



OPINION

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I considered at great length what my purpose could be and should be for this column. The purpose of this column is to provide readers of Lancaster Farming with various perspectives, mine and those of others, that may influence the manner in which we conduct livestock shows, particularly junior livestock shows. Topics will range from ethical considerations, securing a judge, and weight limits, to fitting practices, uniform rules, and technical resources. I will strive to provide balance in both positive and negative commentary on issues, and will graciously welcome responsible comment and ideas for future articles. The 'bottom-line' will be to accentuate the positive, and to mention the negative with hopes of changing it for the better.

Whether we realize it or not, those of us directly and indirectly involved with junior livestock projects have an awesome responsibility! We have instituted programs youth livestock projects, that foster responsibility, care, motivation, competitive spirit, social and life skills, and honesty. But there are a few members of society, both within and without livestock circles, who will ruin these activities for the majority if we allow certain practices to continue, and to be readily accepted as the "norm."

During the last three years, livestock producers have received considerably more unfavorable press than favorable attention from the media. This will probably not change in the near future, as general livestock management practices come under closer scrutiny by American citizens. We owe it to ourselves and to our children to see that youth livestock programs serve future generations in a more positive way than they served us.

To this end, I have reprinted with permission an article entitled, "Learning By Example," written by Larry Mrozinski that was reprinted in Seedstock Edge (August, 1995) by Darrel Anderson, CEO of the National Swine Registry. Larry is a purebred sheep breeder from Minnesota, judges sheep shows nationally, and has served as a contest official at the National Senior College Livestock Judging Contest.

The message is clear. The species terminology is not important. This article clearly defines "the scope and magnitude of some of our responsibilities" to youth and their junior livestock projects

When Tommy was 8 years old, his father registered a lamb born December 24 as being born on January 2. His father said to Tommy, "It's O.K. kids, everybody does it."

When Tommy was 9 years old, his father bred the family's flock of purebred ewes with a ram of another breed and registered the lambs as purebreds. His father said to Tommy, "It's O.K. kid, everybody does it."

When Tommy was 10 years old, his 4-H leader and county agent tagged and weighed newly purchased lambs a month after the ownership deadline. They both said to him, "It's O.K. kid, everybody does it."

When Tommy was 11 years old, his parents bought him a registered ewe lamb to show at a county fair and changed the ear tag to their own flock tag. His parents said, "It's O.K. kid, everybody does it."

When Tommy was 12 years old, his grandparents bought him a show lamb and left it with the breeder who fed and fit the lamb until the day before the county fair. The breeder and his grandparents said, "It's O.K. kid, everybody does it."

When Tommy was 13 years old, his veterinarian issued health papers for sheep he never inspected and that had foot rot and lamb fungus. He said, "It's O.K. kid, everybody does it."

When Tommy was 14 years old, his neighbor used an electric animal prod on his lambs to get them to brace. He told Tommy, "It's O.K. kid, everybody does it."

When Tommy was 15 years old, and after winning the Grand Champion Lamb at the county fair, he saw his Dad having a beer with the judge and paying the judge \$200 for making his son's lamb Champion. The judge and his father said, "It's O.K. kid, everybody does it."

When Tommy was 16 years old, his FFA advisor falsified the numbers on Tommy's winning sheep proficiency award entry. His advisor said, "It's O.K. kid, everybody does it."

When Tommy was 17 years old, his uncle used Lasix on his market lamb at the state fair to make it weigh into a lighter class. The uncle told Tommy, "It's O.K. kid, everybody does it."

When Tommy was 18 years old, his older brother pumped the loin of his lamb at a national sheep show. His brother said, "It's O.K. kid, everybody does it."

When Tommy was 19 years old, his entire family was aware of the clenbuterol being given to his market lambs. They told him, "It's O.K. kid, everybody does it."

When Tommy was 20 years old, a friend offered him some cocaine. His friend said, "It's O.K. kid, everybody does it."

When Tommy was arrested later that night for using cocaine and called his family to ask them to bail him out of jail, they told him, "How could you have brought such disgrace to your family, you never learned any of this at home, where did you go wrong?" After hearing of his arrest, Tommy's 4-H leader, FFA advisor, county agent, grandparents, uncle, veterinarian and neighbors were also shocked.

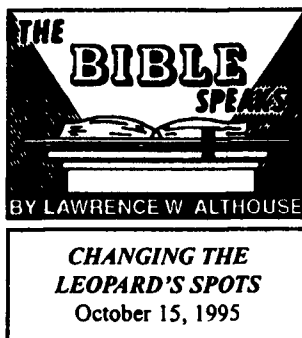
If there is one thing the adult world can't stand, it's a kid that breaks the rules...

