



OPINION

The Coming Boom In American Agriculture

We hear so many negative things about the future of American agriculture that a Hudson Institute briefing paper that reports the speech by Dr. Thomas Duesterberg at their 1994 agriculture conference is refreshing. Duesterberg believes American agriculture is poised to become a powerful export-driven growth industry in the upcoming decades. As developing nations expand their economies—particularly in Asia and Latin America—American farmers, clearly the most productive and efficient in the world, will be able to meet these nations' increased demands for food.

The briefing paper lists a number of advantages that our agriculture has over its competitors.

- We have more prime cropland per capita than any nation except Argentina, even after taking more than 200 million acres out of crop production since 1970 in response to increased productivity and various acreage-reduction programs.
- We have fewer climatic constraints than our competitors.
- We have the best technically trained farm managers.
- We have the most entrepreneurially trained farm managers.
- We have by far the world's best infrastructure, with road, rail, ports, phone lines, and satellite systems already available to serve every farm.
- We have superb agricultural research facilities and a huge lead in biotechnology.
- We have by far the most efficient food processing in the world.

In addition to all the above, our farmers have already begun to place heavier emphasis on protein foods, fruits, and vegetables. We know what consumers want, and we have the competitive advantage to give them what they want.

The opportunities for the future are real, but we must take advantage of it. Substantial work and a concerted effort to counteract the old forces of protectionism, subsidy, and regulation will be needed. But the American farmer and agribusiness producer have just what we need to succeed. That's why there is reason to be optimistic about the future of American agriculture as we approach the twenty-first century.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, July 23

- York County Holstein Show, York Fairgrounds, 10 a.m.
- Monocacy Water Quality Demonstration Project, meet at USDA, Frederick, Md., 9 a.m.
- Bucks County Holstein Club picnic, Kevin Bishop's, Hilltown, 11 a.m.

Sunday, July 24

- Clarion County Fair, New Bethlehem, thru July 30.
- Conneaut Valley Fair, Conneautville, thru July 30.

Monday, July 25

- Jefferson Township Fair, Mercer, thru July 30.
- Kimberton Fair, Kimberton, thru July 30.
- Shippensburg Community Fair, Shippensburg, thru July 30.
- Troy Fair, Troy, thru July 30.
- Potter County Fair, Millport, thru July 30.
- Western FFA Dairy Show, Butler County Fairgrounds.

Tuesday, July 26

- Penn State Field Diagnostic Clinic, Rockspring Research Farm, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
- On-Farm Composting, Dick and Bonnie Bleiler's Farm, New Tripoli, 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m.
- Maryland Dairy Princess Pageant, Holiday Inn-FSK Mall, Frederick, Md., 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, July 27

- Central Maryland REC Field Day, Upper Marlboro Facility, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Beef Cattle Evaluation Workshop,

Live Evaluation, New Holland Sales Stables, New Holland, 7 p.m.; carcass evaluation Stoltzfus Meats, Intercourse, July 29, 7 p.m.

Northeast Region Sustainable Ag Summer Farm Tour, begins Holiday Inn in Windsor Locks, Conn., thru July 28.

Forest Landowners' Workshop Tour, Blair and Mary Carbaugh residence, Riverside, 6:30 p.m.

Capitol Region Summer Turf and Ornamental School, The Capitol, Harrisburg, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Farmers'-Businessmen's Picnic, Oak Grove Plantation, near Pittstown, N.J., 4:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.

Pa. Association of Conservation Districts quarterly meeting, Tofrees, State College, thru July 29.

Lancaster County 4-H Dairy Show, Solanco Fairgrounds. (Turn to Page A31)

Farm Forum

This open letter proposes an idea that Dan Delp, Hagerstown, MD, has for a portable milking parlor. So far, he has not received approval from the state health department, but he is making his case in an attempt to get this approval.

Editor:

In May of 1993 I began producing milk with intensive grazing as the main source of forage. In the



Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Prepare For Late Summer Seedings

Are some of your hay stands thinning out? Do you need to establish desirable pastures?

The ideal time for making many grass and legume seedings is August and September. Best results may be expected if you correct soil pH and control perennial weed problems well in advance of planting.

If you suspect low pH, sample the soil now and apply 1 to 2 tons of lime per acre. This will give sometime for the lime to start working before planting. When you receive the soil test results, subtract what you have already spread and apply the balance.

By planting in the fall, we usually have enough moisture to germinate seeds and time to establish a good stand before winter arrives. Come spring, the new seeding should be off to a running start and better able to withstand the stress of summer droughts.

To Tackle Food Safety Head On

E. coli has replaced Salmonella in the news. The safety of eating ground beef is being questioned.

First, we need to emphasize that proper handling and cooking controls E. coli and Salmonella. Secondly, agriculture needs to learn a lesson from the egg industry. All segments of agriculture need to work with government, universities, cooperative extension, and food service in developing a food safety program. Industry needs to take the lead.

