, might we not some day fall for the same reason—trusting in arms rather than God, failing to understand that the judgement of God comes upon all nations, including us?

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