



OPINION

Farmers Feed The World

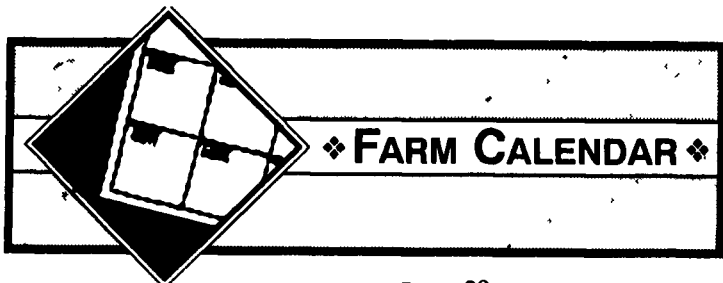
One of the most enduring myths of the modern world is that we're running out of food production potential. According to the summer issue of *Global Food Quarterly* produced by the Hudson Institute, countless people are absolutely certain that famine is just around the corner, and we must do something drastic to suppress population growth. These people have no idea how the world's farmers have tripled their yields over the last 35 years. But they are sure the yields can't be tripled again.

Over the last 22 years, the world's grain production has increased 46 percent, and grain yields have risen 55 percent, outstripping population growth of 42 percent. For the next decade, Asian and Latin American populations are expected to grow at about 1.5 percent per year, while their crop yields are rising at 2.4 percent. Where is the emergency? Only in Africa where they're not using high-yield farming.

In the U.S., farm production has been responsible for feeding not only ourselves but also has been one of the only bright spots in the yearly trade deficit figures. Agricultural products from America have helped feed the world. Our farmers have considered exporting food a good business opportunity, and they have also considered it their moral responsibility to feed the world.

And the future looks bright. For example, new plant varieties have been developed through biotechnology that continue to increase yields and at the same time have within the plant the ability to resist disease, insects, and drought. We believe farmers will continue to be able to feed the world wherever the political and social climate does not prohibit farming and the distribution food to reach the people.

If the world goes hungry, it will be because war or the opponents of agriculture will it to do so.



♦ FARM CALENDAR ♦

Saturday, September 21

Bloomsburg Fair, thru Sept. 28.
U. of Pa. New Bolton Center Open House.

Sunday, September 22
Autumn Begins

Over the Hill Horse Show, Hunter Hill Stables, Coventryville, 9 a.m.

Monday, September 23

Reading Fair, thru Sept. 29.
All American Dairy Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, thru Sept. 26.

Tuesday, September 24

Morrison Cove Community Fair, thru Sept. 27.

Ephrata Fair, thru Sept. 28.

Pa. Fall Championship Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, 9 a.m.

Wednesday, September 25

West Lampeter Community Fair, thru Sept. 27.

Frederick County, Md. pasture walk, Holterholm Farms, Ron and Kathy Holter, Jefferson, Md., 10 a.m.-noon.

John Esh Farm pasture walk, Quarryville, 10 a.m.-noon.

Eastern National Holstein Sale, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, 7 p.m.

Thursday, September 26

Tri-Valley Community Fair, thru Sept. 29.

Eastern National Holstein Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, 8 a.m.

Clarion County Extension meeting, Clarion Clipper Restaurant, Clarion, 6:30 p.m.

Aquaculture in the Mid-Atlantic, Chateau Resort, Tannersville.

Friday, September 27

1996 Eastern National Livestock Show, Maryland State Fairgrounds, Timonium, Md., thru

Sept. 29.

Saturday, September 28

5th Annual Harvest Sheep and Wool Festival of N.J., Salem County Fairgrounds, N.J., thru Sept. 29.

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♦ FARM FORUM ♦

Editor,

As the prime sponsor of HB 2686 I feel compelled to respond to your "Milking the Children" and "Chopped Liver" editorial of August 31, 1996.