Gary Smith, professor of meat science at Colorado State University, states the meat industry cannot afford to leave the job of food safety to the government. He believes that if the meat industry wants the job done and done right, it has little choice but to tackle it. Smith believes that governments do not have the wherewithal to work on these problems and would prefer to just say do not eat certain foods because they are dangerous to your health.

The industry needs to fund research and educational programs

past, our cows were fed a total mix ration. Cows were also fed individually with computer feeder, housed in a free stall barn and milked in a conventional parlor. With this system young cows became old quickly (one third of the total herd was replaced yearly). Feed costs were high and profit, if any was realized, was very low. There was a high concentration of

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to address food safety and bacterial contamination from farm to the consumer table. The sooner the industry starts, the better you will be able to protect your markets.

The egg industry has proven it can be done. Commodity leaders should look at the egg model and start adapting it to their commodity.

To Keep Cows' Dry Matter Intake Up

According to Glenn Shirk, extension dairy agent, the hot, dry days of summer may cause the cow's dry matter intake to drop significantly. There are several reasons for this:

- Pastures dry up in hot weather. There is less feed for cows to consume and what is consumed may be less palatable and less nutritious. In this case, it may be beneficial to increase barn feeding rates.
- Cows are too hot to eat. If this

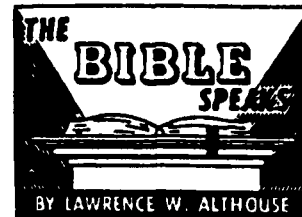
is true, feed more grain if you are not already at maximum levels. Increase the nutrient density of the ration. Feed most of the forages during the cooler hours of the evening.

• In hot weather, cows are more interested in lying in the shade or next to a supply of good quality water than consuming feed. Therefore, supply water to pasture lots being grazed and close to feeding areas.

House cattle in a well-ventilated dairy barn during the heat of the day where they have convenient access to feed and water plus a clean, comfortable place to rest.

• Feeds start to deteriorate in the bunk. This is especially true of ensiled feeds. Keep feed fresh by feeding them frequently and keeping the manger clean.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "You become successful the moment you start moving toward a worthwhile goal."



BREAKING LOOSE
July 24, 1994

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Background Scripture:

Exodus 32; 34:1-10

Devotional Reading:

Numbers 12:1-16

There are a lot of characterizations of God in Exodus 32 and 34 that are obviously quite contrary to the God we meet in Jesus Christ. I could "write around them," but I won't.

The God of these passages is a mercurial God: "... now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. . ." (32:10a). He is also a God susceptible to argumentation. Moses argues, "Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them forth, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth' . . . repent of this evil against thy people . . ." (32:11,12). The writer tells us that God is persuaded by Moses' argument: "And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do his people" (32:14).

Nor does Moses present us with a Christlike model. When he returns from the mountain, we are told that "all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. . ." (32:26). And Moses gave them a chilling assignment: "And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses; and there fell for the people that day about three thousand men (32:28). Then, when Moses asks God to forgive the people, God refuse: "Whoever has sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." " . . . And the Lord sent a plague upon the people, because they made the calf. . ." (32:33,35). And then there is one more passage that sticks in my throat like a bone: "a God . . . who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children, to the third and fourth generation" (34:8).

I have cited these passages simply to show that the ancient Israelite understanding of God is ra-

dically different than the God revealed in Jesus Christ. To try to paste the God of Exodus together with the God of the Four Gospels is a hopeless, fruitless task. So what do we do with the Book of Exodus? I look upon it as the testimony of a view of God that is instructive, but incomplete and immature. There is much we can learn from it, but our understanding of God cannot end with the Book of Exodus.

The scripture passages upon which the Uniform Bible Lesson series and "The Bible Speaks" is based are selected by an interdenominational committee. These particular passages from Exodus 32 and 34 were selected as representing Biblical teaching about forgiveness. I must respectfully disagree: what these passages tell us about forgiveness is quite contrary to what Jesus teaches us. (I was interested to discover that in my various Bible commentaries, the scholars chose to ignore the violent atrocities by Moses and the Levites. I understand that: they are embarrassing.)

To me, then, these passages speak, not so much of forgiveness as they do sin and what it does to one's relationship with God. This is illustrated in 32:25 when the writer tells us, "And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose), then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on the Lord's side?"

This is an interesting term "broken loose." I cannot recall coming across it anywhere else in the Bible. Yet it is very descriptive of what happens when we become impatient for God to act, when we demand satisfaction now, when we are unwilling to trust and obey him. The connection between God and ourselves is broken by our willful disobedience. The worst thing about sin is not that God will punish us, but that we have cut ourselves off from him. Breaking loose from God is the worst thing we can do to ourselves. Fortunately, there is a way to be connected with Him again — and it doesn't take three or four generations.

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