



OPINION

Public Relations Challenge

Two out of three newspaper editors from throughout the country believe that America's interest in food safety will increase during the next five years, according to a recent poll commissioned by CMF&Z Public Relations, a Young & Rubicam company.

The study found that nearly all (95 percent) of the survey respondents think food safety is currently an important issue with the American public. Nine out of ten (87 percent) believe the issue has become more significant in the past five years, and a strong majority (65 percent) anticipate continued prominence.

The survey identified key newspaper editors' perceptions about the importance of food safety, outlined the most important elements of this issue and developed insights regarding the information provided by key resources to journalists covering food safety. Additional survey highlights include:

• **What Are The Key Food Safety Issues?:** The editors ranked bacteria in food as the issue of most importance to the American people, followed closely by pesticides and drug residues in food.

• **Who Covers Food Safety Issues?:** The "food safety beat" is generally covered by food editors (96 percent), according to the survey. It also is relatively common for lifestyle editors (78 percent) and health editors (77 percent) to cover food safety issues. Editors who cover agriculture (34 percent), business (31 percent) and science/technology (18 percent) ranked significantly lower on the list.

• **Who Are The Best Information Sources?:** More than half of the editors indicated that they receive information on food safety from the following sources: Wire services, government agencies, consumer groups, universities, agricultural commodity groups and food manufacturers. The journalists ranked university information as the most credible, followed by wire services and government agencies.

• **What Type of Information Is Needed?:** The editors indicated three types of information are most useful when writing stories on food safety: (1) information in layman's terms, (2) expert sources, and (3) balanced information that addresses both sides of the issue.

• **How Do Food Manufacturers' Efforts Rate?:** Four out of 10 editors (40 percent) feel that food manufacturers are doing a "good" or "excellent" job when working with food safety issues. Although, nearly half (49 percent) of the respondents gave an "average" ranking to those types of companies.

The survey identified the most pressing food safety issues. In addition to bacteria, pesticides and drug residues in food, the editors listed irradiation, genetic engineering and handling contamination as the most significant food safety topics. These responses were based on the editor's perceptions of consumer interests.

This means that companies and organizations involved in these areas can anticipate further coverage and continued consumer attention. They need to be ready to respond, and better yet, take a pro-active approach.

Like it or not, food safety issues will continue to receive media coverage. Complete and accurate information incorporating some or all of the following information is most desired:

- expert, unbiased sources with documentation
- balanced information, that addresses both sides of the issue
- case study support
- breakthrough technical data and statistics
- public opinion research findings
- graphs and graphics
- local news hooks/story angles
- "how to" information

This issue creates the classic public relations challenge. Proper action coupled with effective communications can create a win-win situation for the food industry and for the general public.



NOW IS THE TIME

By John Schwartz
Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Apply For Liquid Fuel Tax Refund

You should have received your Farmer's Liquid Fuels Claim Form by now. This tax refund is available to anyone who uses liquid fuels in the actual production of agricultural products.

Filing is done on a fiscal year basis. Refunds are now available for the period July 1, 1992 to June 30, 1993. The claim forms must be received by the Pennsylvania Treasury Department by September 30, 1993.

In order for the claim to be properly processed, it must be accompanied by either actual paid receipts, copies of paid receipts, or dealer statement showing the number of gallons purchased and verification that state tax had been paid.

If you did not receive a form, have any questions, or need assistance in filing of claims, contact Lynne Vergot in the Treasury Department's Board of Finance and Revenue at (717) 787-6534.

File now before you forget and the deadline passes. Remember, you are only requesting a refund of your money already paid to Harrisburg.

To Protect Wellheads

Water quality is a major issue facing us.

One of the areas that will have the greatest impact on underground water quality has received little attention. That is the wellhead area.

The wellhead area is the land area around your well that is needed to recharge it with water you use. In this part of Pennsylvania, about 12 inches of water is available to recharge underground water. This is one acre foot of water or 324,000 gallons of water per acre of land.

To determine your wellhead protection area, calculate the amount of water used from your well in one year. For a 50-cow dairy herd this would be 638,750 gallons per year or water from two acres. For 80,000 laying hens, it would be 1,460,000 gallons per year or 4.5 acres.

For the dairy herd, this represents a radius from your well of

167 feet or for the poultry farm a radius of 250 feet.

What type of activities are taking place in this area? Manure storage, equipment washing, dead animal disposal, and fertilizer storage are a few examples of possible land uses.

Based on experiences of the Rural Clean Water Project, farmers had the biggest improvement in well water by changing land use in their wellhead area.

