

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

FFA, Agriculture, And America

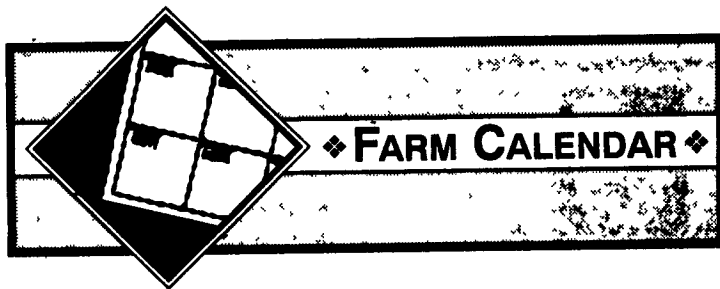
National FFA Week is observed each year during the week of George Washington's birthday to recognize his leadership and commitment to American agriculture. The FFA's 444,497 members in 7,264 chapters across the United States, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands organize events and activities to foster awareness of ag education and support for FFA. This year National FFA Week is February 17-24.

We believe FFA members who lead chapter meetings may one day preside at board meetings or pioneer advances in ag science or genetics. Students who join agricultural education and FFA know they can apply what they learn in class to more than just the test: they are gaining career and leadership skills to last a lifetime. It's the hands-on experience under the dedicated supervision of agriculture teachers and parents that make the difference in the lives of these young people.

"Students are taking note," said National FFA Advisor Larry D. Case. "Over the last four years, more than 60,000 students from diverse backgrounds were attracted to the program, providing them with a strong foundation of knowledge and skills essential for success in the science, business, and technology of agriculture and life."

This year's theme, "FFA—Leadership for a Lifetime," emphasizes how FFA activities and agriculture classes help students develop the critical skills they need for a diversity of agricultural careers and beyond.

FFA is one of the good things about agriculture—and America.



Saturday, February 17
 Clarion County forest stewardship meeting, extension office, 1 p.m.-4 p.m.
 Lancaster 4-H Benefit Auction, Farm and Home Center.
National FFA Week, thru Feb. 24.
Sunday, February 18
 National Mastitis Council 35th Annual meeting, Stouffer Hotel, Nashville, Tenn., thru Feb. 21.
Monday, February 19
 Adams County Fruit Growers meeting, Biglerville High School, 8:30 a.m.
 Bradford County Dairy Day, SRU School, East Smithfield, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
 New Holland Vegetable Day, Summit Valley Elementary School, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Tuesday, February 20
 Solanco Young Farmers meeting, nutrient management, Solanco High School, 7:30 p.m.
 Farm Financial Management Workshop, Centre County extension, Bellefonte, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Cattle Consistency: Implications For Packers and Producers, Hoss's Steak and Sea House, West York, 6:30 p.m.-9 p.m.
 Timber Harvesting: Bradford-Sullivan Forest Landowners Association, Stoll Center, Wyo., 7:30 p.m.
 Pa. DHIA records meeting, Witmer Fire Hall, 12:30 p.m.
 National Agricultural Issues Satellite Conference, Extension Office, Nazareth, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Bucks County pesticide update meeting, Neshaminy Manor Center, 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m., also Feb. 27.

Wednesday, February 21
 Ash Wednesday
 Vegetable Day, Family Heritage Restaurant, Franconia, 8:45 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Grazers Conference, Bedford County Fairgrounds, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
 Delaware-Maryland Dairy Days, Hartly Fire Hall, Hartly, Del., 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
 Nutrient Management Law meeting, Brickerville Fire Company, 7 p.m.
Thursday, February 22
 New York Farm Show, New York State Fairgrounds, Syracuse, N.Y., thru Feb. 24.
 Two-day satellite nutrition workshop, "Current Concepts In Dairy Nutrition," 10 a.m.-3 p.m., various extension sites, also Feb. 29.
 Pa. Holstein Convention Sale, Scottish Rite Auditorium, Williamsport, 7 p.m.
 Dairy Nutrition School, Clarion County extension office, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m., also Feb. 29.
 Crop Decision Workshop, Conference Center, Penn State Schuylkill Campus, Schuylkill Haven, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.
 Dairy Day, Calvert Grange Hall, 9:30 a.m.
 1996 North American Farmers' Director Marketing Conference, Sheraton Inn/City Center, Saratoga Springs, N.Y., thru Feb. 24.
 Annual meeting of the Pa. Dairy Promotion Board, Nittany Lion Inn, State College, 9:30 a.m.
 Adams County Current Concepts In Dairy Nutrition, extension office, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m., also Feb. 29.
 Pesticide update, Penn Manor High School, 7 p.m.



Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Develop A Vision

It has been said there is nothing as constant as change.

This is especially true for farmers as they prepare to enter the 21st century.

Glenn Shirk, extension dairy agent, states successful farmers have a vision of what they want their business to be like in the future. They set specific goals for different segments of their business and share these goals with their management team.

They implement management strategies that will help them meet these goals. They monitor the progress of each segment of their business to see if it is on track with the goals they have set.

They are constantly making improvements that will enhance their competitive position in the future. Those that have no vision and fail to make necessary changes risk stagnation and death of their business.

To Become More Competitive

To stay in business in the United States, owners must constantly be looking for ways to stay competitive.

There is an old saying in business that states you are either growing or dying. The business structure of farming is changing again to meet growing demand for agricultural products. Farms must adjust to the changing food distribution system, consumer demands, and developing world markets.

