



OPINION

Questions To Answer

Now farmers have a framework to help construct communication with the non-farm public. Hands-on House, a children's museum in Lancaster, provides interactive learning opportunities for all children and their families. Through self-directed exhibits and programming, they stimulate curiosity and invite the joy of discovery through play. The museum features eight theme exhibits, including one in progress that will help communicate farm life and the business of farming to these inquisitive families.

To prepare the farm exhibit so that it would deal with modern farming rather than a sentimental view of a '60s homestead, the creators asked family constituents to ask all the questions they would like to know about the farm. Out of this exercise, a list of questions were assembled.

We believe this list offers a concrete insight into what farm communicators should be answering in their public educational efforts to bridge the gap between farmers and consumers. Here are the questions. How would you answer these sincere inquiries about your farm life and business?

Crops:

- Why do farmers spread manure? How does it help the soil?
- How do the farmers prevent the soil from washing away with the rain?
- Why do they make those patterns with the plow?
- How do the farmers know when to plant the seeds?
- Why is some corn stored on the cob and some is taken off?
- How do seeds grow?
- How does crop rotation work?
- What is organic farming?
- What are all the different tractors for?
- What is a typical day like on a crop farm? What time does the work get started? What do the workers do?
- Do we need to fertilize so much? Isn't crop rotation better for the environment?
- How do you keep the plants watered?
- How do they mow the field?
- What is grown in Pennsylvania?
- Why are farmers sometimes paid not to grow food?
- How do farmers plant seeds?
- What is the easiest plant to grow on a farm?
- What kind of dangerous chemicals are used on a farm?
- How does a farmer get the soil ready for planting?

Animals/Livestock:

- How are cows milked?
- How much milk does one cow give in a day?
- What do cows eat? How much do cows eat? What's in silage?
- Why are our local cows mostly black and white spotted?
- What is an ideal cow for milk production?
- What kinds of animals produce milk?
- Where do horses and cows sleep?
- Do cows bite?
- Do the different animals fight?
- Why do farmers leave the cows out in the rain?
- How many times a day do cows get milked?
- Do farm animals get sick?
- How many kinds of horses are used on Amish farms?
- Why do cows lie down before a storm?
- Do pigs really like the mud?
- Why does Lancaster County have relatively few sheep?

Eggs/Poultry:

- How many eggs do hens lay in a week?
- How are eggs collected?
- How are eggs handled so that they don't break?
- How do eggs set sorted by size?

Miscellaneous:

- Who pays for everything on the farm?
- Why are barns often red?
- How do farmers stand the smell?
- How are we going to save farms?
- How many different kinds of farms are there in Lancaster County?
- Does every farm have cats in the barn?
- Do farmers follow the Farmers' Almanac?
- What does the farmer do in his spare time?
- What do the children help with?



Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Evaluate Crop Economics

Which comes first, harvesting alfalfa hay or planting corn?

According to Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent, it depends. It depends on the weather forecast, the stage of growth of the hay, and whether you feed or sell the hay.

Facts to consider: corn yields usually drop one bushel per day for the first 20 days after the end of the optimum planting date and then the decrease increases to two bushels per day for the next 20 to 30 days. The end of the optimum planting season is about May 15.

On the other hand, alfalfa quality declines after the bud stage of growth. Penn State forage specialist Dr. Marvin Hall estimates that when alfalfa hay is worth \$150 per ton, the average rate of quality decline for each day alfalfa harvest is delayed beyond the bud stage will result in a loss of \$6 to \$7.50 in the feed value per day per ton of hay harvested.

To Harvest Alfalfa

From the information above,

Farm Forum

Editor:

The year is just about over and it is time to pass the crown onto someone new. I cannot believe that my year is over, but I want to thank everyone who believed and supported me this past year.

I devoted my past year to do the very best I could at promoting dairy products and the dairy industry. Depending on who I spoke to they might have heard me compare the game of baseball to milk in my skit, or they got to hear my speech where I praised farmers for all the hard work that they do every day. No matter what I did, I always tried to do my very best, but it takes all of us to promote our industry and dairy products. One way we can do this is by when we go out to a restaurant, order a glass of milk, some cheese on your food, or grab some cottage cheese at the salad bar. No matter where we are we can promote our product by buying it ourselves.

Another time this year I was fooled into buying imitation milk. This made me realize how easy it is to buy imitation, no matter how conscious you are at what you are buying. We must all be aware of how easy it is for consumers to buy imitation dairy products in the grocery store. This upset me, first to buy imitation, but also to know how easy it is to buy because it is located right in the dairy case, where imitation should not be.

