



OPINION

Say It Again, Still Sounds Good

The recent second annual meeting of the Pennsylvanians for the Responsible Use of Animals (PRUA) illustrated again that those whose lives are centered on the raising and use of animals have a vested interest in maintaining animal conditions which are of benefit to the animal species.

This is especially true for those with a long term commitment to their business. And it is those types of organizations which represent people who have this long term commitment which have become members of PRUA.

Those people representing the entertainment industry sector which displays or use animals gave a good accounting of their businesses and presented the same standing logic that is behind most animal-based industry — striving to provide the best of care for their animal charges is maintenance of an investment and the only way to stay in business.

The logic is irrefutable: To purposefully or to negligently abuse the center of one's livelihood — animals — is operational suicide.

Besides, as in the case of the circuses, how many people can afford to buy a completely trained elephant every other month?

Those who would abuse or neglect their animals not only do not respect the animals, they would apparently not have enough self-respect or intelligence to take care of themselves.

Or else they are looking for quick gains, which is generally not a possibility in animal agriculture.

We don't mind hearing the message again, even from those not typically considered to be part of the field of agricultural production.

It must be remembered and repeated.

The only way for someone who uses animals as a means to take care of themselves is to take care of their animals.

Even if it is a circus.



NOW IS THE TIME

By John Schwartz
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To Compare Performance Records

To stay competitive, farmers must know how they are doing compared to other producers. Competition, new technology, genetics, nutrition, and husbandry practices are a few of the ways farmers are improving their production efficiency.

To know how you rate compared to other producers requires you to compare your records against a current records data base. Most farmers have access to at least one data base to compare their records with. This data base could be maintained by your feed company, DHIA, cooperative extension, accounting service or integrator.

It should be every farmer's goal to be in the top 20 percent of the producers. If you are not in the top 20 percent, you should find out why and make the necessary corrections.

Some areas that keep farmers out of the top 20 percent include improper vaccination schedules, poor biosecurity procedures, poor ventilation, no quality control programs for feed, lack of time spent with animals, and equipment not properly adjusted.

If you are not constantly improving your production performance, you will soon find yourself slipping in the rankings. Competition will constantly be weeding out the bottom farmers.

By keeping good records and comparing your performance against a good data base, you will always know where you stand with your competition and when you need to make changes in your operation in order to stay competitive. It is easier to make the changes when you are still in the top 25 percent than when you are in the bottom 10 percent. Talk with your feed supplier, service person, or banker and find out how to compare your records with other farmers.

To Pick Up Forage Fact Sheets

During the past year, the Penn State Agronomy Department has published numerous fact sheets that address a wide range of information on forage crops. The fact sheets are available at cooperative extension offices in Pennsylvania at no cost.

Eleven of the sheets cover information on the following forage crop species: ryegrass, birdsfoot trefoil, red clover, white clover, summer annual grasses, timothy,

ter, 6 p.m.-8:30 p.m.
Lehigh County Tractor Safety Course, Ag Center, March 4-April 8 (Thursdays).
Managing Dairy Nutrition, Light-

orchardgrass, reed canarygrass, smooth brome grass, tall fescue and warm season grasses. Other topics which are covered include cutting management for alfalfa, red clover and birdsfoot trefoil, large round bale silage, forage quality perspectives, harvesting and utilizing silage and three on forage soil fertility management.

These should be very helpful as farmers evaluate alternative crops, especially as nutrient management plans are being developed. Grasses could be a key player in helping farmers to meet nutrient management guidelines.

To Early Wean Pigs

According to Chester Hughes, extension livestock agent, pork producers who wean pigs early may increase the number of pigs weaned per sow per year and may allow for heavier pigs at 8 weeks of age.

A successful weaning program depends on choosing an age at weaning that suits the facilities, nutritional program, and manage-

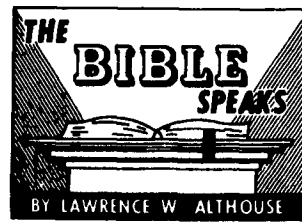
ment skills of the producer.

Weaning between two and four weeks of age has now become the normal practice with most herds weaning at 24 days of age. For the best herds, a target of 70 pound pigs at 60 days of age is attainable.

Hughes offers the following tips for improved early weaning:

- Feed a well balanced, high energy, palatable diet.
- Keep feed fresh and clean.
- Temperature at pig level should be 85 degrees F for pigs 8 to 12 pounds and 80 degrees for pigs 12 to, 17 pounds.
- Provide clean, dry, disinfected pens.
- Allow one water nipple for every 6 to 8 pigs.
- Use an all-in, all-out system.
- Provide a draft-free environment and use overlays on slatted floors.
- Number of pigs per pen should be 16 or less.
- Adjust pen mates within a weight range of 2 to 3 pounds.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "There are times when silence has the loudest voice."



GODLESS CHATTER February 28, 1993

Background Scripture:

2 Timothy 2:14 through 3:9; Titus 2.

Devotional Reading:

Titus 2.