To become more competitive, farmers may have to:

- Expand the size of their business and spend more time on management issues and less time on physical labor.
- Reduce the capital cost of doing business by leasing land and facilities, by hiring custom operators to do some of the work, and by sharing equipment with other farmers.
- Hold debt loads to affordable

Carroll County, Md. Dairy Nutrition Workshop Satellite Conference, Carroll County Community College, also Feb. 29.
 Agriculture and Exporting Information Briefing, Southern Market Center, Lancaster, noon-4:30 p.m.
 Grassland FFA Alumni Buffet, Garden Spot High School Library Media Center, 11:15 a.m.-1:15 p.m.
 Commodity Marketing Seminar, Tulpehocken Young Farmer Association, Tulpehocken High School, 7:30 p.m.-9 p.m.
 York County Beekeepers meeting, extension office, 7 p.m.
 Pesticide update, Bucks County,

levels and have good equity and income base before taking on new debt.

• Exercise reasonable control over production costs while maintaining high levels of efficient production and improving labor efficiency.

Farmers need to sit down and think about their future in agriculture. Do you want to be the business owner and develop management skills or a farm worker employed by a farm business to perform farm production skills?

There is a bright future for both.

To Look At Corn Rootworm Control

According to Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent, every year the corn rootworm larvae causes loss of production in some corn fields.

The larvae which feed on the roots of corn during May and June often go unnoticed until the corn plant falls over during a storm or at harvest time when corn stalks show goose necking.

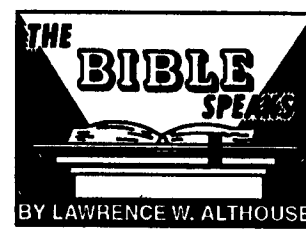
The traditional approach controlling this destructive pest is to apply a soil insecticide at planting time to fields which have been in corn for more than one year or during the past growing season 1, 2 or more beetles were observed per corn plant.

Usually first-year corn is not affected by this insect because the adult female beetle lays her eggs only in corn fields.

The farm press in Illinois and Indiana have reported problems with rootworm larvae feeding on corn roots following soybeans. They report that the adult beetles feed on the silks and tassels of corn, then migrate to nearby soybean fields to lay eggs.

Anderson reports that we have not observed this in Pennsylvania except for a few isolated incidents. Thus, our recommendation in Pennsylvania remains not to treat first-year corn fields with a soil insecticide to control corn rootworm larvae.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "A leader embraces change and encourages innovation."



CALL ME "BITTER"
 February 18, 1996

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Background Scripture:

Ruth 1

Devotional Reading:

Psalms 199:59-72

In the past when I have read the Book of Ruth, I have been so dazzled by the loving devotion of Ruth that I have tended to overlook to depiction of Naomi. And that's unfortunate for there is something to learn from Naomi as well as from Ruth.

The first impression is quite positive. With her husband and two sons dead, she decides to return to her home in Bethlehem and magnanimously tells her daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, that it would be wise for them to return to their family homes, for she could offer nothing in Israel. She might have tried to make them feel guilty enough to go with her, but Naomi unselfishly counsels them wisely.

Ruth and Orpah weep and protest that they will go with her. Apparently there is deep love and appreciation between these three women. Obviously she was more than just a mother-in-law to them for, with the sons dead, there was no more legal binding between them.

GOOD ADVICE!

Naomi also is admirable because she provides her two daughters-in-law with sensible counsel: stay here in your own homeland with your own families for I can offer you nothing. Naomi's strange-sounding words about having no more sons to give them is a reference to Deuteronomy 25:5,6: "if a brother die and have no child, his brother shall wed the widow." Even if she remarried and conceived immediately, it would be too long for the two daughters-in-law to wait.

The second time around, Orpah heeds Naomi's wise counsel to stay in Moab, but Ruth, whose name means "friend," knows how deeply Naomi has been wounded with the loss of her husband and two sons, so she will in fact continue as her friend.

Let's make certain we don't sell Orpah short here. There was nothing unloving or disloyal about her giving in to Naomi's advice to stay in Moab with her family. She had already pledged to accompany Naomi. But Naomi's advice was sound. She was doing the very thing that Naomi was telling her to do. She was obeying her mother-in-law.

BEYOND COMMON SENSE

But Ruth's love and loyalty go beyond common sense. Ruth demonstrates a truth that is both ancient and contemporary: Love and true friendship are not irrational, they simply go beyond reason. In fact, love can move so far beyond common sense that, as Jesus said, "greater love has no man than this that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

So, Naomi and Ruth go to Bethlehem. And there it is that we learn something else about Naomi: she is consumed by bitterness. When her fellow townspeople ask, "Is this Naomi?" (for ten or more years have passed since they last saw her), she replies, "Do not call me Naomi, call me Mara..." (1:20). What a contract between the name she bears and the one she proposes! Naomi means "my joy" or "my pleasant one." Mara, on the other hand means "bitter." Naomi's loss of husband and sons has left her with a bitterness toward God: "...for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty."

For a time, at least, Naomi is forgetting the good years in Moab and she is overlooking to loyalty and love of Ruth. And that is how we manage to hold onto bitterness: overlooking the love and grace that God has given us. We are the ones who are poisoned when we choose to be called "bitter."

The Althouses will lead a group to the Holy Land, Oct. 9 to Nov. 2, 1996. Space limited. For information, write them at 4412 Shenandoah Ave., Dallas, TX 75205.

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