



OPINION

Education Where Needed Most

Today begins National FFA week. This year's theme is "FFA—The Spirit of Leadership." And this theme is fitting because FFA chapters contribute to their school, community and the nation. And in doing so, they learn leadership, and they become leaders.

FFA participation increased in 1992 to 401,574 members who were in 7,456 chapters throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands. Local, state and national activities and award programs provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills acquired through agricultural education.

In addition, in schools where FFA students are present, the bridge is shortened between young people with roots in agriculture and those who know nothing about it. With the push by opponents of agriculture to infiltrate our educational system, FFA is the lighthouse that provides a ray of hope, a hope that a few more young people will come to realize that a nation that loses its agriculture loses the very base of its economic and societal existence.

Hopefully our food production and distribution system will not need to be disrupted before the public realizes the basic need for agriculture. The FFA does its part of keep people informed about agriculture in the educational system where it's needed most.



Saturday, February 20 National FFA Week

Septic System Management and Well Protection Workshop, Penn State Fruit Research Laboratory, Biglerville, 9 a.m.-noon.

Penn State Ag and Bio Engineering Open House.

National FFA Week, thru Feb. 27.

Sunday, February 21 National FFA Week

Game Bird Production and Management of Shooting Preserves, Days Inn, Penn State, State College, thru Feb. 23.

NCGA Corn Classic, San Antonio, Texas, thru Feb. 23.

Monday, February 22 National FFA Week

Pesticide update meeting, Milford Square.

Dairy-MAP, Somerset County Area Vocational Technical School, continues March 1 and 8.

Planning Your Dairy for the Next Century, Adams Extension Office, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Cumberland Cooperative Wool Growers meeting, South Middleton Twp. Fire Hall, 7 p.m.

Lebanon/Dauphin Crops Day, Lebanon Valley Expo Center Fairgrounds, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Clinton Co. swine production meeting, Willowbank Bldg., Bellefonte, 7:30 p.m.

Swine Meeting, Willowbank Building, Bellefonte, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 23 National FFA Week

Lancaster County Dairy Days, Part I, Farm and Home Center, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m., continues March 2.

Annual Interiorscape Conference, Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square.

Silage Production from Seed to Animal National Conference, Syracuse, N.Y., thru Feb. 25. Pesticide meeting, Neshaminy

Manor Center, Doylestown, 7:15 p.m.-9:30 p.m., and March 2.

Small and Part-Time Farmer Workshop, Recreation Community Center, Titusville.

Franklin Co. Vegetable Growers meeting, Penn State Fruit Research Lab, Biglerville, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Dairy-MAP, Corry Higher Educational Council Building, Corry, continues March 2 and 9.

Tulpehocken H.S. DHIA workshop, 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

Pork producers meeting on mod-

Editor:

Newspapers are the main source of information from which people form opinions. Recent news items concerning nutrient runoff control, tobacco growers problems, falling milk prices and other agricultural related problems prompted me to get some facts from those who make the news. The following is from the comments of four farmers in Chester County, four farmers in Lancaster County, one feed salesman and public information services.

In Lancaster County there are approximately 3507 full time farmers with 3886 full time hired employees. These along with part time help and family members amount to about two percent of the population. The value of agricultural products in 1991 was \$782,404,000. Helping the farmers are 126 agriculture related services employing 1223 with a payroll of \$16,500,000. There are 91 food processing companies employing 7060 with a \$152,000,000 payroll. Farmers are a small percentage of the population but they bring much money



NOW IS THE TIME
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Apply For Milk Refund

As part of the federal deficit reduction program, an assessment is withheld from dairy producers' milk checks.

In 1992, this assessment was 11.25 cents per hundredweight (CWT) for milk shipped from January through April and 13.65 cents per CWT for milk shipped from May through December. Producers who shipped less milk in 1992 than they did in 1991 are entitled to a refund of their assessment.

Application for the refund must be made before March 15. You must take a record of your monthly shipments for 1991 and 1992 to your Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) office.

You will also have to provide

- ern biotechnology, Ephrata H.S. Ag Dept., 7:30 p.m.
- Western Pa. Turf Conference and Trade Show, Radisson Hotel and Expo Mart, Monroeville, thru Feb. 25.
- Westmoreland Co. Hay Auction, Fairgrounds, 11 a.m.
- Winter Tree Fruit Growers meeting, Days Inn, Shamokin Dam, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
- Manure and Nutrient Management Meeting, Leola Family Restaurant, 7:15 p.m.

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Farm Forum

and job opportunities to the area. In Chester County agricultural production amounts to 314.9 million dollars annually.

