



## OPINION

### Farmers Call Editor

After reading our page one story last week about the farm animals that were incapacitated by the ice and snow in barnyards and meadows, several horse farmers called to make suggestions about what to do in those conditions. One farmer spreads manure on the barnyard and lets it freeze into the ice to make a rough surface. Another has a dirt barn floor, and this farmer scrapes dirt from the floor and spreads this dirt on the icy paddock to create better footing for the animals.

In addition to better footing for your animals, Larry Hutchinson, in the veterinary science extension department at Penn State says that while most farm animals can tolerate cold weather better than humans, in extreme cold weather you should take a few extra measures to insure the well-being of your livestock.

Hay bales and feed bunks are sometimes hard to reach in deep or drifting snow, and you may need to feed in a sheltered area or use a tractor to pack the snow around the feeding areas. Heated watering devices or frequent ice-breaking on streams or ponds may also be necessary.

All classes of livestock require more energy to maintain body temperature in cold weather. Livestock, such as beef cows or horses that are kept outdoors, may need additional forage and grain.

Another farmer who read our editorial in the February 5 issue about the problems farmers are having with tests for medicines in the milk at the plant called this week to say he was having the same kind of problem with SCC tests. Samples from the same tank gave official results that varied as much as 600,000 cells. While this farmer recently went through a barn fire that put stress on the cows, all individual cows were tested and no individual showed cell counts above acceptable levels.

Officials say individual SCC tests can be variable from the same sample. This leaves dairymen vulnerable to SCC scores that are unacceptable, especially at the break point of 750,000 cells.

## Farm Calendar

### Saturday, February 26

Pa. State Holstein Association Convention Sale, Ramada Inn, Gettysburg, 10 a.m.  
Penn State Ag and Biological Engineering Open House, University Park, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.  
McKean-Potter Crop Production Seminar, Kane Fish and Game Club, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.  
National DHIA annual Convention and Trade Show, Hyatt Regency, San Antonio, Texas, thru March 1.

### Sunday, February 27

NCGA Corn Classic, Denver, Colo., thru March 1.

### Monday, February 28

Cumberland Cooperative Wool Growers annual meeting, 7 p.m.  
Weed and manure management meeting, Lebanon County extension office, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.  
Centre/Clinton Weed Management School, Logan Grange Hall, Pleasant Gap, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

### Tuesday, March 1

Grounds Maintenance Seminar, Kutztown Grange Hall, Kutztown.  
Solanco Young Farmers meeting, Farm Safety and First Aid.  
Jefferson/Clearfield County Dairy-MAP, Ramada Inn, DuBois, also March 8.  
Lancaster County Dairy Day II, Farm and Home Center, 9 a.m.  
Tri-County Christmas Tree Growers' meeting, Penn State Fruit Research Lab, Biglerville, 7 p.m.-9:45 p.m.  
Penn State Weed Management School, Neshaminy Manor Center, Doylestown, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.  
District III Jersey meeting, Bird In Hand Restaurant, Bird In Hand, 11:30 a.m.  
McKean-Potter Corn Production Seminar, First Citizens National Bank, Ulysses, 1 p.m.-3:30

p.m.

Corn Production Teleconference, York extension office, 10 a.m.-noon and 7 p.m.-9 p.m.  
Montgomery County Cooperative Extension meeting, barn facility, Rhone-Poulenc Rorer, 7 p.m.  
Mid East UDA meeting, Days Inn, Meadville.  
Bradford County Food Safety Course, Wysox Fire Hall, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

### Wednesday, March 2

Garden Center and Landscape Conference, Holiday Inn, Lionville.  
Pa. Potato Growers meeting, Ramada Inn, Somerset, thru March 3.  
Nutrient Management For Pa. Pork Producers, Yoder's Restaurant, New Holland, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m.  
Carroll Co., Md. private pesticide applicator exam, extension office, Westminster, 1 p.m.-3 p.m. or 7 p.m.-9 p.m.  
Mid East UDIA meeting, Sheraton Inn, Greensburg.  
Susquehanna County Food Safety Course, Montrose United

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## Farm Forum

### Editor:

United We Stand, Divided We Fall! Very smart and very simply put.

These are the words that finally got this great nation together. You know the United States of America. Do you think it took courage and strength to join 13 colonies? To form one United States?

If it worked, then why can't it work now?



**NOW IS THE TIME**  
By John Schwartz  
Lancaster County  
Agricultural Agent

### To Check Alfalfa Seeding Rates

Dr. Marvin Hall at Penn State just completed a study of seeding rates for alfalfa in conventionally prepared seedbeds.

In this study, alfalfa was seeded at seven different rates (6-24 pounds per acre) at five different locations. Plant density and forage yield and quality were monitored through the first harvest of the year after seeding.

Plant densities were lower for the lowest compared to the highest seeding rate throughout the study. The lowest seeding rate (six pounds per acre) reduced yield 322 pounds per acre compared to the highest seeding rate for the first harvest after planting.

