



OPINION

More Hazardous Than The Weather

Each of us in our own tradition, celebrated Thanksgiving day, this week. For many families, the celebration involves food. And food starts with the farmer. Daniel Webster (1782-1852) said in a speech about agriculture, "When tillage begins, other arts follow. The farmers therefore are the founders of human civilization."

Unfortunately, food is so plentiful that we may need to experience famine before we can really be thankful.

For many years, farmers have been willing to produce low cost food because they considered their occupation a way of life with a higher calling. But when prices are so low to farmers that they can't "make ends meet," they are forced to give up their life, their calling, and the farm.

Arden Tewksbury says some people are reporting that the national average cost of producing milk for 1990 was \$14.98. He has no problem with these USDA figures. But he says these same reporters claim the average returns to management and risk escalated three cents per cwt. from 1989 to 1990—from 11 to 14 cents.

"Those who claim the national average return to dairy farmers of 14 cents per cwt. in 1990 as somewhat of a victory forgot to tell dairy farmers in Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, and New England States that USDA reports indicate that these farmers were in a minus in 1989 of 60 cents per cwt. and a minus of 46 cents in 1990," Tewksbury said. "These same farmers averaged a return of \$1.76 per cwt. in 1986 and \$2.04 per cwt in 1987; and 90 cents in 1988."

Whatever you had for your thanksgiving meal last Thursday, remember the food came from the farm, and be thankful for farmers who not only endure the usual hazards of seed time and harvest, they often face unfavorable markets that are more hazardous than the weather.

Farm Calendar

Monday, November 30
National Milk Producers Federation Annual Meeting and Dairy Summit, Las Vegas, thru Dec. 3.

Chester County Estate Planning Workshop, West Chester Borough Hall, 7 p.m.-10 p.m.
Goat Meeting, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, basement, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 1
Dairy Housing Ideas, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, basement, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, December 2
Lancaster County On-Farm Composting Field Days, Bob Kellerman's Farm near Lititz, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Insects, Diseases and Weeds of Trees and Shrubs, Penn State Great Valley, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 3
Friday, December 4
National 4-H Congress, thru Dec. 11.

Poultry Industry Nutrition Labeling Workshop Hyatt Arlington, Virginia.

Saturday, December 5
Annual Victorian Christmas at The Station, Manheim.

Crawford County annual meeting, St. Hippolyte Church, Frenchtown, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 6

Monday, December 7
McKean County DHIA Meeting, Robbin's Nest Restaurant, 7:30 p.m.

Western Pa. Commercial Vegetable Growers' Seminar, Days

Inn, Butler, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
N.Y.-Pa. Seed Potato Meeting, First Citizens National Bank, Ulysses, 10 a.m.

Land Preservation Education Lower Windsor Township Building, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 8
7th Regional meeting on Practical Biosecurity for Popularity, Clayton Hall, University of Delaware, Newark, 8 a.m.

ADA/DC District 21, Bryncliff Motel Conference Center, Varysburg, N.Y., noon.

Ag Service School, Bradford County Extension, Towanda, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

North Carolina Dairy Management Tour, leaves 6 a.m. Edinboro Inn, Edinboro, returns Dec. 10.

Agronomy Dealers In-service, Extension Office, 10 a.m.

Lancaster DHIA Banquet, Good and Plenty Restaurant, Lancaster, 11:30 a.m.

"Understanding How to Make DHIA Reports Work for You," Country Apple Restaurant, Ono, 10 a.m.

Managing Risks (SE - Bronchitis), University of Delaware, Newark.

Wednesday, December 9
Northeast Lamb Pool, Wyalusing Sale Barn.

Ag-Service School, The Country Cupboard, Lewisburg, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Meeting for Veterinarians, Leola Family Restaurant, 7 p.m.

Land Preservation Education Meetings, Spring Grove Borough Building, 7:30 p.m.



NOW IS THE TIME
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Protect Corn Crib From Rodents

Mice and other rodents take a heavy toll on ear corn stored in wooden and metal corn cribs.

The corn crib provides an ideal habitat for these pesty rodents. It provides sheltered nesting areas out of the cold winter weather along with an ample food supply.

The control of mice and rats under these conditions is very difficult.

However, several things may be done to help keep rodent populations down. First, traps may be used to monitor the extent of the problem. Trapping alone will do little to eliminate the rodents. Second, by placing screening wherever possible to exclude rodents will help keep numbers in check.

When a severe problem exists, the commercial use of tracking powder has been the most effective means of eradication. Remember, when using mice and rat baits, always read and follow the directions to avoid feed contamination and killing of non-target animals.

To Soil Test

Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent, reminds us now is a good time to soil test.

A regular program of testing farm fields should be followed. How often to soil test?

First, establish baseline data on each field through soil tests. Anderson then recommends only testing when you change crops or every third or fourth year.

This amount of testing will allow for monitoring of nutrient levels in the soil. If the level of nutrients increases over the period, fertilizer applications may be reduced to save money. If levels are falling, additional fertilizer may be needed to keep soils productive.