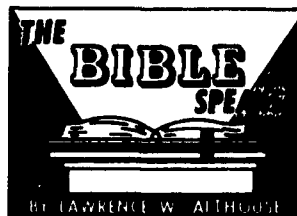
Now is the time to go to your well and look at the various activities taking place within 150 to 300 feet of your well and make the necessary changes.

To Test

Standby Generators

The recent hot weather and thunderstorms reminds us power failures may happen at anytime. Are you ready for them?

Standby generators should be tested weekly and make sure there is enough fuel to run them for extended period of times. Simulate different kinds of power failures.



CHRIST-SHAPED VOID
July 11, 1993

Background Scripture:

Colossians 2

Devotional Reading:

Hebrews 10:11-25.

I do not profess to understand much of the tragedy that occurred in Waco at the Branch Davidian compound in the early part of this year. The appeal of the charismatic leader and his cult obviously had something to do with offering people spiritual assurance. These were people who felt a sense of emptiness which he was able to fill—at least for a while.

What kind of emptiness? Many people want to be assured that they are giving themselves to a system that has the answers to all their questions and cults usually assure their adherents that they have those answers. What they offer their recruits is a belief-system that seems to hang together and make sense. Many people also are searching to fill an emotional emptiness. They feel they need something to make their lives whole, but they don't know what it is until the cult comes along and offers to fill that void.

What is a cult? My Random House Dictionary of the English Language (1967) gives seven definitions. Two main strains ruin through these definitions: (1) a system of rites and ceremonies and (2) a bond of personal devotion to a thing, a person or ideal. On the face of it, there is nothing wrong with either of those. Systems of rites and ceremonies keep worship from being chaotic and the church at its best is a bond of fellowship in common devotion to Christ.

A SUBSTITUTE FOR GOD

This becomes a problem only when the system or the bond of devotion usurp the place of the spiritual power they are meant to serve. Human beings have always been tempted to use religion to exert control over spiritual forces. This is the basic appeal of magic and witchcraft—to manipulate the powers, what I believe Paul means by "the elemental spirits of the universe" (Col. 2:8b).

So, it is easy for us to look at

To often we only check for one type of failure and ignore other causes.

Make sure your alarm system is working and not depending on the same power source that caused the failure for operation. The result would be a nonfunctioning alarm system.

Also, make sure all fans are running at maximum output. Clean inlets, louvers, and fan blades while making sure belts are tight and louvers are opened.

Do not depend on automatic controls. Make sure someone visually checks to make sure all mechanical systems are working, especially going into and out of tunnel ventilation.

Looking at the investment in buildings, equipment and animals, you need to have someone staying close by and monitoring confinement buildings at all times during hot weather and thunderstorm season.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "The speed of the leader determines the rate of the pack."

a group like the Waco Branch Davidians and see them as a cult. What is not so easy is to see the cultic practices of our own mainline religious groups. We all have our ritualistic systems, including those who make a system of not having any systems. We all encourage a bond of devotion to a common cause. But mainline religious groups can also make their systems and their bond into ends instead of means.

In other words, we all are tempted to present our answers and rituals as the—answers and rituals. That which is first intended to help us experience God ends up becoming a substitute for God. The rituals and the bond of fellowship become more important than the reality behind them. What we offer is a certainty that is really not ours to offer."

HUMAN TRADITIONS

So it was in Colossae and it was the reason Paul was writing that church. Someone in Colossae was undermining the church there. We do not know the specifics, but it is obvious from Paul's letter that there was excessive ritualism, asceticism, rules and regulations on foods and holy days, and the worship of angels. That is why Paul writes: "See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits on the universe, and not according to Christ" (2:8). "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath" (2:16).

Somewhere I read, "In everyone's heart there is a Christ-shaped void." Only Christ—not our rituals, our systems, our human traditions or speculative philosophies—can fill that void in our hearts. As Paul says, "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness of life in him..." (2:9). For that emptiness we all want to fill—only Christ: nothing more, nothing less.

Farm Calendar



Saturday, July 10

Sunday, July 11

Columbia/Luzerne summer picnic, 11 a.m.

Monday, July 12

Derry Township Fair, New Derry, thru July 17.

Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Fair, Pocono Downs, thru July 18.

Tuesday, July 13

Animal Housing Expo, Lebanon Fairgrounds, thru July 14.

Landisville Weed Tour/Field Day, Southeast Field Research Center, Salunga, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Pennsylvania Vegetable and Small Fruit Field Tour, Meat Red Roof Inn, York, 5:30 a.m.

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Farm Forum

Editor:

I am writing in response to your editorial regarding the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which appeared in the June 26, 1993 issue of *Lancaster Farming*.

The American Farm Bureau Federation and Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (PFB) support ratifi-

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