



OPINION

Progress On Youth Livestock Ethics

Some progress has been made on the youth livestock ethics problem. Approximately 250 representatives of animal agriculture from 40 states across North America recently attended the National Youth Livestock Program Ethics Symposium and formulated an Action Plan to eliminate unethical and illegal activity in youth livestock programs.

The Livestock Conservation Institute facilitated the symposium in an effort to provide a forum for building consensus to interested individuals and organizations concerned about the growing number of unethical and illegal incidences related to youth livestock events. LCI was joined in this effort by the American Farm Bureau Federation, American Veterinary Medical Association, Animal Industry Foundation, National FFA Organization, and Cooperative Extension Service (4-H).

Following two days of presentations and discussions relating to the symposium's four areas of emphasis — self examination, unified effort, education and enforcement — the participants developed an action plan containing 78 "action items" and 38 "desired outcomes."

The establishment of a National Code of Ethics received top priority from each of the "working groups" from the four areas of emphasis as they developed a framework for progress. An evaluation of the existing livestock program rewards systems was also the consensus of most participants. Some of the other key issues outlined by the four groups in the Action Plan are as follows:

- **Self-examination**

Articulating and disseminating a system of professional ethics accepted as a consensus in youth livestock programs. Selecting, conducting and regulating youth livestock events such that the fundamental goals of both public and youth education and development are supported.

- **Unified Effort**

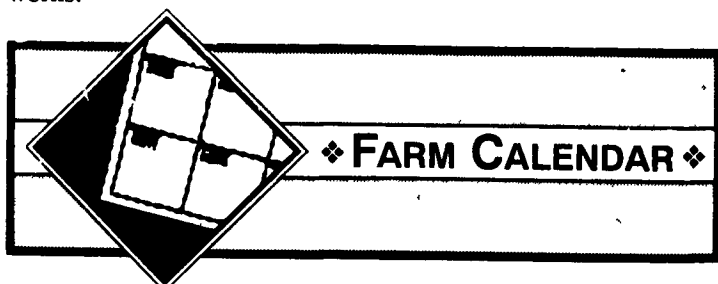
Local, state and national training programs to increase awareness of youth ethics by incorporating the unified effort of all those interested in improvement. Assimilating and distributing information from all groups involved in the showing of livestock on a local, state and national level. The adoption of award systems and standards that emphasize complete knowledge of industry and development of life skills.

- **Education**

External communication and education to address political entities, the media, fairboards, supporters and commodity groups. Internal communication with organizations attempting to implement successful animal science programs for youth. Educational programs to eliminate unethical behavior in the Junior Livestock Program. Revision of high dollar reward systems that encourage unethical acts, with recognition evaluated on effort and accomplishments both in and outside the showing.

- **Enforcement**

Advancing uniform rules and procedures for competitive livestock events to benefit the development of youth and to maintain a strong future for animal agriculture in America. Promoting ethics educational efforts for all youth involved in livestock showing. While the enthusiasm and unified sense of urgency of the group will carry this effort forward, the real point of proper conduct comes at the family and local youth level. Parents need to set examples for their children. Youth leaders also need to eliminate unethical and illegal activity in their youth livestock programs. Penalties of law and conscience when needed at a young age impair a lifetime of potential good works.



♦ FARM CALENDAR ♦

Saturday, December 16
 Sunday, December 17
 Monday, December 18
 "Nuisance Concerns With American Agriculture In the Community: The Case of Odors," Yoder's Restaurant, New Holland, 9 a.m.-3:45 p.m.

Tuesday, December 19
 Ephrata Area Young Farmers Annual Christmas Celebration, Ephrata High School auditorium, 7:30 p.m.
 Wednesday, December 20
 Pork Production Forum, Country Table Restaurant, Mount Joy, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
 Thursday, December 21



Now Is The Time
 By John Schwartz
 Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Jump-Start Vehicles Safely

If you need to jump-start a vehicle that has a weak or discharged battery, be sure to follow these safety tips.

First, connect the positive cable marked with a "+" or red clamps to the positive terminal of the weak battery. Then clamp the other end of the positive cable to the positive post of the charged battery.

Next, connect the negative cable to the negative post of the good battery. Finally, make the last connection of the negative cable to the engine block or frame of the non-starting vehicle.

The engine block or frame acts like a negative terminal. By keeping the clamps of the weakened battery separated, one reduces the possibility of unwanted stray sparks causing an explosion or fire.

Once the vehicle is started, remove the cables in reverse order. Be careful not to allow the cables to contact each other when removing them. Store the jumper cables in a clean and dry location.

To Practice Safe Sledding

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 50,000 people receive emergency room treatment annually for injuries related to sleds, snow discs and toboggans.