For Pennsylvania farmers, we recommend using the Penn State Soil Testing Laboratory. The Penn State Lab bases its recommendations on research done under Pennsylvania soil types and growing conditions. Labs in other states will base their recommendations based on their conditions.

Regardless of where you send your soil samples, always send them to the same lab so you may compare results from one year to the next.

To Winterize Your Sprayer

As soon as the crop sprayer is used for the last time this season, you will want to clean and winter-

Annual Delegate Meeting Milk Marketing, Inc., Fawcett Center for Tomorrow, Ohio State University, 9:30 a.m.
Turkey Meeting, Sheraton, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

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ize it.

Alfalfa growers may want to wait until the winter annual weed control program is completed. If you will not be completing this program soon, you will want to consider protecting sprayer parts from freezing.

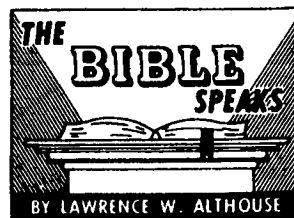
A gallon or two of RV antifreeze will do an excellent job at a reasonable cost. To clean a sprayer, mix a sudsy detergent solution using about 1/4 pound of powder or equivalent amount of liquid detergent for every 25 gallons of water. Run this solution through the sprayer, washing all internal parts. This should remove the residues of most insecticides, fungicides, and herbicides with the exception of the hormone-type herbicides such as 2,4-D, Banvel, and similar products. If these materials were used in the sprayer, add one quart of ammonia for each 25 gallons of water. You may also use 1/2 pound of activated charcoal for each 25 gallons of water.

After cleaning the sprayer, it needs to be protected from freezing. One way to do this is to completely drain all parts including the pump and all controls. This will require taking some of the parts apart and blowing them dry with air.

A better method is to add antifreeze solution to the sprayer. Robert Anderson suggests using the RV type antifreeze. This type is nontoxic and easy to dispose of next spring.

Automotive types of antifreeze may cause environmental problems if spilled or when beginning to use the sprayer next spring. Remember, when cleaning and winterizing your sprayer, make sure wash water and antifreeze is properly collected and disposed of to prevent soil and water contamination.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "We find comfort among those who agree with us — grpwth among those who do not." — Frank Clark



Background Scripture:
Luke 1: 1-25.
Devotional Reading:
Luke 1:67-79.

There are some who pray much in the same way that they mail order merchandise from Sears or Spiegels. For them, prayer is like a shopping list of needs that God is obligated to fulfill. At the other extreme are those who believe that prayer is useless, an exercise in futility, in between those two polarities is where you and I probably find ourselves: not so arrogant that we believe God cannot and will not refuse our request, nor so skeptical as to believe that it accomplishes nothing.

The problem with many of us is pretty much what it was with Zechariah, the Jewish priest who became the father of John the Baptist. We don't know how long Zechariah and Elizabeth prayed for a son, but as Luke says "both were advanced in years," we can assume that for quite a few decades they had prayed fervently and nothing happened.

NO ANSWER?

Have you ever prayed for something day after day, month after month, year after year, but without anything you could interpret as an answer? I have. For at least three decades, I have prayed daily for the healing of a loved one's troubled soul. If there has been any result of my prayer, I have not noticed it. In fact, quite to the contrary. It is not a selfish or unusual request. I know that God wants that person whole as much and even more than I do. Is it beyond the power of God? No. Maybe I'm not praying rightly or perhaps I am not worthy for God to answer this prayer? No, I don't think that is it either. God doesn't answer prayer because we are worthy and only humans worry about prayer being the "right way". In fact, in Luke 1 we find that Zechariah and Elizabeth "were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child..." (1:6,7).

So it does not follow that God will answer the prayers of his "good" children and turn a deaf ear to those who are "bad". Human transactions and relationships may work that way, but not

with God. Answered prayer is always a matter of grace: not because we are good, but in spite of the fact that we are not. Goodness may be rewarded, but a reward is never guaranteed. So, for me, prayer is always a mystery. Just when I think I know how best to pray, just when I think I have it all figured out, I am brought face to face with the realization that I don't know as much as I think I do.

YOUR PRAYER IS HEARD!

Zechariah's experience in the temple is always a spiritual tonic for me. When I wonder whether the God of the universe could possibly be hearing my prayers. I read the angel's assurance to both Zechariah and all of us, "Do not be afraid... for your prayer is heard..." (1:13). All of us need to be reassured that our prayers are heard and regarded by God, that in praying we are not speaking empty words to ourselves. Zechariah was assured, not only that his prayer was heard, but that his wife would bear a child that was to be a special servant of God.

So, should all barren couples believe that they are guaranteed that someday there will be a child born to them? No, that is a guarantee that prayer cannot and will not make. What is guaranteed is that God has heard the prayer and will do something about it. The purpose of our prayer will be fulfilled, but the letter of the prayer may not be. We will get our heart's desire, but it may not be in the form we have asked for. We are not God and therefore we do not always know what we really need.

So, although I have not yet penetrated the mystery of prayer and seen the results of my years of praying one special request, I will continue to pray, assured that God does hear my prayer and cares enough for me to answer that prayer, even though I may not see or understand the answer when it comes.

When shall I stop praying? Never!

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