



OPINION

The Rural Health Care Reform We Need

While all Americans have a stake in the health care reforms that are being proposed on the national level, rural and agricultural communities and individuals face special challenges. More than 95 percent of farmers and ranchers are self-employed and pay the cost of insurance coverage right out of their pockets and are not able to pass on health care expenses as part of the price of their products. Many other businesses do pass these costs on to the consumers of their products.

We believe Congress should provide "tax fairness" that would provide 100 percent deductibility of health insurance costs for self-employed people. Employees of companies with proper programs can have health insurance costs deducted from their wages before employment taxes are figured. Why shouldn't farmers be able to deduct their health insurance costs before paying income taxes too?

In addition, farmers and other rural Americans should have the option to keep their current coverage, choose from voluntary competing alliances, or form their own alliances if they wish. Under many current proposals, farmers wouldn't be able to keep the plan they now have, even if it costs them less and they like it more.

Rural Americans can and should be one of the winners in health care reform. But when the tough decisions are made, we can't be forgotten or lumped into a group whose needs are not the same as the unique needs of agriculture. As *Communicating for Agriculture, Inc.* has said in an open letter to Congress: "The health care reform we get should be the health care reform we need."



Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz
Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Attend

Animal Housing Expo
The Annual Animal Housing Expo will be held July 12-13 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day at the Lebanon Fairgrounds in Lebanon.

The design and construction of animal housing facilities has a long-term effect on the health and productivity of animals and the profitability of the farm. The Animal Housing Expo affords livestock, dairy and poultry producers an opportunity to receive new ideas and assistance in the design and construction of animal housing and handling facilities.

There will be commercial exhibitors and educational speakers including Dr. David Kohl, Virginia Tech, on financial planning; Dr. Doug Reineman, University of Wisconsin, on milking system management; and Dr. Howard Person, Michigan State, on building design for rodent and bird control.

This year will also feature an evening tour and cookout. The tour will feature a new dairy freestall and milking parlor.

Reservations are required for the tour. For more information, contact your local extension office or the Lancaster County Coopera-

Sunday, July 10

Ephrata Area Young Farmers Association annual family picnic, Ephrata Community Park, 12:30 p.m.

Monday, July 11

Derry Township Fair, Derry, thru July 16.

Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Fair, Pocono Downs, thru July 16. Mason-Dixon Red and White

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div Extension Office at (717) 394-6851.

To Explore

Teen Tax Credit

The July issue of Money magazine had a short statement on an under-used tax credit.

If you are self-employed, you might be able to take advantage of this targeted jobs tax credit. You can claim a 40 percent tax credit for up to \$3,000 in wages paid to 16- and 17-year-olds who work for you between May 1 and September 1.

That is \$1,200 off your tax bill. The youth must be a member of an economically disadvantaged family.

For more information, contact your accountant or call the IRS at 800-Tax-Form and ask for your free copy of IRS Publication 907.

To Adjust

Swine Rations

Heat affects swine production,

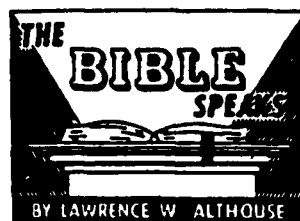
according to Chester Hughes, extension livestock agent.

Hogs are more sensitive to heat the heavier they get. Heat-stressed pigs eat less, which means their growth rate takes a turn for the worse.

As a hog surpasses 200 pounds, daily feed intake may drop to near zero when temperatures exceed 90 degrees F. With summer weather upon us, it is a good idea to re-evaluate the nutrient density of your finishing ration.

Start with the amino acids, the most limiting nutrient for growing and finishing pigs. Up the lysine during hot weather by 10 to 15 percent. Adding energy dense fat to the diet (fat has about 2.25 times more energy than carbohydrates or protein) helps maintain pigs' calorie intake. Because it is more easily digested than fiber, fat helps keep body temperatures down.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "Seek to understand before you seek to be understood."



A DAY'S PORTION
July 3, 1994

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Background Scripture:
Exodus 16
Devotional Reading:
Exodus 17:1-13

I marvel when I think that the Exodus actually took place several thousand years ago, for there are elements in this story that are as contemporary as today's newspaper. For one thing, the complaint to Moses and Aaron by the people of Israel: "Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger" (16:3).

That sounds like something that could have been voiced in the Administrative Board of our church. Not those words, of course, but something quite similar. Think of the context of these complaints; after years of slavery in Egypt, through Moses God has led the people of Israel out of their bondage and enabled them to escape the wrath of the Egyptians. Furthermore, God has promised to lead them to a prosperous Promised Land that will be their inheritance. What a spot to be in!

But the Israelites didn't see it that way. Yes, it was good not to be slaves anymore. Yes, the miraculous escape from Egypt had been thrilling. And, yes, they were happy to be going to Canaan. But now they were hungry and that was all they could think about. What good are a great past and the promise of an even greater future, if in the present moment we have empty bellies?

LATELY?

