



OPINION

Help Students To Understand Agriculture

Even in our agricultural colleges, more and more students who enroll are from non-farm backgrounds. Many of these students' experiences with livestock may be limited to television, books and car window views of the countryside.

Brad Skaar, Iowa State University animal science instructor, said he has had to look for new teaching techniques as fewer and fewer of his students each year have first-hand knowledge and experience with livestock. Skaar was one of the speakers at the American Society of Animal Science annual meeting in Pittsburgh last month.

Students' lack of agricultural background makes them less likely to understand and learn information in a traditional college lecture class. In Skaar's class, college juniors play the role of "junior partners" in the fictional company, Futuristic Animal Consulting Technologies, Inc. Students evaluate each other in the course. Those evaluations and those of the instructor are used to award play money, "cash bonuses," during the semester. Final grades in the course were awarded according to total income during the semester.

Students worked in small teams to develop recommendations for clients regarding animal breeding issues. The issues were modeled after actual situations. Their recommendations were expected to meet the clients' needs, be effectively communicated and based on accepted theory and technology. The approach forced them to learn animal breeding principles as they are applied in the animal industry.

Ag in the classroom programs in grade schools, FFA chapters and vo-ag classes in high school, and students from urban backgrounds enrolled in agricultural colleges all form part of the educational process necessary for people to understand farming. In addition, students with these learning opportunities develop the skills that help fill the employment needs of agribusinesses as the number of people who have the opportunity to grow up on the farm decreases.

As students go back to school at this time of year in all levels of education, we applaud those who teach, especially those instructors who help our students understand agriculture in creative ways.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, September 11
 Tree Farm Day, Wolfe Farm, York Springs, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
 Historic Schaefferstown 23rd annual Horse Plowing Contest and Horse Pull at Harvest Fair, thru Sept. 12.

Sunday, September 12
 Penn Ag Convention, Princess Royal, Ocean City, Md., thru Sept. 14.
 National DHIA Management Science Conference, Royal York Plaza Hotel, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, thru Sept. 14.
 Emu Farming Conference, Jerseytown Social Hall, 2 p.m.

Monday, September 13
 Green Township Community Fair, Commodore, thru Sept. 18.

Tuesday, September 14
 Albion Area Fair, Albion, thru Sept. 18.
 Denver Community Fair, Denver, thru Sept. 18.
 Sinking Valley Community Fair, Altoona, thru Sept. 18.

Wednesday, September 15
 Delmarva Broiler Housing and Flock Supervisor's Conference, Delmarva Convention Center, Delmar, Md.
 Southern Lancaster County Fair, Quarryville, thru Sept. 17.
 Berlin Brothers Valley Fair, Berlin, thru Sept. 18.

Thursday, September 16
 Williamsburg Community Farm (Turn to Page A11)

Farm Forum

Editor:
 I am writing in regard to the article on page 1 of your Sept. 4 paper, "Continuation of the Wool Act."
 In the article Janet Mawhinny said, quote: "U.S. Senator Harris Wofford (D-Bryn Mawr) wrote a very positive letter to the conference committee supporting the continuation of the act," unquote.
 In the latest (August) issue of the National Wool Grower maga-

zine (P 28) is an article entitled "Wool Act Survives Attack." Among the 52 senators who voted in favor of consideration of eliminating the Wool Act was Senator Wofford.
 Without further comment, I will let the readers draw their own conclusions as to the senator's support of sheep producers.
F. Gerald Matter
 Millersburg
 (Turn to Page A11)

NOW IS THE TIME
 By John Schwartz
 Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Avoid Feeding Hot, Uncured Silage
 As corn ensiling time approaches, farmers may find it necessary to chop some corn prematurely in order to have enough feed for the herd until the corn may be chopped and ensiled. Or, they may greenchop ends of rows to open up fields for the forage chopper.

If feed is in short supply, or if cured silage is inaccessible, farmers may find it necessary to start feeding the recently chopped corn immediately, before it has had a chance to cure properly.

Glenn Shirk, extension dairy agent, reminds us feeding immature green chopped corn, or feeding hot, uncured silage may cause digestive upsets in cows, with a resultant drop in production and butterfat test.

To help prevent these problems, strive to have a supply of cured silage to feed from in the weeks preceding and following silo filling time. This may involve the use of a small stack or bag of silage or relying upon an alternate silo.

To Be Aware Of Green Tobacco Sickness
 Workers engaged in the harvest of tobacco should be aware of Green Tobacco Sickness (GTS). The illness is caused by the absorption of nicotine from the surface of wet tobacco through the skin.

Workers whose clothing become saturated from wet tobacco due to rain or dew are at a high risk for the development of the illness.

Symptoms of GTS include nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and severe weakness. It is often accompanied by fluctuations in blood pressure, headaches, and difficulty in breathing.