But as I look back on my year, I had lots of fun promoting and meeting new people. I'm sure

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should you plant corn or harvest alfalfa hay on May 21?

Based on Robert Anderson's calculations, by harvesting the hay you will delay corn planting five days. This will result in a loss of about 10 bushels of corn worth \$5.50 per bushel for a potential loss of \$55.00.

With the hay, the calculation would be 5 days times \$6.75 times 2.5 tons for a potential loss of \$84.38. The potential corn loss is \$55 while the potential hay loss is \$84 per acre.

By harvesting alfalfa hay on time you are making almost \$30 per acre more money based on these assumptions.

To Deworm Cattle

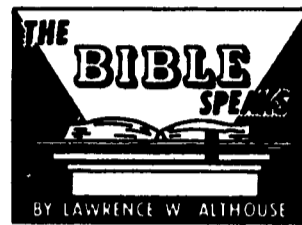
Chester Hughes, extension livestock agent, reminds us that strategic deworming is an excellent method to control internal parasites in cattle.

Strategic deworming implies there is specific timing for treatment. In our area, a strategic deworming program will include treatment 4-6 weeks after the cattle go to grass and a second treatment in early November.

There is some discussion about the need to deworm mature cows. There will be a benefit in milk production and cow condition, which influences reproduction, if a deworming program is instituted and maintained for a few years.

Eventually, parasite loads will be reduced to the extent treatment may be discontinued and monitored through fecal samples until there is a buildup again. The spring deworming coincides with a good time to ear tag, castrate, implant, and vaccinate calves for clostridial diseases. Therefore, the trouble of the trip through the chute may be a very profitable one.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."



THE WEIGHT OF THINGS

May 19, 1996

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Background Scripture:

Matthew 6:19-21, 24-34,

Luke 12:13-21

Devotional Reading:

Luke 12:13-21

For almost 40 years of my life, most people seemed to think that Communism was the greatest threat to the kingdom of heaven. I never did. The *ism* I have always feared the most is materialism.

As I write these words, Communism is pretty well in eclipse throughout the world, although I realize that it could always experience a resurgence. But, while Communism has been thoroughly discredited even in the lands where it has reigned so long, materialism threatens us more than ever.

Wherever I see the Gospel of Jesus Christ in serious conflict in our world, materialism is always heavily involved. Essentially, the struggle that rages today is the contest between God and things, between spiritual values and material values. In his book, *The Kingdom of God*, the late John Bright holds that we are as hooked on false gods today as the ancients were. "For that to which a man looks for his ultimate well-being, his salvation no less, and from which he derives his standards of conduct—that is his god. And we have no lack of them."

ULTIMATE WELL-BEING

To what do we look for our "ultimate well-being" today? Things — birth, shiny things. To what do we look for our "salvation?" Things — pills, booze, sex, and all manner of adult toys. And from what do we derive our "standard of conduct?" — Things — our ethics are basically derived from property values, price tags and profit margins. We no longer ask if something is right or wrong, good or bad, but is it "cost effective?"

In his *Retreat From Reason*, Alfred E. Cohn says, "The rescue of political, of social, of spiritual values, crushed by the weight of things, is becoming the crucial issue in the will to survive." Those words were written more than 40

years ago and they are even more true today than they were then.

Why should this so surprise us? How do we read the gospels and miss what Jesus has to say about? He tells us that material things are fleeting at best: "do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven..." (Matt. 6:19,20).

Jesus tells us also that material things are rivals to God. "You cannot serve God and mammon." Why, because they are diametrical opposites. He tells us also that material things do no have the power to dispel our anxiety. In fact, the more material things we have, the more anxious we become. "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on" (6:25).

A FAITH ISSUE

Probably worst of all, materialism is a faith issue because it means we depend upon things, not God: "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith?" (6:30).

So, the sense of life is not in things, but in God: "take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Lk, 12:15). If we focus on what is really important and ultimate, the kingdom of heaven, God will provide the things that we need. "But righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matt 7:33).

Money buys things, but He sheer weight of the things that burden our lives never brings lasting joy or peace. As Carl Sandburg put it, "Money buys everything except love, personality, freedom, immortality, silence, peace."

The Althouses will lead a group to the Holy Land, Oct. 9 to Nov. 3, 1996. Space limited. For information, write them at 4412 Shenandoah Ave., Dallas, TX 75205.

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