The farmers I spoke to have real problems. All are terrified about real estate reassessment. They do not see how they can afford higher taxes. Most emphasized that land used exclusively for agriculture should be taxed at a rate different from other real estate. One said that teachers should lower their wage expectations while taking into consideration the falling income of the farmers. At one time land owners made the laws and paid any taxes because they were the only ones with the funds to do so. The Amish must pay real estate taxes for the public school system plus another assessment for their own parochial schools.

In Chester County it is the opinion that the family farm as it is known is a thing of the past. Regulations and high taxes make it impossible. Farming in Chester County will be done as a hobby by people with outside jobs and by investors and businesses who rent or lease the land to tenants. Sever-

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your social security number. If you have any questions, contact your ASCS office.

To Monitor Dry Matter Intake

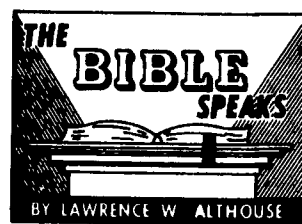
Glenn Shirk, extension dairy agent, reminds us the more dry matter cows eat, the more milk they will produce, the less flesh they will lose and the better they will conceive.

To maximize dry matter intake, cows need to be fed generous amounts of highly digestible fibrous feeds such as high quality forages of sufficient particle length. This enhances good rumen function.

Also important to good rumen microbial activity is a readily available supply of soluble protein and soluble carbohydrates in a buffered environment. The cleanliness of managers, the freshness and palatability of feeds, and easy access to feed bunks and waterers all affect feed intakes.

Are you doing everything you can to increase dry matter intake?

To Participate In Sheep Scrapie Program
On October 1, 1992, the Volun-



LOOKING OUT FOR #1
February 21, 1992

Background Scripture:
Romans 15:1-13.
Devotional Reading:
Colossians 3:9-17

Methodist Bishop Gerald Kennedy told of a young man who was being interviewed by a theater owner for the job of usher. "What would you do in case of fire?", the owner asked him. "Oh don't worry about me," the youth assured him, "I'll get out all right."

Like many, he missed the point. Because he was strong, he was confident that he could save his own life. But being a theater usher is not just a matter of surviving an emergency. The usher's job is to help save those who are less strong and able. Responsibility for the weak is always part of the price God expects the strong to pay for their superior strength.

A number of people who have told me that, while they realized the church could be helpful to those who needed help--the 'weak'--they couldn't see themselves having any need of the Christian fellowship. "I'll get out all right," they have said in effect. Perhaps there are those who don't need the church for what they can get out of it, but for what they can put into it. If you can't think of anything you need from the church, ask yourself what the church may need from you.

BLESSED & RESPONSIBLE

For the first twelve years of my life I was a rather sickly boy. I knew the doctor a lot better than I knew the pastor. But, in my teens I began to experience good health and since then I have been almost embarrassingly healthy. I confess that my latter day excellent health sometimes leads me to have a hard time identifying with those who

tary Scrapie Flock Certification Program for sheep and goats went into effect.

The intent of this program is to give recognition to sheep flocks that are free of the disease and provide technical assistance to infected flocks. Scrapie has become a disease of economic impact and is costing producers an average of \$5 per head.

This is a five-year program that will take producers through a step-by-step process to gain scrapie free certification for their flocks (class C,B,A, then certified) as long as there is no evidence of scrapie. The flock owner must agree to report all suspects, officially identify sheep over one year of age, keep records, and submit samples.

The program is voluntary, will identify the scrapie risk of purchased animals, and a premium may be obtained for certified flocks. To enter this voluntary program, the producer must complete VS Form 5-22. To obtain this form or for more information, contact USDA-APHIS-VS, 2301 North Cameron Street, Room 412, Harrisburg PA 17110, (717) 782-3442.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "The time is always right to do what is right."

are chronically ill. I must remind myself day after day that I have been blessed with a gift of good health and vitality and that this is not the norm for the rest of humanity.

So, those of us who are "strong" in some department of life may fail to appreciate the plight of those who are weak. If we've never had a drinking problem, we must avoid being judgmental with those who do. The same is true of any kind of personal problem: marital, financial, habitual, spiritual, whatever.

PLEASE YOURSELF

Those of us who are 'strong' in some way, therefore, have an obligation, not to judge or condemn, not to avoid or ignore, but to help the 'weak' bear their burdens. So, Paul writes, "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him" (15:1,2). Pointing to the example of Christ, Paul says: "For Christ did not please himself...(15:3).

Despite what the world tells us, the essence of life is not in pleasing ourselves. When we focus on pleasing ourselves, it is like filling a bottomless pit and we are never pleased in the long run. Ironically, sometimes the greatest pleasure in life is what we experience when we deny ourselves and sacrifice our own desires for the sake of another. Dr. Alexis Carrel once wrote: "Deny yourself, for there is no more beautiful adventure than the renovation and remaking of mankind."

There is nothing more unrewarding in life than always "looking out for number one"--unless, of course, "number one" is Jesus Christ.

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