



OPINION

Dairy Farmers Infuriated

After a recent CBS news broadcast, which infuriated dairy farmers across the country, some of us have felt the need to respond. I'd like to share with you the following letter I wrote to anchorman Dan Rather, who aired the piece on proposed dairy legislation.

(I revised this several times, cleaning up my initial, gut-level-emotion response!)

Have you ever been hungry? Few Americans in positions of leadership and public-opinion setting have likely experienced the pangs of a really empty stomach.

Americans are the best and most-inexpensively-fed people on earth. That's because American farmers have consistently grown more efficient. Less than one million farmers — those who sell \$10,000 or more worth of agriculture goods per year — not only feed our nation of billions, but feed billions more around the world.

What a disappointment that a recent CBS news report by you has done the American dairy farmer a serious disservice. That report, aired February 2, charged that dairy farmers had secretly conspired to develop legislation that would cost American consumers some 2.5 billion dollars and put "additives" in milk.

During the past year, agriculture and food industry representatives testified at Congressional hearings held around the country toward developing new farm legislation. These were public hearings, widely covered by the press. Working from the basis of those hearings, legislators developed the dairy proposals recently voted out of the House Agricultural Committee. This is hardly a secretive process.

Yes the goal of that legislation is to modestly increase the price of raw milk. Dairy producers today are receiving comparatively less for raw milk shipped from their farms than they did a decade ago. Such depressed income levels, compared to the inflation which has steadily increased prices of everyday input, are creating a severe financial crunch to our nation's dairy farm families.

Your report projected an increase per gallon of milk to consumer of 40 cents. Industry estimates the per gallon increase under the proposed dairy legislation to be about 9 cents. Adjusted for inflation, consumers are already paying less for a gallon of milk than they were in the 1950s. Raw milk price has traditionally had little effect on the retail price, since the farm is only about one-third of checkout cost of a gallon of milk.

Meanwhile, the cost of the dairy program to America's taxpayers has dropped from \$2.5 billion in 1983 to \$4 million in 1995; dairy farmers actually pick up most of the tab through assessments on every pound of milk they sell. But, farm support programs are a form of hunger insurance for the consuming public. Today, there are virtually no stocks of dairy commodities on hand in government storage, should some disaster strike.

Now, about those "additives." The proposed legislation would simply increase the minimum standards of solids-non-fat in milk - the nutritious but NOT FAT things like protein, calcium and minerals — to standards that California consumers have enjoyed for many years. California milk is consistently rated superior in taste tests. And, milk fortified with higher solids-not-fat is not only better-tasting, it's more nutritious.

Milk is not manufactured in the back of supermarket dairy shelves. It can only be produced by the minor miracle that is the dairy cow. If you and all consumers are to have ready supplies of milk in your refrigerators, dairy producers must be able to earn a financial return that enables us to maintain our herds and our farms.

Mr. Rather, your dependability, your believability, your credibility has always seemed above reproach. We challenge you to restore our confidence in your reporting with an airing not just the retailers' side, but also the producers' side of this important public issue. Sincerely yours...etc.

And sincerely irritated about irresponsible, distorted reporting. — Joyce Bupp, On Being a Farm Wife, Column reprinted from February 24 issue, Lancaster Farming

Farm Forum

Editor:

My name is Jennifer Davis and I am the 1995-1996 Berks County Dairy Princess. This past year I have devoted my time to inform the public of the importance of buying and using real dairy products, but recently I learned my own lesson in real versus imitation dairy products. I know that dairies

are in the business to make money and produce drinks for the public to buy, but what I don't understand is why dairies don't use the products that are brought to them, like milk. It is very difficult for myself and others to educate the public to buy real dairy products when there are all of these imita-

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Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Manage Pastures

Grazing time is rapidly approaching. Glenn Shirk, extension dairy agent, reminds us that well-managed pastures may be an economical source of excellent quality feed for cattle.

The management of pastures requires a lot of knowledge and skill. Two things to be considered are the gradual acclimation of cattle to pastures and keeping up with the spring flush of growth.

You may meet both of these challenges by grazing early in the spring while pasture growth is only two to four inches tall and rotating cattle rapidly through the pastures. This early grazing will slow down the initial growth and will start to stagger the maturity of the aftermath growth.

Turning cows out to graze early in the spring while very little pasture growth is present is one way of gradually acclimating them to more grass in the ration. Another way to acclimate the cows is to restrict the amount of access time to the pasture.

To Be Aware Of Bt Corn

According to Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent, several companies will be selling field corn with the ability to produce Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt).

Bt is a bacteria which kills the larvae stage of the European Corn Borer (ECB).

The ECB may be a very destructive pest of corn. An infestation of

Farm Calendar

Saturday, March 23

York County Pork Producer's annual banquet, Stewartstown Fire Hall, 7 p.m.

Del. Dept. of Ag's Ag Days, Christiana Mall, thru March 24.

Greene County Beef Field Day, Greene County Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Md. Guernsey Breeders annual meeting, Lisbon Fire Hall, Lisbon, Md., 10 a.m.