There were no yield differences at other harvests. Forage quality at all harvests were not affected by seeding rate. The conclusion of this study was: "In Pennsylvania, when spring, band seeding alfalfa into well prepared seedbed, seeding rates above 9 pounds pure live seed per acre are not justified. Seeding methods other than band seeding or planting under adverse climatic conditions or into poorly prepared seedbed may warrant higher seeding rates other than 9 pounds per acre. However, increasing seeding rates has not been demonstrated as a successful practice to overcome adverse conditions for alfalfa establishment."

### To Be Concerned About Environmental Issues

Improving and protecting the environment is a major public issue. We are seeing more legislative activity in this area.

Agriculture and farmers have been identified as a major concern along with on-lot sewage disposal, automobile emissions, and industrial production.

Farmers need to develop a positive strategy to deal with this and other emerging issues. First, farmers need to realize and accept responsibility for environmental protection. Next, farmers need to

For example, I've heard it said, "You can't get one farmer to agree with another about anything." Well, when times were good, you had farmers very satisfied with milk prices. But you also had farmers complaining and maybe a bit jealous of a bigger, more stable family farm.

As time went on, the processors saw this bickering and jealousy

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cite how agriculture is improving the environment more than creating new problems.

We need time and research to solve problems and set standards. Agriculture needs to act more quickly to identify and anticipate environmental issues and develop solutions.

Farmers need to demand science in the form of research and technology is engaged as part of the solution. Agriculture needs to be more aggressive in their public relations efforts to help the public understand agriculture's role in sustaining the environment.

The environmental issue is not going away. By accepting it and becoming a part of the solution will ensure the future of agriculture.

### To Reduce Pathogens

Pathogen reduction on farms has become a high priority within the United States Department of Agriculture.

Most of the major farm commodity groups have instituted quality assurance programs. These

include the dairy, egg, and pork industries.

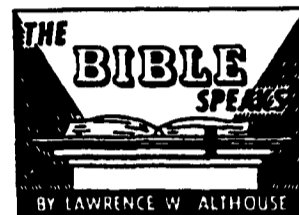
The safety of food is the responsibility of everyone in the food production system — including the farmer. Testing is only a monitoring tool and cannot guarantee safety. Only best management practices being used by everyone will maintain the integrity of our food system.

As farmers, we expect the businesses we are dealing with are providing us with the best product possible. We expect no defects and top performances. We would be very upset to find out they sold us inferior materials or broken parts.

Consumers expect the same from farmers and the food they buy. Thus, every farmer needs to be concerned with producing the highest quality product possible and never sell anything you would not buy or eat.

Learn about your industry quality assurance program and become a participant.

*Feather Prof's Footnote:* "Excellence may be attained if you risk more than others think is safe."



**THE WAYSIDE INN**  
February 27, 1994

Background Scripture:  
Luke 23:32-47; 24:13-35  
Devotional Reading:  
Mark 15:33-37

I have caught myself saying "If I die...", "when, of course, I should have said, "When I die..." Whether that is just a habit of speech or an unconscious slip that betrays an inner and faint hope that I might personally escape what is the destiny of every living creature, I am not sure.

Maybe it is that, having lived with fears and crises throughout my life and been spared many "close ones," I now unconsciously hope that I shall get through this one, too. Rationally, I know better. No amount of cleverness, will, luck or even good contact can intervene because it is part of God's plan.

Recently I found these words of St. Augustine: "There is only one thing you can be sure of: that you will die; everything else in this life, good or bad, is uncertain except death." At first, I was uncomfortable with these words, but I soon realized my discomfort is only the result of a limited perspective.

### A MATTER OF HOW

So, it is not a question of whether we will die, but how. Look at the way Jesus died! Betrayed by one of his disciples, railroaded on a trumped-up charge, tortured and denied virtually any shred of human dignity, he nevertheless died in a way that put to shame the living of all others. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (23:34). With those ten words he made himself victor instead of victim. People did their worst, but their worst was not strong enough to overcome his best. In the midst of his agony and degradation, he was magnanimous; to a repentant thief he promised, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise" (23:43). And, at that final moment he took himself out of the

hands of those who nailed him to the cross: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" In the street vernacular, "Man! That's living!"

The death of Jesus stands in stark contrast to the living that many of us do. During World War II, Robert D. Abrahams wrote:

For some men die by shrapnel, and some go down in flames, But most men perish inch by inch.

In play at little games.

Dying "inch by inch" allows us to continue under the delusion that we are living, that we are escaping death. Like the epitaph I copied years ago: "Died at 45; buried at 62." We all know someone like that, don't we? As someone has said: "Some die without having really lived, while others continue to live, in spite of the fact that they have died."

### THE WAYSIDE INN

Basically, we can die more victoriously if we accept that death is part of God's plan for life. Life on earth is not intended to last forever. Life, as we know it now, and death, as we perceive it, are only stopping places along the way to our ultimate destiny. Recently, my wife and I were forced to quickly find another house to move into for at least three months because of substantial water damage to the underside of our house. In the hurried preparation to move out of the house where I expected to spend the rest of my life, it dawned on me that that house is only a stopping place on my journey — even when we move back into it.

Cicero said, "I depart from life as from an inn, and not as from my home." And St. Augustine wrote: "...the man journeying to his own country must not mistake the inn for his home." That's the mistake we make — mistaking the inn of earthly life for our home country. When we see it as only a stopping place along the way, we can say with Jesus; "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!"

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