To minimize the risk of GTS, the following recommendations are made:

- Avoid harvesting or working in wet tobacco.
- Protective clothing may reduce the risk. Wear chemical-resistant gloves, plastic aprons, or rain suits. However, this clothing may add to the risk of heat stress in hot weather.
- Change to dry clothing when clothing becomes wet from wet tobacco.

Workers who become ill while working with tobacco and who require medical attention should inform doctors of the nicotine exposure to aid in the diagnosis. Symptoms of GTS are very similar to pesticide poisoning from phosphorus pesticides. However, the treatment is very different.

To Develop Management Skills
 I have been following the letters

to the editor regarding low farm prices.

What we forget to remember is most farmers are producers of a raw product. Regardless of the industry, agriculture, mining, steel, etc., the producer of raw products is a price taker and receives the lowest price. Thus, the successful businesses in these industries must be the low cost producer.

To achieve this, the owner must be constantly adapting new technology generated by research. Once an industry loses its research support and willingness to adopt new technology, it no longer will remain competitive.

The cycle of new technology has shortened. Farmers must now constantly be managing change in order to stay in business. Those farmers who manage change will stay profitable. Those who cannot will either leave agriculture or go to work for those who manage change.

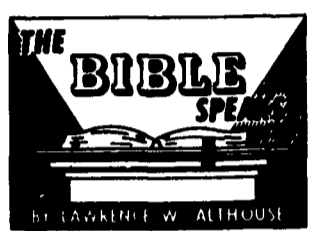
The income of managers is based on their ability to manage people and capital, not how many

cows they milk in a day. The business structure of farming is changing. Those farmers electing to only do semiskilled labor will see their income decline. Those who take the time to learn new management skills and master them should see their farms and income grow. Traditionally, meetings dealing with production have been largely attended, but those dealing in farm management, economics, and marketing have been very poorly attended.

In order to keep strong and profitable family farms, farmers need to change their priorities on meeting attendance. Farmers need to be requesting and attending management meetings. Also, farmers need to change their attitude from a negative one to a positive one.

When we stop trying to place the blame for our troubles on someone else and accept them as opportunities and direct our energies to solutions and new ideas, the stronger agriculture will be.

Feather Prof's Footnote:
 "There are no shortcuts to any place worth going."



VERY GOOD!
 September 12, 1993

Background Scripture
 Genesis 1:25-31; 2:4-9, 15-25
Devotional Reading:
 Psalms 8:3-9

Like a litany, after each act of creation in Genesis 1, we are told, "And God saw that it was good." That should be required reading for all those who are constantly pronouncing the world to be an evil and rotten place. God looked on it, including those things which you and I judge to be "good" and "bad," and he still saw it as "good!" It is also significant that God called the garden "Eden," which means "joy"—God's garden is the source of his joy.

Best of all is what he says when humanity has been added to the order of his creation: "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good" (my italics). If creation before humanity was "good," then creation afterwards was even better. That also flies in the face of the popular assumption that some of us are destined to be the "good guys," and other of us "the bad guys." But God said: "very good." That includes every single human being: Genghis Kahn, Adolph Hitler, Jack the Ripper, Joseph Stalin, and Fidel Castro. All of us are created "in the image of God."

Why Are We Here?
 The key is not the quality of our creation as to what we do with it. God has purpose for his creation and especially for his creatures. Going back to the very beginning, why did God create us?

One answer is that we might fulfill his image placed within us. When Genesis tells us that we were created "in his own image," (1:27) it is indicating that we have a purpose to fulfill, a potential to realize. Hitler distorted and denied the image of God in him. This was not his fate, but his choice. Jack the Ripper was not born to be a murderer. And you and I were created with far more potential for goodness than we have displayed so far in this life. Does the "image of God" show in you? If not, why

not? Another answer is found in his command to "Be fruitful and multiply" (1:28). We've got the last part of that down pat; in fact, I believe God is telling us today to stop multiplying so much. Our multiplying is getting in the ways of our being "fruitful." What does he mean "be fruitful?" He means that we are to produce that which is good, that which helps rather than hurts, prospers rather than impoverishes, improves rather than dissipates. Yes, I've multiplied, but have I been fruitful? Are you?

"Boss" or "Steward?" Still another answer is in the command to "have dominion... other every living thing that moves upon the earth" (1:26,28). As one little boy said when he heard those verses, "It sounds like he made us 'boss!'" But actually something more than "boss": "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it" (2:15). Jesus spoke of our God-given human role as that of the steward. The steward does not own, but manages for someone else. In the story of the garden of Eden, it is clear that it belongs to God, but Adam is placed in charge of it to make it fruitful for God.

That's a very current issue, isn't it? For centuries we humans have acted as if this world was ours to use and abuse as we like. We have spent it like an inheritance on which there were no conditions. But now, we are being told, we are close to having exhausted it. And, we are remembering that it was not so much an inheritance that God gave us, but a stewardship. We are expected to give it back to him with interest. We have abused and wasted the garden and now we must start being good stewards before it is too late, before God asks, "What have you done to my beautiful garden?"

God made it all "very good," but what are we making of it?

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