



OPINION

Many Reasons To Be Thankful

Thanksgiving day was supposedly started by the Pilgrims. And that's true. In 1621 a Thanksgiving day was held. Actually, it was for three days. But the day was not proclaimed nationally until 1789, and then it was not a regular festivity at a specific time until about 100 years later.

The proclamation for the first Thanksgiving day was issued in 1789 by George Washington when he entered office. He repeated the call in 1795. But to become a regular national holiday took some time. Some political leaders, including Thomas Jefferson, did not like the idea. In addition, many state governors didn't support it because they thought it was civil interference with religion.

But Sarah Josepha Hale, the editor of the Boston-based *Ladies Magazine*, is credited with keeping public attention on the issue until on Oct. 3, 1863, President Lincoln proclaimed the fourth Thursday in November as "henceforth a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens."

Commercialism got in the way when Franklin Roosevelt set aside the third Thursday as Thanksgiving in 1939 and 1940 to give more time to buy Christmas presents and prepare for the Christmas rush. But mostly since the official beginning in 1863, the fourth Thursday of November has been the official yearly day of Thanksgiving just as Sarah Hale proposed.

And this year it happens again next Thursday. Join us as we remember our many blessings. We have a lot of reasons to be thankful.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, November 19

Mercer County Holstein Association annual meeting, extension office, Mercer, 7:30 p.m.

1994 Equine Expo and Trade Show, Days Inn Conference Center, Allentown.

Delmarva Forestry Seminar, Chesapeake College, Wye Mills, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Md. Polled Hereford Association 24th Annual Red, White, and Blue Sale, Frederick County Fairgrounds, 1 p.m.

Lehigh Valley Horse Council Annual Expo and Trade Fair, Days Inn Conference Center, Rt. 22 and 309.

G-Bread House Competition, Quality Inn, Lebanon, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Sunday, November 20

Monday, November 21

Lebanon County pesticide test, extension office, 9 a.m.

Octorara Young Farmers Association pesticide meeting, Octorara High School Ag Ed Room, 7:30 p.m.

Fayette County DHIA meeting, Gleason's, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, November 22

Lancaster County Ag-Industry Banquet, Host Resort Inn, 7 p.m.

Franklin County Farm-City Banquet, Kauffman's Community Center, 6:45 p.m.

York County DHIA meeting, Shrewsbury Fire Hall, 7 p.m.

Lebanon County DHIA meeting, Myerstown Brethern Church, 7 p.m.

Perry County DHIA meeting, Landisburg Fire Hall, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, November 23

Northwest Pa. Holstein Show and Sale meeting, Mercer, 10:30 a.m.

Thursday, November 24

Thanksgiving Day

Friday, November 25

Saturday, November 26

Sunday, November 27

Monday, November 28

Lehigh Valley Horse Council meeting, Whitehall Mall Community Room, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, November 29

Summit On Risk Management In American Ag, Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C., 7:45 a.m.-6 p.m.

Wednesday, November 30

Westmoreland County Extension dinner meeting, Lakeview Lounge, Greensburg, 7 p.m.

Thursday, December 1

Liquid Manure Application Systems, Rochester Marriott Thruway Hotel, Rochester, N.Y., thru Dec. 2.

Beaver County DHIA meeting, extension office, 11 a.m.

Friday, December 2

Estate Planning Seminar, Columbia Inn, Columbia, Md., 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Saturday, December 3

National 4-H Youth Congress, Orlando, Fla., thru Dec. 8.

Estate Planning Seminar, Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel, Hagerstown, Md., 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Sunday, December 4

Monday, December 5

Agronomy Ag Service School, Brynwood Inn, Lewisburg.

Intensive Grazing For Dairy Cows Seminar, Franklin County extension, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Lehigh County annual meeting, Bake Oven Inn, Germansville, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 6

Mid-Atlantic Cooperative Extension Meeting (MACE), University of Delaware, Newark, Del.

Agronomy Ag Service School, Sinbad's Restaurant, Wysox.

Lancaster County DHIA meeting, Good and Plenty Restaurant, 11:30 a.m.

Berks County DHIA meeting, 4-H Center, Leesport, 7 p.m.



Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Evaluate Alfalfa Stands

Most farmers evaluate the condition of their alfalfa stands in the spring.

University specialists in Minnesota and Wisconsin recommend assessing stands in the fall to give more time for planning. Fall checks also allow farmers to evaluate weed control needs.

Spring stand evaluations are still needed to assess winter damage. Identifying less profitable fields or fields likely to suffer winter injury in the fall gives farmers time to change fall tillage and cropping strategies before spring.

The specialists recommend a two-step process to evaluate stands. Use stem counts to estimate current yield potential and check crown and root health to determine future yield potential.

To Determine Alfalfa Yield Potential

To make a stem count to determine current yield potential, select three or four representative areas of a field and mark off a two square foot section in each area. Count only stems that are over two inches tall. Then divide your count by two to calculate stems per square foot. Then calculate the average stem count for the field to determine yield potential.

Counts with more than 55 stems per square foot means stem density will not limit yield. Counts of 40 to

Bradford-Sullivan Forest Landowners Association directors meeting, extension office, 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 7
Agronomy Ag Service School, Berks county Ag Center, Leesport.

Wayne County DHIA meeting, Bethany Church, Honesdale, 7:45 p.m.

Clinton County DHIA meeting, Big Wrangler, Mill Hall, 11:30 a.m.

