



OPINION

Appreciate Blessings

The 1992 Census of Agriculture (the most recent information available) shows that the United States had 1,925,300 farms, making it the first census since 1850 with fewer than 2 million farms. The census counted the highest number of farms, 6.8 million, in 1935. The value of U.S. agricultural products sold in 1992 reached \$163 billion. Even though the number of farms declined, overall farm production increased, thus continuing the trend toward more efficient agricultural productivity. The 333,865 farms with sales of \$100,000 or more accounted for only 17 percent of all farms, but 83 percent of total sales. There were 46,914 farms with sales of \$500,000 or more in 1992, compared to 32,023 farms of that size in 1987.

The increase in value of sales was largely due to increased crop production in 1992. Although total land in farms dropped from 965 to 946 million acres between 1987 and 1992, harvested cropland rose from 282 to 296 million acres, and crop sales rose by 28 percent in the same period. Farmer participation in Federal annual commodity programs has declined since 1987. Acres idled by those programs fell from 43 million acres in 1987 to 7 million acres in 1992.

Notable regional shifts in milk cows and hogs have been taking place in recent censuses and have accelerated between 1987 and 1992. Since 1987, milk cow inventories decreased in 39 of the 50 states. Five Great Lakes states, Wisconsin, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania had large declines. Collectively they lost 514,948 head, or 12 percent of their combined 1987 inventories. Five western and southwestern states, California, Texas, Washington, Idaho, and New Mexico added a total of 314,595 head. California and New Mexico accounted for 73 percent of that increase. Despite a nationwide decrease in the number of milk cows, the value of dairy products sold registered an 11 percent gain between 1987 and 1992 to a value of \$18 billion.

There has also been a shift in hog production. It has remained strong in traditional midwestern states such as Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Indiana, and Nebraska. However, North Carolina registered a 108 percent growth in number of hogs sold in 1992 compared with 1987, becoming the second ranked state in number of hogs sold in 1992; up from sixth in 1987.

Sales of poultry and poultry products continued on an upward trend, registering a 21 percent increase between 1987 and 1992. Poultry and poultry products sales were \$15.4 billion in 1992, up \$2.7 billion from 1987. Alabama, Arkansas, California, Georgia and North Carolina accounted for 46 percent of all poultry and poultry products sold. The number of broilers sold was 5.4 billion.

Americans continue to have an abundant, cheap food supply. Do they really appreciate their blessings?

Editor's Note: Reports for individual states may be obtained by writing the Editorial and Information Office, Agriculture and Financial Statistics Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233, or by calling 1-800-523-3215. Data in machine readable format are available from the Census Bureau by calling (301) 763-4100. Sampling is used to collect data for selected items and to account for nonresponding farm operations. Thus, the results are subject to sampling variability as well as reporting and coverage errors. Dollar values have not been adjusted for changes in price levels.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, November 12
Pa. State Beekeepers Association winter meeting and banquet, Lewisburg.
Goat Health Conference, Penn State Ag Sciences and Industries Building, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
Central Md. Forestry Seminar, Oregon Ridge Nature Center, Hunt Valley, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
Crawford County Annual Meeting, Sara Byler's Restaurant, Frenchtown, 7:30 p.m.
Lackawanna County Cooperative Extension annual meeting, Genetti Manor, Dickson City, 2:30 p.m.
Berks County Horticulture Club Enrichment Day, Berks County Ag Center, 8:30 a.m.-3:20 p.m.

Small-Scale Beef Production, First Congregational Church of Greene, Greene, N.Y., 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
Annual Convention of Cumberland County Society of Farm Women of Pa., Rillo's, Mechanicsburg, 9 a.m.
Sunday, November 13
Equine Respiratory Influenza Seminar (influenza outbreak in horses), Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 7 p.m.
Monday, November 14
Pennsylvania Farm Bureau annual meeting, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, thru Nov. 16.
Poultry Management and Health Seminar, Kreider's Restaurant,



**Now Is
The Time**
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Watch For Influenza In Horses

According to local veterinarians, we are experiencing an outbreak of a hot strain of equine influenza.

This virus is hopping from barn to barn and making horses very sick. First signs of the disease are running nose and coughing. Temperature may rise slightly.

If not treated, the horse could develop pneumonia or the lungs may fill with liquid. Contact your veterinarian at the first sign of a cough or running nose.

Vaccinations should help slow down the spread of the disease. However, the normal vaccination program of every three months may not be adequate for this new strain. The current recommendation is vaccinate now unless you have vaccinated in the last two months. Then repeat vaccinations every two months.

To reduce the spread of the disease, make sure your barn is adequately ventilated and practice good biosecurity. Do not allow visitors to your barn and change clothes before tending your horses or visiting other horses.

This is an emergency situation that needs your attention. Viruses may become more pathogenic as they pass from one farm to another. The best way to keep this virus from becoming very pathogenic is to vaccinate. If you have any questions, contact your

Manheim, noon.

1994 Dairy Feed Industry Seminar, Shadow Brook Inn and Resort, Tunkhannock, 9 a.m.-3:45 p.m.

Dauphin County Cooperative Extension annual meeting, Dauphin County Ag and Natural Resources Center, Dauphin, 7 p.m.

