



# OPINION

## "Milking The Children" And "Chopped Liver"

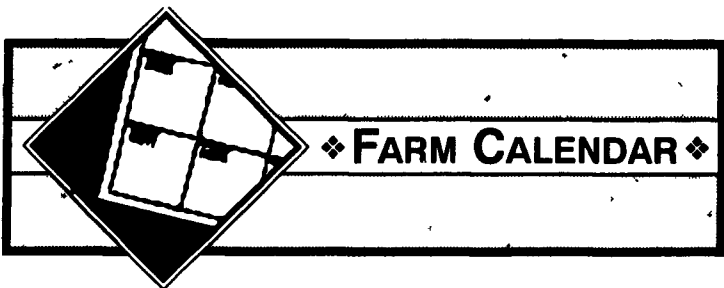
If a business continues to sell its products below cost or for only a small, unreasonable profit, eventually the business is forced to go out of business. This, in summary, is how serious the proposal to eliminate the authority of the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board (PMMB) must be viewed.

The state House of Representatives State Government Committee held a public hearing last week at the Lower Merion Township building on the PMMB elimination proposal made by state Rep. Colleen Sheehan, R-King of Pursia in House Bill 2628. In her testimony she called the practice of setting minimum retail prices for fluid milk "corporate welfare."

She cited a 67-cent difference in the retail price of a gallon of milk sold in the same-chain supermarket stores—one in Pennsylvania, the other in Maryland which does not have minimum retail prices for milk. What Rep. Sheehan didn't say is that Maryland is losing dairy farms so fast it makes your head spin because they can't continue to keep producing milk at a loss any longer. We're losing dairy farms in Pennsylvania too. But maybe instead of trying to put Pennsylvania in Maryland's situation, Maryland should get a milk marketing board or some other means whereby they can get their price up to Pennsylvania's and keep their farmers in business so we don't have a major famine in the U.S. like so many other peoples of the world have experienced.

In Pennsylvania there is no farm "cartel" as the opponents of agriculture would like you to believe. But large organizations such as the Philadelphia Public School System right in Rep. Sheehan's own back forty might deserve such a city label. Last year they negotiated a lower price for their school lunch milk from the PMMB. But did they pass this savings to the kids and their families Rep. Sheehan is so concerned about? No! The school district made \$1,500,000 in new money from the lower price of their milk to be absorbed unnoticed into the system's huge deficit. The school district makes 100 percent profit based on the cost of the sale of milk to students and in addition the schools get state and federal reimbursements on meals served containing milk.

Turning the tables on Rep. Sheehan's testimony at the hearing, who would you say is really "milking the children," and who is being treated like "chopped liver"? And all these disparaging remarks about agriculture in a state where bottled water sells for nearly three times the price of milk.



### ◆ FARM CALENDAR ◆

**Saturday, August 31**  
 Juniata County Fair, thru Sept. 7.  
 Mon Valley 4-H District Dairy Show, Fayette County Fairgrounds, Uniontown.

**Sunday, September 1**  
 Maryland Holstein Futurity, Timonium.  
 Cambria County Fair, thru Sept. 7.  
 Spartansburg Community Fair, thru Sept. 7.

**Monday, September 2**  
 Labor Day  
 Md. Holstein State Fair Holstein Show, Timonium.  
 Waterford Community Fair, thru Sept. 7.  
 West Alexander Fair, thru Sept. 7.  
 Ox Hill Community Fair, thru Sept. 7.

**Tuesday, September 3**  
 Claysburg Farm Show, thru Sept. 7.  
 Jamestown Community Fair, thru Sept. 7.

**Wednesday, September 4**  
 Bellwood-Antis Farm Show, thru Sept. 7.  
 Luzerne County Fair, thru Sept. 8.  
 Outstanding Farm Family awards banquet, Fleetwood Grange Hall, 7 p.m.

**Thursday, September 5**  
 Pike County Fair, thru Sept. 8.

"Keeping th Farm in the Family," Wayne County Extension office, Court House, 925 Court St., Honesdale.

**Friday, September 6**  
 York Inter-State Fair, thru Sept. 14.  
 40th Annual Thurmont & Emmitsburg Community Show, Thurmont, Md., thru Sept. 8.  
 Mason-Dixon Historical Society Steam and Gas Roundup Show Days, Carroll County Farm Museum.

**Saturday, September 7**  
 West Central 4-H/FFA District Dairy Show, Lycoming County Fairgrounds.  
 Northwest District Dairy Show, Crawford County Fairgrounds, Meadville.  
 Bradford County "How to Identify Trees," Courthouse Annex, Montrose, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Sunday, September 8**  
 Show Series, Grazing Acres Farm, New London, 8:30 a.m.

**Monday, September 9**  
 Green Township Community Association Fair thru Sept. 14.  
 Bradford County 4-H Advisory Community Meeting, Extension Office, 7:30 p.m.



## Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz  
 Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

### To Evaluate Alfalfa Fields

It is always difficult for a farmer to decide when to rotate an established alfalfa field into another crop, according to Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent.

The best time is probably in early spring when the plant is starting to break winter dormancy. However, delaying the decision that long may put the grower in a bind for ordering seed, fertilizer, and planning the year's production of crops.

The earlier the decision to rotate a field to another crop is made, the easier the planning is.

Farmers may assess the health of a alfalfa field between the last two harvests for the season by counting the number of stems per square foot. Counting the number of stems rather than the number of plants gives a good indication of the relative health of the plant.

Alfalfa fields with 55 or more stems per square foot produce maximum yields. When the number of stems per square foot declines to 40, the yield potential is reduced by 25 percent. Economic data suggests when yields drop by 25 percent, it is time to rotate the alfalfa field to another crop.