There are a number of causes for these accidents. Old sleds may splinter or break or the steering mechanism may fail. A new snowfall may hide rocks, stumps, ditches, or a low fence wire. Injuries

occur when sleds collide with other sleds, stationary objects, or moving cars.

Parents and children should keep safety in mind when heading to the snowy hillsides. Examine the hillside carefully for hidden obstructions. Children should learn how to roll off their sleds to avoid collisions.

Children must stay out of streets and traffic intersections when playing in the snow. Do not allow sleds to be towed by cars.

To Control Mice In Home

Dr. Tim Elkner, extension horticultural agent, reminds us this is the time of year when mice seek warm shelter and a guaranteed food supply.

Agile climbers, they can scale vertical surfaces such as trees and brick walls. They can cross power lines and pipes and squeeze through holes as small as a fourth of an inch in diameter.

Dark, grain size droppings in

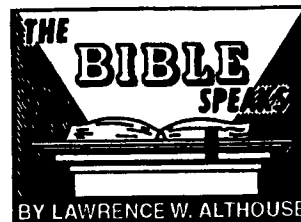
cabinets and drawers are a sign that mice are in the house. Hoarded food piles and nests of shredded paper or cloth are further evidence.

Prevention is the best form of mice control. Permanently seal all entries into the house. Steel wool stuffed firmly into a small opening makes a good temporary barrier against mice.

Store pet food and bird seed in sealed containers and clean up spills immediately. If mice are already in your house, set traps in areas where they are active — along walls and on ledges. Bait the traps with peanut butter. Check the traps daily to dispose of the catch and to renew the bait.

Be sure to prevent children and pets from being injured from the traps. Poison based baits are not recommended for homes. They are dangerous to children and dead mice may end up behind walls or under floors.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "A leader praises efforts and celebrates achievements."



LIGHT FOR A DARK NIGHT
 December 17, 1995

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Background Scripture:
 Isaiah 9:1-7
Devotional Reading:
 Luke 1:46-55

Last March my wife and I landed in Bangkok, Thailand to board a cruise ship bound for Vietnam and Hong Kong. We knew that the ship was docked outside the city and engaged a taxi to take us there. We thought we'd be there in at least 30 minutes, but two hours later and our taxi was still hurtling south from Bangkok and night had fallen swiftly.

When, at last, we reached the port where our ship was docked, it was too dark to read the street signs and our taxi driver drove in circles for another 30 or more minutes. Finally, just when we were beginning to think we could not find our ship, we saw it gleaming like a Christmas tree in the darkness. Eventually, following its light, our driver delivered us to the ship in safety.

That experience, we later acknowledged to each other, is symbolic of life itself. How often we grope our way through life in darkness — unaware of where we are and not able to see where we're going. How often I have had to make choices without a clue as to what the outcome might be. I'm sure you have too. Then there have been some "dark nights of the soul" as St. John of the Cross described them, when, no matter what I did, my spirituality seemed to have dried up. So, I can personally identify with Isaiah's description of "The people who walked in darkness . . . those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness" (9:2).

LIGHT RETURNS

Although we do not know what time of the year Jesus was actually born, Christians have traditionally celebrated his birth at the time of the winter solstice, the time of the year when the days become longer once again and light begins its slow but sure return to earth.

When you've stumbled around in the darkness, nothing is so wel-

come as light. You don't have to see everything by that light, just enough to find your way. So Isaiah's prophecy, given to the people of Israel at a time of grave national and personal darkness is something that brings hope to anyone in darkness: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light."

It would appear that this "light" Isaiah saw was a king to rule Israel — whether already arrived or to come, we can't tell. When a person became king of Israel, he was anointed with oil in a religious ceremony. The term "Messiah," means "the anointed one." Isaiah gives a glowing description of this ideal king whom God has anointed to rule over them. "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*"

THE ANOINTED ONE

It is not difficult to understand why early Christians saw this prophecy fulfilled in the birth of Jesus. All that Isaiah prophesied concerning the "anointed one" is applicable to Jesus. Note, that while Isaiah's contemporaries may have looked for a mighty ruler to lead a victorious army, extend Israel's borders and restore its secular power, the prophet sees the "anointed one" as accomplishing something quite different: "Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end . . . and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore" (9:7).

Peace, justice and righteousness were to be the hallmarks of the ideal king, the very role that Jesus fulfilled and still fulfills today. To put it in symbolic terms, Jesus came to bring divine light into the darkness of human existence. Christ was born almost two thousand years ago, but every year at this time we acknowledge that Christ is reborn among us wherever and whenever people walk in darkness.

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