



OPINION

Nurturing The Bumper Crop

Starting today and all this week FFA members in high schools all over the nation are planning to celebrate and highlight the achievements of FFA and agricultural education during National FFA Week Feb. 18-25.

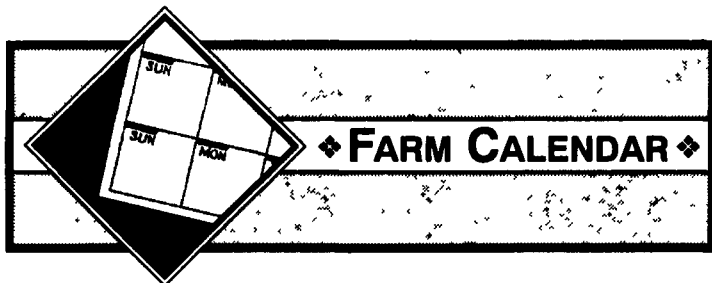
The theme this year is "FFA — The Leadership Advantage." This theme is certainly appropriate as many young people who have gone through the FFA programs in their local school district have become leaders both in agriculture, agribusiness, and the community at large. Many local, state, and national leaders are former FFA members.

FFA chapters conduct activities which develop leadership skills of high school students. And these experiences give the student good references as proof of integrity and work ethic in later years when they apply for a job or enter some other field of endeavor.

Right now 428,109 members of FFA across the nation are preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business, and technology of agriculture. And behind the 7,257 local chapters are dedicated teachers who not only impart knowledge, but often become the mentors of these young people.

FFA's mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education. Someone has said a lucky farmer is one who has raised a bumper crop of good boys and girls. We think FFA helps to nurture this crop very nicely.

Thank You!



Saturday, February 18
Northeast Purebred Beef Cattle Breeders Forum, Tofrees, State College.

Sunday, February 19

Monday, February 20
National Mastitis Council annual meeting, Worthington Hotel, Fort Worth, Texas, also Feb. 22.

Dairy MAP-Labor Management Workshop, Chester County Government Services Center, West Chester, also Feb. 27.

New Holland Vegetable Day, Summit Valley Elementary School, New Holland.

Bradford County Dairy Day, SRU Middle School, East Smithfield, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Fences, Pastures, and Profits, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 7:30 p.m.

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

Tuesday, February 21
Blair/Huntingdon Counties MFS Workshop, Warriors Mark Fire Hall, also Feb. 23.

Christmas Tree Growers meeting, Biglerville Fruit Laboratory, 7 p.m.

Garden Center and Green School, County Services Building, York, 9 a.m.-2:45 p.m.

Franklin County Fruit Growers meeting, Savoy Restaurant, Waynesboro, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

York Dairy MAP, Olde Country Buffet, also Feb. 28.

Producing Profitable Feedlot Cattle, Hoss's Steak and Sea House, West York, dinner 6:30 p.m., meeting 7:30 p.m.-9 p.m.

Nutrient Management Workshop, northeast region, Wysox Fire Hall, Wysox.

Wednesday, February 22
Dairy MAP Labor Management Workshop, Neshaminy Manor Center, Doylestown, also March 1.

Mid-Atlantic Direct Marketing Conference, Marriott's Sea View Resort, Absecon, N.J.

Farming For the Future: Partners In Stewardship, Sheraton Universal Inn and Conference Center, Syracuse, N.Y., thru Feb. 23.

Regional Potato Growers meeting, Richland Mall, Johnstown.

Franklin County Dairy MAP, Lighthouse Restaurant, north of Chambersburg, also March 8.

Water Rights and Irrigation Management meeting, Sheraton Inn, Harrisburg, 8:30 a.m.-noon.

Estate Tax Planning Seminar for Farm Families, Government Services Center, West Chester, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Thursday, February 23
Pennsylvania Holstein Convention, Raddison Hotel, West Middlesex, thru Feb. 25.

Adams County Farmer-to-Farmer Meeting, Hoss's Steakhouse, Gettysburg, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Farm Regulation Changes meeting, Lebanon Valley Ag Center, 10 a.m.-noon.

N.Y. Farm Show, State Fairgrounds, Syracuse, N.Y., thru Feb. 25.

Center County Cooperative Extension Association annual meeting, South Ridge Motor Inn, 7 p.m.

Corestates Hamilton Bank Agri-Education Seminar, Farm and Home Center, 8:30 a.m.

Bucks County Conservation and



Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Improve Swine Profitability

The past several months have not been pleasant experiences for swine producers. However, this has not been the first time we have seen low hog prices.

One long-time producer told me this is the third time in his career he had seen such losses.

The important thing to remember is, beyond hog prices, the production-related items with the greatest influence on profit are feed costs, maintaining facilities at capacity, and sow productivity.

The price of feed is difficult to control. Decreasing building capacity will generally reduce profits per pig. However, increasing sow productivity can add dollars to your bottom line, according to Dr. Ken Kephart, Penn State swine specialist.

Most sows will wean at least eight pigs per litter. Increasing that average to 8.5 or 9, the profit over feed costs on those extra pigs, even with today's depressed market, is at least \$25 per head.

However, it will take a little extra effort on your part. You will need to make sure things go well at farrowing, to check sow comfort and temperature, and watch pigs throughout lactation and transferring.

Kephart notes of all the things that farmers can do, it is farrowing management that pays major dividends.