This may sound strange coming from a preacher, but I usually avoid arguing about either religion or politics. In my experience, "discussions" of religion or politics generally turn into arguments. Mostly, when people cross the line from "discussion" into "argument," they become angry. When people become angry there is little that can be said that will be reasonably received.

It is said of St. Francis of Assisi that one day he asked a certain brothermonk to accompany him to the village to preach. The brothermonk was puzzled, however, in that throughout their whole course through the village St. Francis maintained silence. When they returned, the brothermonk said, "I thought we were going to preach in the village!" "Ah, we did," said St. Francis. "We walked in peace and brotherhood and people saw our example. It was not necessary to say something."

LEARN SILENCE FIRST

Sometimes I wish preachers and other religious enthusiasts would learn silence before they begin to speak. Christian life is too often filled to the brim with words, words, words. Words that hurt, condemn, attack, confuse, and testify, not to the goodness of God, but the self-celebrated human intellect. We are never nearly so clever or wise as we think and whenever we think we are particularly brilliant, that is usually when we are actually the most stupid.

I realize that's a strong statement, but no stronger than what Paul says in 2 Timothy: "...charge them before the Lord to avoid disputing about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers" (2:14). And: "Avoid such godless chatter, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, and their talk will eat its way like gangrene" (2:16,17).

And: "Have nothing to do with stupid, senseless controversies: you know that they breed quarrels" (2:23).

We've all heard far too much talk like that. Nothing can hurt the cause of Christ more than "godless chatter." The problem is that we seldom hear our own words as "godless." In fact, we may think that by filling our conversation with the word "God," we are doing well. But when conversation celebrates our own understanding, no matter how many times we invoke God's name, it is "godless." It serves our own ego, not God.

SILENCE IN THE CHURCH!

Theologian Soren Kierkegaard once wrote: "Order the parsons to be silent on Sundays. What is there left? The essential things remain: their lives... Would you then get the impression by watching them, that it was Christianity they were preaching?" On another occasion, he said: "Would-be theologians... must be on their guard lest by beginning too soon to preach they rather chatter themselves into Christianity than live themselves into it and find themselves at home there."

Ah, but there are times when we must speak out, you say, when there are words that must be said. How can we know the fine line between "godless chatter" and witnessing for Christ? Paul says: "the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, correcting his opponents with gentleness" (2:24,25).

If, in your speaking for God you can remain humble, acknowledging that you do not have all the answers, that you speak, not as one who is superior because of what you know--or think you know--and can keep from becoming angry, self-righteous or judgmental, you can avoid "godless chatter," "senseless controversies," and "disputing about words."

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Farm Calendar

Saturday, February 27

Animal Science Day, Seneca Highlands Vocational Technical Center, Port Allegany, 9 a.m.

Regional Christmas Tree Growers Meeting and Trade Show, Mountain Laurel Resort, White Haven, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Farm Accident Rescue Demo, Punxsutawney Central Fire Hall and Londondale Farm, 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, February 28

Monday, March 1

Pesticide Update/Conservation/Crop Meeting, Milford Square. Tulpehocken High School ag chemical meeting.

Somerset County annual meeting, 7 a.m.

Beef meeting, Line Mountain High School, 7:30 p.m.

Carbon/Monroe/Northampton Crops Meeting, Polk Township Fire House, Kresgeville, 6:30 p.m.

Blair/Huntingdon Dairy Day, Alexandria Fire Hall, Alexandria, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Bradford Co. Dairy-MAP, extension office, 10 a.m.

Tuesday, March 2

Lancaster County Dairy Day II, Farm and Home Center, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Pennsylvania Corn Conference, Ramada Inn, West Middlesex. Pesticide Update/Conservation/Crop Meeting, Neshaminy Manor.

Ag Information Series, Your Weed Control Choices and Managing Perennial Weeds in

Agronomic Crops, UNILEC Building, DuBois, 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

Ephrata Area pesticide update training, Cloister Restaurant, 6:45 p.m.

Bucks-Mont Udder Health School, Montgomery 4-H Center, Creamery, 9:45 a.m.-2 p.m., and March 9.

Susquehanna County Dairy-MAP Program, Lenoxville Hall.

Central Susquehanna Valley Turf and Ornamental meeting, Brynwood Banquet Center, Lewisburg, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 3

Garden Center Conference, Holiday Inn, Lionville, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Pennsylvania Potato Growers Institute Meeting, Holiday Inn Conference Center, Allentown, thru March 4.

Franklin/Adams/Cumberland Soybean Growers meeting, Grace United Church of Christ, Shippensburg, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Tri County Soybean Growers' Meeting, Grace United Church of Christ, Shippensburg, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Berks County Udder Health School, Berks County Ag Center, 9:45 a.m.-2 p.m. and March 10, Berks County Ag Center and Scattered Acres Farm, 9:45 a.m.-2:15 p.m.

Regional greenhouse meeting, Richland Mall Community Room, Johnstown, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Thursday, March 4

Poultry Progress Day, Lancaster Farm and Home Center.
Berks 4-H Supper series, Ag Cen-