



# OPINION

## Should Have Stayed On The Farm

*Should have stayed on the farm, should have listened to my old man.* In a popular song of the 1970s, a man leaves farming life and strikes out on his own — all the while thinking he should have listened to his father and stayed on the farm.

Some of the words by Elton John, from his song "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road," provide an apt testimony to what is going on in many farms — the children are leaving the farm in record numbers.

It is sad, when you look at the facts.

According to the demographic office at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, young farm operators are becoming an endangered species. Since 1940, the number of farm operators under age 35 has declined an astonishing 77 percent. Dr. Charles Pautler, chief of the U.S. Census Bureau's agriculture division, said the rising age of the American farm operator might reflect the difficulties facing young people who want to get started in farming.

Lancaster Farming has seen the decline in the number of children taking over the family farm. More and more are choosing to leave because of the harsh realities faced by farmers — a decline in the ability to make a living at many types of farming.

The items are distressing. From a story about the W. Blaine Souder family, a swine operation in Telford, Montgomery County: "Within the past year, about three or four nearby dairy farms 'gave up this winter,' (Blaine Souder) said, pointing around him. "The one down here did, the one out there did, and the other one . . . dairy farmers just sold out." Souder spoke about the importance of the family in the farm operation. Blaine said his daughters also enjoy farming. He said he would pass it down to them if they showed interest. "I think we'd be happy just if it would stay in farming," said Blaine's wife, Linda. ("Despite Development, Other Pressures, Century Farm Thrives," Lancaster Farming, May 25, 1991.)

From a story in South Lebanon: "John Risser is an 18-year-old who has dreams of operating a hog farm near home. However, the possibility of doing so doesn't look promising, he said. There is only so much land available for agriculture in the limestone-rich Lebanon Valley where Risser lives with his father and mother." ("Youths' Woes, Worries Set Aside For Farm Show" Lancaster Farming, January 4, 1992.)

From another story about the GATT agreements: "The drift from the land is accelerating again," said (International Federation of Agricultural Producers President Hans) Kjeldsen. (The story centered on trade surpluses affecting farmers worldwide.) "And this time, it's the young, educated farmers who are leaving." ("Farm Leaders Demand GATT Agreement," Lancaster Farming, June 22, 1991.)

There are many more examples of how complex and disturbing this problem continues to be. At many of the banquets and meetings, in the crowd, you always hear of many children in farm families who have gone into other occupations — after all, to them, a daytime job certainly beats the demands of an overtime, seven-day-a-week job that is farming.

And what of the impact on farming in general? How will the shrinking number of family farms and passing of the farm to conglomerates and to development affect the standard of living for everyone? Who has the answers?



### Farm Calendar

#### Saturday, July 18

Annual Menges Mills Historic Horse, Steam, and Gas Show, Elicker's Grove, Spring Grove, 9 a.m.

York County Sheep and Wool Growers Lamb Promotion at Brown's Orchards, thru July 19.

Berks/Southeast Cattlemen's Summer Field Trip, departs Berks County Ag Center, 7 a.m. Shippensburg Community Fair, thru July 25.

Lancaster County Goat Field Day, Windy Hill Goat Dairy (Jacob Fisher's), Manheim, 1 p.m.-4 p.m.

#### Sunday, July 19

Shippensburg Fair, thru July 25.

#### Monday, July 20

Susquehanna County Dairy Tour to New England, thru July 24.

Better Living Through Ag In the Classroom Workshop, Penn State, University Park.

Jefferson Township Fair, Mercer, thru July 25.

Kimberton Community Fair, Phoenixville, thru July 25.

Shippensburg Community Fair, Shippensburg, thru July 25.

Ag in the Classroom Teacher Workshop, University Park, thru July 23.

#### Tuesday, July 21

Lancaster FFA Dairy Show, Lebanon Fairgrounds, 8 a.m.

Eastern Pa. District FFA Dairy Show, Lebanon Fairgrounds, 8:30 a.m.

Conneaut Valley Fair, Conneautville, thru July 25.

Sundaes on the Capitol Steps, Harrisburg, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Focus On Tree Identification, Farm and Home Center, Lancaster, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Eastern Pennsylvania District FFA Dairy Show, Lebanon Fairgrounds, 8:30 a.m.

Adams County Crops Field Day, tour begins at Moose Park, Gettysburg, 9 a.m.



**NOW IS THE TIME**  
By John Schwartz  
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

#### To Rotationally Graze Pastures

As the heat of summer has finally arrived, the rate of pasture growth diminishes. To increase the productivity of pastures, it is advisable to graze them on a rotational basis.

Each section or paddock should be grazed for only 1 to 7 days. The paddock should not be regrazed for another 5 to 6 weeks.

This requires that the cows be given only limited access to the pasture. Meanwhile, they will need to be confined to an exercise or sacrifice lot or housed indoors.

For maximum productivity, pastures species need a chance to build up their root reserves. This can not occur when the new regrowth is being grazed continuously.

It is also important to prevent the grasses and legumes from reaching maturity. Thus, the old growth that remains after grazing should be clipped and excess growth should be harvested.