Lancaster County 4-H Dairy Awards Night, Farm and Home Center, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, November 15

1994 Dairy Feed Industry Seminar, Holiday Inn, Morgantown, 9 a.m.-3:45 p.m.

Pa. County Agents Association Annual Meeting, Atherton Hotel, State College, thru Nov. 16.

Wednesday, November 16

1994 Dairy Feed Industry Seminar, Ramada Inn, Somerset, 9 a.m.-3:45 p.m.

Efficient Land Application of Biosolids Workshop, Md. Dept. of Ag Headquarters, Annapolis.
Adams County Ag Overview meeting, Penn State Fruit Research Laboratory, Biglerville, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 17

Chester County DHIA annual meeting, East Brandywine Fire

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veterinarian.

To Check

Your Insurance

Remember last winter? Record snow falls and ice caused a lot of damage to farm property.

Frozen pipes and fallen roofs were a couple of the losses farmers experienced. However, many farmers found out too late their insurance policy did not cover snow or ice damages.

Now would be a good time to sit down with your insurance agent and discuss your insurance coverage. Another type of insurance you may want to consider is income interruption insurance. This insurance could become very valuable in making loan payments if you have a major loss from fire, roof collapse, etc. and lose the use of your confinement animal housing.

Also, review your health, liability, and life insurance coverage. These insurance policies are designed to reduce the risk of losing your farm. The amount of insurance you need depends on how much money you can afford

to spend on unexpected costs and still stay in business.

To Purchase

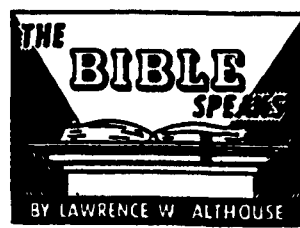
The 1995-1996 Agronomy Guide

The new Penn State Agronomy Guides are available at your local cooperative extension office.

This 215-page book is a must reference for anyone growing crops. It includes the latest pest control recommendations, cultural practices for growing corn, sorghum, soybeans, small grains, forages, cover crops, and conservation plantings. The guide also includes information on soil fertility and proper application of animal manures.

In one book you have the seeding rate, planting time, harvesting guidelines, storage considerations, and pest control recommendations for agronomic crops. The cost is \$7 per book. This is a very valuable reference book that should be on every farmer's desk.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "When you have a true desire to play, excelling is no longer work."



YOU ARE THE ONE!
November 13, 1994

Background Scripture: 2 Samuel 11:1-12:19

Devotional Reading: I John 1:5-10

Have you ever noticed how different sin appears when it is in your own backyard?

If my neighbor does something reprehensible, I generally don't have any difficulty in seeing his actions for what they are. If, on the other hand, one of my children does the same thing, I may regard it as an "unfortunate mistake," but suggest there were some reasons for it. And if, instead, I am the one who does this thing, I may regard it as quite justified and refuse to see it as wrong.

From time to time I read about a physician being sued for malpractice and, on the strength of what I read, my sympathies are usually with the patient. But I have a friend who is a physician and he was sued for malpractice and knowing the circumstances of the case, I feel that the suit is unjustified and my friend did nothing wrong. When we are close to a person, we may see his or her actions in a less condemnatory light.

MORAL SENSE INTACT

When we are the person in question—the person to whom we are closest, ourselves—it is extremely difficult to be objective. We may ignore what we don't want to acknowledge as if it never happened—and we may quickly forget pertinent incriminating details. Have you ever condemned anyone for doing the very thing which you have done without remorse?

That's what makes the story of King David and the prophet Nathan so compelling. When Nathan tells the king of a rich man who took the lamb of his poor neighbor, David's moral sense is very much intact. "Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, 'As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die; and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and

because he had not pity'" (12:6). Our moral sense is usually quite intact when we are judging others.

How devastating, then, when having delivered himself of this ringing condemnation, David is told by Nathan, "You are the man" (12:7). Having already pronounced judgment upon himself, it is now too late for him to offer excuses and extenuating circumstances. There is no point, now, in David saying, "Just a minute, you don't understand what was involved here."

EXEMPTED BY RANK

It was also too late for David to claim exemption because of who he was, another reason we are so varying in our judgments. As I see it, justice in our society usually varies in direct proportion to the economic and social status of the person accused. White collar crime is much more acceptable in this country than blue collar crime.

There is much less stigma attached to stealing millions of dollars from your company than stealing one hundred dollars from the cash drawer of the local gas station. If you are socially or economically prominent, your sins are more acceptable to the public than if you are not.

David's sin began with lust then became adultery, and culminated in murder. Sin has the nature: one paves the way for and leads to another. (In today's world, King David would probably sue Uriah for permitting his wife to bathe in a place where he, David, could see her and lust for her.) Often, the most destructive sins we commit are those that we do to hide another sin.

Most of us do not have a Nathan to confront us and trick us unto pronouncing judgment upon ourselves. But, whenever we find ourselves condemning the actions or words of others, let us remember Nathan and examine ourselves to see if his "You are the one!" could not apply to us, too.

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