Their complaint reminds me of the story of the man who approached his friend and said, "Sam, I know that when I needed help to build my house, you pitched in. And when I was down on my luck, you loaned me enough to get me through. When I was in need of a job, you steered me in

the right direction. And when my wife walked out on me, you talked her into giving me another chance. But, Sam, things aren't going too good for me right now. So what have you done for me lately?" (Sam and God seem to have the same "friends.")

Someone has said, "Be careful what you pray for; God just might give it to you." The people of Israel had prayed long and hard, asking God to lift from them the yoke of Egyptian slavery. If only they could be free! So now they were free, but that did not satisfy them. Now they longed to return to that slavery in Egypt so that they would have enough to eat. ("... died by the hand of the Lord" means to die by natural causes.) Are we not like that, too? Often we would rather have material security than freedom. Freedom doesn't look as good on an empty stomach.

DAILY BREAD

Once again, God responds to their prayers (like many of us today, their prayers were mainly complaints). "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion, that I may prove them" (16:4). God was going to test their faith by giving them just enough food for one day at a time. Perhaps this verse inspired the petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread."

There were some 1994-style people in that Israelite band. Although told to gather only enough for their daily need, some clever souls decided to gather more and stockpile it. (Maybe the first black market!) Others, told not to leave any manna until morning, did just that. These people demonstrated their lack of faith. They were not willing to live by God's promise alone.

Sometimes it seems difficult to trust God's providence. But that's what he asks of us, to live one day at a time, to be satisfied with one day's portion and to trust him for the rest.

Farm Calendar



Saturday, July 2

Kutztown Folk Festival, Folk Festival Grounds, thru July 10.
Berks County Wool Pool, Leesport Farmers' Market, Leesport, 7:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
Delaware Valley Milk Goat Association Annual Dairy Goat Show, Allentown Fairgrounds, 8:30 a.m.

Sunday, July 3

National Holstein Convention, Seattle, Wash., thru July 6.

Monday, July 4

Independence Day
Butler Fair, Butler, thru July 9.

Tuesday, July 5

Forage Quality Management presentation, Fulper Farms, Lambertville, N.J.

Meeting on biosecurity, BVD situation, Central High School auditorium, Martinsburg, 8 p.m.

Lancaster County 4-H Fashion Revue, Farm and Home Center, 2:30 p.m.

Wednesday, July 6

Lancaster County pesticide container recycling, Gideon King, Kinzers, also Aug. 5 and Sept. 6.

Forage Quality Management presentation, Gibbsquest Dairies, Allamuchy, N.J.

SRBC Public Hearings on Water Use, Perryville High School Auditorium, Perryville, Md., 1:30 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Young Cooperator's Leaders' Conference, Ramada Inn, Altoona, thru July 8.

Thursday, July 7

Penn State Weed Science Field Day, Landisville, 9 a.m.-noon.
Rockspring Research Farm Tour and Barbecue, Penn State Ag Progress Days site, Rockspring, 5:30-dark.

Forage Quality Management pre-

sentation, Klein's Farm, Easton.

Feedlot Management Forum, Yoder's Family Restaurant, New Holland, noon.

Friday, July 8

Weed Science Field Day, Penn State Rockspring, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Keystone Stud Ram and Ewe Show and Sale, State College Ag Arena, thru July 9.

Fawn Grove Fair, Fawn Grove, thru July 10.

Berks County Summer Field Trip, bus leaves Berks County Ag Center to farms in Chester County and Unionville area, 7 a.m.

Saturday, July 9

Farm Forum

Contrary to the "trend of annual cuts to agriculture" mentioned in your paper's budget story last week, state funding for agriculture has increased year after year under the Casey Administration. Like other state agencies, the Department of Agriculture tightened its belt when doing so was in the best interest of the citizens, but the facts clearly show that state funding for the Department under the Casey Administration has increased from \$31.4 million in fiscal year 1986-87 to \$43.8 million for fiscal year 1994-95. This is an increase of 39.5 percent.

Once again, Governor Casey has demonstrated his support for Pennsylvania's producers and consumers. By signing the new state budget, the Governor has given Pennsylvania's animal agriculture the funding source needed to move toward completion of the tripartite diagnostic system. The New Bol-

ton Center will receive \$580,000 through the Animal Health Commission to help refurbish its toxicology unit.

The Governor has also committed to support nutrient management efforts; help dairy farmers comply with new federal rules; and purchase more lab supplies to increase testing for Avian Influenza, SE, Johnes and pseudorabies. I am very proud of Governor Casey's support for Pennsylvania's leading industry. Anyone who has visited the Farm Show in recent years has seen tangible proof of that interest. Moreover, all of us who appreciate the Animal Health Commission, the planned animal health laboratory, Pennsylvania's farmland preservation effort and new producer-controlled commodity marketing programs know whose leadership made it possible.

Boyd E. Wolff,
PA Ag Secretary

Lancaster Farming

Established 1955

Published Every Saturday

Ephrata Review Building

1 E. Main St.

Ephrata, PA 17522

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