Thursday, December 8
Extension Strategies For Dairy Farms National Conference and Trade Show, Turf Valley Hotel, Ellicott City, Md., thru Dec. 9.

Adams County DHIA annual meeting, Fire Hall, Hamey, Md., 7 p.m.

Agronomy Ag Service School, Quality Inn, Carlisle.

Centre County DHIA meeting, Logan Grange, Pleasant Gap, 7 p.m.

Friday, December 9
Agronomy Ag Service School, Lancaster Farm and Home Center.

PennAg Nutrient Management Seminar, Eden Resort Inn, Lancaster, 10 a.m.-noon.

Armstrong County DHIA meeting, Bonello, 11 a.m.

55 probably will result in some yield reduction. Stem densities between 35 and 40 may warrant consideration for replacing the stand.

To evaluate the crown and root health of a stand, dig plants from three or four representative field locations. Be sure to include the top 6 inches of the root. Examine crowns for size, symmetry, and the number of shoots present. Then cut the root lengthwise and check for crown and root discoloration or rot.

Categorize the plants as follows: 0. healthy, 1. some discoloration, 2. moderate discoloration or rot, 3. significant discoloration or rot, 4. greater than 50 percent discoloration, and 5. dead.

Healthy stands have fewer than 30 percent of plants in categories 3, 4, and 5. Plant health becomes a major consideration in marginal stands. For example, healthy stands with 40 stems per square foot may be worth keeping while similar a stand with a high percentage of discolored crowns and

roots would not.

To Be Thankful

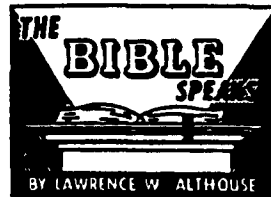
Thursday marks our national holiday of Thanksgiving. It is a time for us to give thanks for the many blessings we have — especially the blessings of family and health.

Take time and spend it with family and recount memories of the past, joys of the present, and the hopes of the future. Look at the positive things in life — the smile of a child, birth of an animal, the bountiful harvest of crops, and the other miracles of nature. Look for ways to help families, friends, and community.

Surprise someone with a visit or help a neighbor, or even better, get to know a neighbor better.

Let's use this Thanksgiving as a time to celebrate the joy of being a member of a loving and caring family and being a good neighbor. Happy Thanksgiving!

Feather Prof's Footnote: "In the race to be better or best do not miss the joy of being."



PROSPERITY AND VIRTUE
November 20, 1994

Background Scripture:
I Kings 9:1-9; 10:1-24
Devotional Reading:
Proverbs 3:5-15

In much of the Old Testament it is obvious that prosperity is linked to virtue. The good prosper, the sinner does not. Prosperity is a sign of virtue; poverty is an indication of sin. (It was in contradiction to this idea that the Book of Job was written).

That Old Testament idea is still quite prevalent today. I frequently find that religious movements are judged "successful" if they are materially prosperous and vice versa. In fact, their material prosperity is regarded as a sign of God's favor and blessing. Television evangelists dress like movie stars and live a material life-style that is not second to "the rich and the famous."

There's nothing wrong with prosperity per se. It is said by religious historians that because the poor people of England responded positively to the preaching of John Wesley, they became industrious and eventually achieved a modest prosperity along with their piety. But with their material prosperity came the temptations of prosperity. Whereas piety led to prosperity, prosperity had also led at times back to impiety.

BEGINNING HUMBLE

We can see the seeds of this kind of situation in the story of King Solomon. He begins as a humble and upright king, whose piety seems to be rewarded with immense prosperity and fame. His wisdom and affluence were bywords throughout the known world. It was this reputation that brought the fabled Queen of Sheba to see him.

In 1993 my wife visited Yemen on the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. Visiting the ancient and exotic interior city of Sana'a, we were told that it was the historic capitol of the ancient kingdom of Sheba and that it was probably from there that the Queen of Sheba set out on her journey to King Solomon. Spices, precious stones and gold are still

important trade items in the camel caravans that cross Yemen's deserts. (That some scholars dispute Yemen as the site didn't make the visit any less exciting for us.)

For some reason, the Queen of Sheba has always been a rather mysterious figure in Middle Eastern legends. To the Arabs she was known as Bilkis and to the Ethiopians her name was Makeda. One legend has it that Solomon fathered a child by Sheba and that this child is the foundation of the royal lineage of Ethiopia. Other legends indicate that King Solomon, and perhaps the Queen of Sheba, were involved in gold trade with the exotic Mashonaland, the ruins of which can still be seen in the African nation of Zimbabwe.

PROSPERITY BREEDS ARROGANCE

Whatever else the Queen of Sheba was or represented in the time of King Solomon, her purpose in I Kings 10 is obviously to emphasize the legendary wealth and acclaim of Solomon and his kingdom. Solomon was more than equal to all the hard questions she posed to him and his brilliant answers literally took her breath away "...there was no more spirit in her..." (10:5). He was even more impressive than his reputation: "...but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it; and behold, the half was not told me; your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report which I heard" (10:56).

At this point the Queen of Sheba ascribes Solomon's fame to the right source: "Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel!" As long as Solomon didn't believe his own press notices and continued to give the credit to God, he would be alright.

But, unfortunately, power and prosperity often corrupt us, turning humility to pride and pride into arrogance. And arrogance seldom rears its head without causing our fall and ruin.

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