"Learning By Example" by Larry Mrozinski

The first step to ensuring the continuation of the variety of positive experiences that have benefited numerous of us previously is to put an end to the practices of a few who would adhere to the aforementioned philosophy.

We all know that, "It's not O.K.!", and, "Not everybody does it!"

But if just one person does it, "It's not O.K.!"



Background Scripture:

Acts 9:1-31

Devotional Reading:

Matthew 4:17-22

Last week one evening I watched an episode of "Under Suspicion," a current television series. In this particular episode there was a priest who was suspect in a murder case, largely because, before becoming a priest, he had been convicted of manslaughter.

At one point, the detective asks her superior officer if he believes that people can change and he cynically replies that, in his experience, criminals do not change. At the end the priest is proven innocent and the detective is confronted with the evidence that, here at least, was one person who could and did change—for the better.

This story captured my interest because it is a very timely concern. Lots of people today share the conviction that people don't change for the better. In the Sunday newspaper was an article about a social worker who said that ex-convicts are caught on the horns of a dilemma. When prospective employers ask them whether they have a police record, if they respond truthfully, they are not likely to get the job. If they lie and are found out, they will be dismissed. Yet, if ex-cons are ever to "go straight," they need to be able to get jobs.

THE "BAD GUYS"

The problem is that many of us think that people either cannot change for the good, or are not likely to do so. I will acknowledge that there are many who do not change, but may that not be because our society reinforces their belief that they are condemned to be criminals. If they try to make something of their

lives we may refuse to give them the chance to be the better selves that God created them to be.

Perhaps that is the problem right there: maybe we do not believe that God created them to be anything more than what they have been. Lots of people believe that the world can be divided into the "good guys" and the "bad guys" and that both are born to be the way they are.

If that were true, then Paul's conversion on the Damascus road could not have taken place. For, up to that moment, Saul was clearly one of the "bad guys." He had not only been a guilty bystander at the tragic murder of Stephen, he had become the early church's greatest nemesis, "breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord" and zealously dragging bound Christians off to Jerusalem to face persecution.

THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT

We cannot blame the early Christians for being frightened of this man. Instructed by the Lord to go to Saul and heal him, Ananias had good reason to protest: "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to the saints in Jerusalem..." (9:13). And, after the converted Saul has become Paul and begins preaching in the synagogues of Damascus, we can understand why the Christians there ask, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called on his (Jesus') name?" (8:21).

The answer to these protests is both "yes" and "no." Yes, this is the same man, but no it is not. Yes, this man was a zealous persecutor of Christians, but he has changed from a persecutor to an apostle. Why? Because the Lord has created him for another purpose. As God said to Ananias, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel" (9:15).

Each of us God has created as a chosen instrument, when we permit him to do so, he can change us to accomplish that purpose. The leopard cannot change his spots, but God can!



Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Pick Up
Farm Show
Information

Copies of the premium list for the 1996 Pennsylvania State Farm Show have arrived at your local cooperative extension office.

The premium list provides information on all the classes and competitions at the 1996 show. It has all the rules, entry forms, and closing dates for entries.

Many of the classes have a Nov. 2 closing date while others have Oct. 28, December 2, 15 and Jan. 4-6 closing dates.

In addition, tentative schedule of events is provided.

The 1996 Farm Show will be held January 6-11.

To Plant
Cover Crops

Cover crops have many uses and advantages. Cover crops can help supplement the production of the farm by providing additional feed for livestock in fall, winter or spring as pasture. They may also be harvested as silage in the spring. Other major advantages of cover crops include protection of soil from erosion during the winter, capturing unused nitrogen in the soil profile, adding organic matter to the soil, and improving soil tilth. Also, cover crops minimize nutrient losses from winter spreading of manure.

Many plants may be used as cover crops, but the most popular are winter grains. Spring oats sowed in the fall are an excellent cover crop that does not need to be killed with a pesticide next spring. If farmers have land which will be bare during the winter, they should consider the many advantages that cover crops offer.

To Consider
Rotating Alfalfa
Fields

Is it time to rotate the alfalfa field to another crop? Now is the time to start making that determination.

Start in the fall by counting the number of plants per square foot. Fields with 4 to 5 plants per square foot should be considered as good potentials for rotation next spring.

However, knowing the number of plants per square foot may not

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