Western Pa. Beekeeping Seminar, Park United Presbyterian Church, Zelienople.

Md. Dept. of Ag Open House, Md. Dept. of Ag, Annapolis, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Penn State College Open House, Ag Sciences and Industries Building, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Penn State Spring Judging Contest, Ag Arena, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sunday, March 24
Northeastern Dairy Conference, Sheraton Hotel Station Square, Pittsburgh, thru March 26.

Monday, March 25
Designing Landscapes For North-

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one ECB per plant will reduce corn yields by five percent. This effect is cumulative up to six ECBs per plant, which may result in a 30 percent reduction in yield.

It is very difficult to control ECB because of the time it attacks the corn plant.

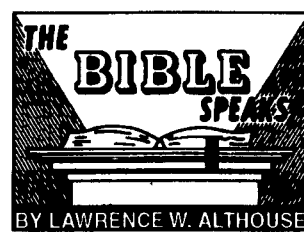
The borer usually attacks corn near the silking stage. This means a pesticide application is difficult because of the height of the corn.

In addition, the borer only feeds externally on the corn for a short period of time before tunneling into the stalk where a pesticide will not contact it.

The new corn, which contains Bt, will kill ECB as it begins to feed on the corn plant. Bt is very specific and will not kill other insects.

To Be Aware Of Roundup Ready Soybeans

Another new technology farmers may use to produce crops with better pest control is Roundup Ready Soybeans.



FEAR'S BOTTOM LINE
March 24, 1996

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Background Scripture:

Matthew 25:14-30

Devotional Reading:

Matthew 25:1-13

I'm afraid that, had I been there when Jesus told his parables, I might have argued with him on some of them. Last week's parable of the laborers in the vineyard is one of those and this week's parable of the talents in another. I probably would have argued on the basis that the verdict in either case seems unfair — at first glance.

In the parable of the talents (a unit of money) my heart and sense of fairness go out to the poor servant who got only one talent from his Master. Couldn't we say that this man acted prudently? He was fearful of losing the one talent he was given, so, instead of investing it, he hid it. Can't we give him a good grade for right intentions if not initiative?

Why did he choose this course? He was afraid! "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you do not sow, and gathering where you did not sow; so I was afraid, and I went out and hid your talent in the ground" (25:24,25). Maybe if he had had more than one talent, he wouldn't have been so afraid of losing it. In a sense, isn't it God's fault for giving him just one talent? What's wrong with his being afraid?

FEAR VS. TRUST

What's wrong with our fear is its bottom line; fear is often the opposite of love and trust. We fear because we do not trust in the love of God. It is not that we don't believe in God, but that believing in him, we do not trust him enough to do what he tells us to do. To be afraid is one thing; to let that fear keep us from trusting in God's love is another. That's what happened in this parable: the one-talent servant did not trust God's love enough to be a good steward of what he had received from him. Fear is a faith problem

Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent, reports Roundup Ready Soybeans will allow farmers to spray the herbicide Roundup over soybeans without injury to the soybean itself.

Roundup Ready Soybeans have been bred to be resistant to the herbicide Roundup. Roundup is a herbicide which controls almost all plants but becomes inactive upon reaching the ground.

Monsanto, the marketer of Roundup, will require growers of these soybeans to sign an agreement not to save seed for replanting. Monsanto sees the new soybeans as being ideal for the no-till market.

No-till farmers will be able to plant the soybeans and wait to see what the weed pressure is before applying any herbicide.

Roundup is very effective on the control of almost all perennial plants which may be a problem in no-till farming.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "The world is run by those who show up."

The servant had a distorted view of the owner of the estate. "I knew you to be a hard man," he tells him, and that's why he hid his talent in the ground and failed to do what his Master wanted. Is it possible that is the way some of us look at God? "Master, I knew you to be a hard man . . . so I was afraid . . ." With all we know of the good news of God's grace revealed in Jesus Christ, is it possible that many of us still relate to God in fear instead of love? And if we fear him, if we regard his as a "hard" Master, is it possible for us to rise above this distorted view of God and entrust ourselves to him?

I think not. If I fear God, then it is myself in whom I trust, not God. It means that I think I am clever enough to avoid his anger. And if I think that, it is my cleverness, my instinct for survival in which I trust, not his grace. The bottom line of fear can never be trust in God.

BELIEF VS. TRUST

Look at the other two servants. They trusted the Master and therefore they overcame whatever feat they might have had, investing their talents and earning more. Did they fear that if they failed the Master would punish them? Apparently not. Unlike the one talent servant, they did not think of him as "a hard man."

How is it possible that all three servants knew the same Master but saw him so differently? They all believed in him, but what they believed about him was very different. Why is it that some of us believe in a vengeful, punitive God instead of the gracious God we see in Jesus crucified and resurrected?

I don't know the answer. But I am certain that the one talent servant's view of the Master as "a hard man" said more about the servant than it did the Master.

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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