If fields are checked between the last two harvests of the year, marginal fields may be identified for rotation and appropriate plans made.

### To Control Weeds In New Alfalfa Seedings

Weed management at establishment or in the seeding year is critical to ensure a healthy, vigorous stand.

However, there are several other cultural control practices that will help forages compete against weeds including proper liming and fertilizing, selection of a well adapted long-lived variety, planting weed-free seed, selecting a site with good soil drainage, and avoiding poorly drained fields. Others include selection of a disease-resistant or disease-tolerant variety, timely control of insect and weed pests, and following a good cutting schedule during the life of the stand.

Dr. Bill Curran, Penn State Agronomy Department, gives the following guidelines on weed competition with alfalfa.

First, most of the damage from

**Tuesday, September 10**  
 Ephrata High School Young Farmers, cafeteria, mentors' program, young farmer and school district reps, Ephrata High School, 7:30 p.m.  
 Albion area Fair thru Sept. 14.  
 Denver Community Fair thru Sept. 14.

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weeds in forages is from winter annual weeds in early spring. Second, the grass weeds are more competitive against legumes than are broadleaf weeds. Third, any weed which emerges at the same time as the alfalfa will usually create more problems. Fourth, the weeds which emerge during the first 60 days after planting will cause more competition than weeds which emerge after 60 days. However, late emerging weeds may influence forage quality.

### To Know Alfalfa Weed Control Products

One of the most effective times to use a herbicide in an alfalfa field is in the seeding year. After that, alfalfa should be able to compete with weeds other than winter annual weeds, such as chickweed, mustard, and a few others.

Chemical control of weeds in

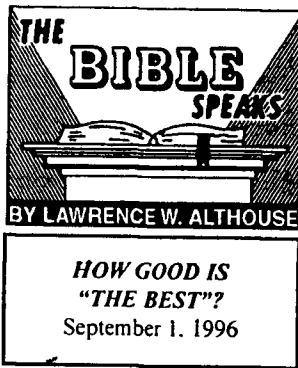
legumes is easiest in alfalfa seeded without grass. Two products, Balan and Eptam, are labeled for use on alfalfa seeded alone as a preplant incorporated material. They both do a good job of controlling annual grasses and some broadleaf weeds.

Balan is slightly effective against chickweed while Eptam is better on the control of winter annuals such as mustards, henbit, and quackgrass.

If you are unsure of the weeds which may become a problem, a wait-and-see approach may be used.

Several good post emergence herbicides are available for annual grass and broadleaf weed control. For a listing of products that may be used, consult the Penn State Agronomy Guide.

*Feather Prof.'s Footnote:* "Nothing lasts forever — not even your troubles."



HOW GOOD IS "THE BEST"?  
 September 1, 1996

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Background Scripture:  
 II Kings 18 through 20  
 Devotional Reading:  
 Deuteronomy 10:12-22

Apparently, the writers of the biblical books that chronicle the kingdoms of Israel and Judah held most of the kings of these two nations in no higher esteem than many of us view the politicians of today. One after another they are condemned: "And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. . ." (II Kings 21:2a). This was a reference to Judah's King Manasseh, who succeeded Hezekiah, but it was also said of most of those who came before and after him.

One outstanding exception is Hezekiah, who became King of Judah at the age of 25 and ruled for 29 years: "And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. . ." (II Kings 18:3). And: "He trusted in the Lord the God of Israel; so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him" (18:5).

What were the fruits of Hezekiah's trust in the Lord? First, he reformed Judah's religion, destroying the pagan idols and places of worship. "And the Lord was with him; wherever he went forth, he prospered. He rebelled against the king of Assyria, and would not serve him. He smote the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city" (18:7,8).

### A PRAYER ANSWERED

II Kings provides us with two signal events from the life of Hezekiah. The first is the miraculous salvation of Jerusalem from the army of mighty Assyria. Having already subdued Judah's cousin, Israel, Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, began to invade Judah and capture its cities. Knowing that Assyria was too much militarily for Judah, Hezekiah tried to placate them by paying enormous tribute to him.

But Shalmaneser wasn't satis-

fied with most of Judah and its treasure; he also wanted Jerusalem. Shalmaneser calls upon Hezekiah to realize his hopeless position and surrender the city. His approach is mockingly arrogant: "Come now, make a wager . . . I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders upon them" (18:23). So Hezekiah prays and consults Isaiah the prophet who tells him not to be afraid because God himself will cause Shalmaneser to return to Assyria without attacking Jerusalem. He also prophesies the violent death of the Assyrian king.

The second major event is Hezekiah's miraculous healing from a sickness that had already been pronounced as terminal. Despite this prophetic prognosis, Hezekiah prayed for healing and Isaiah came to him with the good news that God was granting him another 15 years of life!

### NOT PERFECT

But, for all Hezekiah's virtue and reform, he was not a perfect man. He made some mistakes and the last view that we get of him is disappointing. Following his recovery, Babylonian envoys come to visit him. Flattered and eager to impress them, he shows them virtually every treasure which Judah still possessed.

What was wrong with this and why did he incur Isaiah's displeasure? Because it would seem that his deliverance by God had made him proud instead of humble. His pride rested upon material treasures, not faith in the Lord. So Isaiah tells him that Judah would be carried away into Babylon and his own sons would suffer humiliation. But all this would happen after the death of Hezekiah!

And that's where this otherwise admirable king makes a disappointing response: "'The word of the Lord which you have spoken is good.' For he thought, 'Why not if there will be peace and security in my days?'" (20:19). Informed of this great disaster to Judah and his own family, he rejoices that at least it won't happen to him!

Even the best of us are anything but perfect.

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