To Manage Crop Residues

There are many ways to reduce soil erosion on the farm. A simple and inexpensive way on fields is the management of crop residues.

Crop residues left on the surface of the soil will intercept rain drops and reduce erosion. The more residue, the less erosion. Any field operation will reduce residue and increase the potential for erosion.

Pesticide Update meeting, Neshaminy Manor Center, Doylestown, 7:15 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

Weed Management School, Dauphin County Ag and Natural Resources Center, Dauphin.

Forage producers meeting, Carriage Corner Restaurant, Mifflinburg, 9 a.m.-11:30 a.m. and Washingtonville Fairground, Washingtonville, 1 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

Friday, February 24
Intensive Grain Management School, Lebanon Valley Ag Center, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Weed Management School, York extension, Pleasant Acres, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Raleigh DHIA Record Workshop, Paul B. Stoltzfus Farm, Church

(Turn to Page A31)

Some operations are less damaging to residues. Each time an implement is used in the field, crop residue is reduced. Weathering also contributes to the loss of residue.

Some examples of percent reduction in residue based on various operations are harvesting, 10; moldboard plow, 97; chisel plowing, 50; disking, 60; anhydrous injection, 60; drill with disk openers, 10; drills with hoe openers, 50; and field cultivation, 50.

Crop residue management is another way farmers are helping to protect the environment and maintain the productivity of their soil for future generations.

To Know Cattle Feeding Behavior

According to Glenn Shirk, extension dairy agent, there has been identified a behavior in cows called social facilitation.

In this behavior, when one cow eats, others will also eat whether they are hungry or not. Cows eating in groups eat more than when fed separately. Cows in groups also tend to be more content and

less fearful.

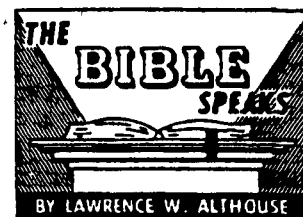
Competition for feed may develop when cows are housed in groups and when manger space is short. In one study, intake of a total mixed ration (TMR) was depressed when manger space was less than 8 inches per cow.

In another study, intake was not different when cows had 8 or 20 inches of manger space. Also, there is evidence that cows feeding with their heads in the natural grazing position produce more saliva than cows eating with their heads held horizontally. This has an impact on rumen function, because saliva acts as a natural buffer.

A commonly overlooked feeding factor is a cow's access to water. Research has shown that cows who had access to feed and water 24 hours a day produced more milk than if access to feed and water were restricted.

The bottom line is to make sure cows have adequate access to feed space, feed, and water.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "The moment you commit yourself, the opportunity for success becomes a reality."



BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

SAVE YOURSELF!
February 19, 1995

Background Scripture:

Matthew. 27:1-44

Devotional Reading:

John 3:14-21

In last week's The Bible Speaks I said that I think Jesus could have avoided the cross if he had been willing to temper or forsake his commitment to God. Even after he was arrested there was still another chance or two to avoid crucifixion.

When he was brought before Caiaphas the high priest, Matthew tells us, they found no actual witnesses to testify against Him. Then, when some witnesses were bribed and accused him of saying, "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days," he could have explained that he had been misunderstood, for he was not speaking of the actual Jerusalem temple. When, standing before Pilate he was asked, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus could have talked his way out of the confrontation. He might have said that he never claimed to be king, or that his kingship was spiritual, not temporal.

LEGIONS OF ANGELS

Perhaps Jesus even had an opportunity when he was hanging on the cross. In the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:53) Jesus had said to his disciples who wanted to resist arrest with violence, "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?" And this is what his tormentors had in mind when they railed at him, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." The chief priests, scribes and elders also taunted him: "He saved others; he cannot save himself" (40-42).

I'm not at all sure Jesus couldn't save himself, but it is apparent that he did not attempt to do so. Had Jesus called down angelic legions to save him from the cross, would he really have been saved? If he had argued his case before Pilate, might

he not have been able to get off with a reprimand? If he had gotten out of town before Good Friday, might he not have survived to preach, teach and heal some more?

There are times when we too can save ourselves by muting the message, keeping silent in the face of injustice, going along when our conscience calls for us to "make waves," turning our backs on those who need our help, waiting for someone else to take the lead. But when we save ourselves that way, we find that we are not really saved. Being rejected by others for the sake of our convictions is not the worst thing that can happen to us. Jesus knew that the worst thing that could happen would be to reject God's purpose of him. It is also our own "worst case scenario."

Actually, the one thing that we cannot do — is to save ourselves! Not in the long run. Only God can save us. To save ourselves in the here and now may place us in jeopardy in the hereafter. What Jesus did estranged him from many of the religious people of his day. When we put right before might, principle before profit, eternal security before temporal safety, we may find ourselves estranged from those who march to the world's tempo. But it is better to be estranged from society than from the kingdom of God.

The wonder of Jesus' crucifixion is not that he died, but the way he died, totally innocent of the charges made against him the victim of trumped-up accusations, forsaken by his disciples when he needed them most, reviled by both passers-by and religious officials, suffering an inhuman execution. Jesus could well have thundered threats, curses, and recriminations. Who among us would have resisted the temptation to call out to our tormentors, "You'll all be sorry!"?

But Jesus died as he lived with a power and majesty that the world could neither take away nor diminish. And in doing so he saved both himself and us.

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