To learn more about rotational grazing, Glenn Shirk, extension dairy agent, has planned a field day on July 31 from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The field day will be held at Lindenhof Guernsey Farm, 2 miles south of Kirkwood on Route 472.

There will be exhibits and speakers discussing various aspects of rotational grazing.

#### To Encourage School Milk Consumption

Penn State Agricultural Economist Blair Smith conducted a survey in 1990 to determine students' attitudes about school milk.

Problems identified were warm milk, dirty cartons, hard-to-open cartons, and lack of choice.

Smith offers the following suggestions on ways to increase milk consumption in schools:

- Accept from the school vendor nothing but the highest quality,

#### Wednesday, July 22

Garden Center Educational Bus Tour, Plymouth Meeting to Maryland, 7 a.m.-9 p.m.

Plainfield Farmers Fair, Nazareth, thru July 25.

Susquehanna/Wyoming County Wool Pool, Wyoming County Fairgrounds, 8 a.m.-11 a.m.

Pa. Veg. and Small Fruit Field Day, Penn State Horticultural Research Farm, Rockspring.

York County 4-H Fair, thru July 25.

York Co. Water Quality Farm Tour, Airville/Delta/Fawn Grove.

NIR Van, Belmont Fire Hall, Pleasant Mount, 8 a.m.-11 a.m. and 1-3:30 p.m. County Office Building, Montrose.

Lancaster County 4-H Dairy

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best tasting, and freshest milk possible.

- Make certain milk arrives cold and is kept cold until the moment it is served to students.

- Be sure cartons are clean when delivered and they are clean when served to students.

- Determine, periodically, how difficult it is to open the milk cartons.

- Make skim and low fat milk available because many students prefer these products.

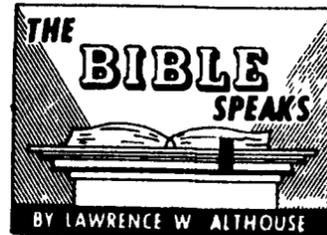
- Promote milk as being good for you and tasting good. If the milk does not meet quality standards, the shipment must be rejected.

Today's successful food marketers are only delivering high quality product and making sure the food service people are handling it correctly.

By monitoring the school milk program, you will stop inferior product from being dumped on children and you will increase milk consumption.

#### To Study Foreign Broiler Prices

The Foreign Agriculture Ser-



#### Background Scripture:

Zephaniah 3

#### Devotional Reading:

Psalms 51:10-19

Often, it is bad enough that we sin, but many of us compound our sin by refusing to accept correction. This was at the heart of Zephaniah's prophesy against Judah: "Woe to her that is rebellious and defiled, the oppressing city? She listens to no voice, she accepts no correction"(3:1,2).

Several decades ago, Richardson Dilworth was running for the office of Governor of Pennsylvania. He had been District Attorney in Philadelphia while I was in college and admired the job he had done under difficult circumstances. In the midst of that Gubernatorial campaign, Dilworth asked about a decision he had made several years previous in the midst of a serious strike. Instead of hedging or fudging or brazening out his position, Mr. Dilworth acknowledged that he had been wrong in the decision he had made. "Wrong"? A politician "wrong"? How could that be?

#### "I WAS WRONG!"

Mr. Dilworth paid dearly for this admission, for one of the sides in the labor dispute—with whom he had originally sided—became irate and vowed that they would prevent him from becoming Governor. And they did. Essentially, he lost because he admitted he had been wrong. I'm afraid he's the only politician I can remember losing for the sake of his honesty. Have you noticed that no one in public life—and private life, too—has ever done anything really "wrong"? Every public official responds to any and all accusations of wrongdoing with the explanation that he or she was misquoted, misunderstood or maligned. How refreshing it would be to hear one of the present presidential candidates say, "Yes, I did do that and it was a mistake, a bad mistake!"

As the old saying goes, "What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the

gander." If it behooves people in public life to be willing to accept correction and even admit to mistakes and—dare we use the word—sins, what about us? How willing are we to consider that perhaps our actions are not as righteous we might wish to believe? **I AM NOT GOD**

Have you ever considered why it is that some people can never accept any correction or reproff? Contrary to what we might think, it is not because they think too highly of themselves, but not highly enough. If you are a secure person, criticism is not devastating. If I feel reasonably good about life and my relationship with God, it does not destroy me for someone to suggest that I have acted unfairly or unjustly in a particular situation. It will not have been my first failure nor my last one. I can live with the knowledge that I am not God. It is only when one's confidence is shaky that correction appears so threatening. In other words, defensiveness and self-righteousness are often signs of vulnerability.

The people against whom Zephaniah's prophecy was chiefly directed are not the kinds of people we might expect to be the subjects of blame: "Her officials within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves that leave nothing til the morning. Her prophets are wanton, faithless men; her priests profane what is sacred, they do violence to the law" (3:3,4). These are not the normal malefactors of society: drunkards, thieves, people of ill repute. God's greatest dissatisfaction is often with those of whom he expects more.

Dwight L. Moody once said that he had had more trouble with Dwight L. Moody than any other person he knew. At least he recognized it. Do I? Do you?

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