Your editorial suggestion that my bill somehow targets farmers and agriculture in general simply could not be farther from the truth. In fact, my desire to NOT in any way hurt the price received by the farmers was a genuine concern of mine before introducing the bill, and a major reason why my bill is directed at a vary narrow and specific piece of the overall PMMB authority. It repeals only the Board's authority to set minimum retail prices and the wholesale price paid by schools and certain public institutions. All other aspects of the milk marketing law, including the Board's power to set minimum producer prices, would remain intact. Thus, if the Board truly exercises its authority as an independent agency — one whose mission is to ensure a fair price for farmers as the basis for all levels

of minimum pricing — there is absolutely no basis for the conclusion that this bill would in any way adversely affect the price received by the farmers.

If the impact on farmers would be as your editorial suggests, why is its objective, repeal of minimum prices, supported in the 1996 Policy Book of the PA Farm Bureau, the largest state farm organization and the key one I checked before introducing the bill? And why did their dairy specialist offer excellent testimony in favor of the bill at the hearing stating, "The policy makers of our organization believe that by lowering the retail milk price, sales of milk will increase, and farm profits will improve?" Furthermore, at the hearing Dr. Robert Yonkers, Associate Professor of Agriculture Economics at Penn State University, testified that there was no valid evidence to support the conclusion that repeal of the minimum retail pricing in other states had resulted

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Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Check Fire Insurance

If a fire occurred in your home, how much of the losses to personal property would be covered by your homeowner's or renter's insurance?

According to Dr. Robert Thee, extension family resource management agent, the standard policy will only cover the depreciated value of clothing, appliances, furniture and other personal items lost in a fire. Depending on the age and type of item, that could be as little as a few cents on the dollar of what you paid when you bought the item.

But for only a few dollars more on your insurance premium, you can have the replacement cost for personal property instead of the depreciated value. This may be especially important for items which quickly lose their value.

To Check for Perils Covered by Insurance

Dr. Robert Thee, extension family resource management agent, reminds us it is important to know what your insurance covers.

One important area is the type of perils covered under your current homeowner's or renter's policy. For most policies, personal property is covered for the 18 items listed under broad form coverage. These

include fire or lightning, winds-torm or hail, explosion, smoke, vandalism, theft and weight of ice, snow or sleet.

By adding a rider, this coverage may be extended to all perils except flood, earthquake, war, nuclear accident and others specified in your policy.

If you are renting and do not have renter's insurance, you should consider this type of coverage. It is important to review your policy with your insurance agent to be sure you have the type of coverage you need.

To Consider Cover Crops

According to Leon Ressler, extension agricultural agent, proper on-farm nutrient management requires the use of several tools.

These include soil testing, manure testing and manure spreader calibration. Another tool which is often overlooked but can provide numerous benefits is the use of winter cover crops.

Many farmers need to empty their manure storage units during

the fall season. Winter cover crops are a valuable tool to prevent the loss of valuable nutrients and prevent environmental pollution when this is done.

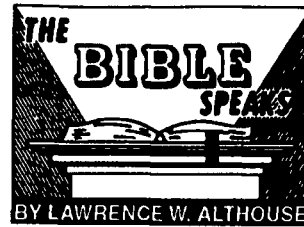
If you are applying manure to cropland this fall, plan on planting a small grain cover crop such as rye. The rye will take up the available nitrogen and hold it in the plant preventing its loss to the water supply.

If the rye is harvested, the nutrients will be utilized as high quality feed. If the rye is killed or plowed in the spring, the nutrients will become available to the following crop.

The rye will also prevent nutrient loss by slowing soil erosion.

Rye may be planted as late as November. However, the earlier the rye is planted the more nutrients it will take up and the more yield it will produce in the spring.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "What happens to a man is less significant than what happens within him."



BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

BACKWARD OR FORWARD?
September 22, 1996

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Background Scripture:

Jeremiah 7

Devotional Reading:

Micah 6:1-8

It is hard for us to comprehend why the prophet Jeremiah was so rejected in his own day. One reason is that we find ourselves in pretty much the same situation as the one that faced the people to whom he prophesied. They knew how to be good Jews and they did it. They made the right sacrifices in the temple, they observed the right holy days, and they lived up to all those criteria by which people were judged as true servants of God.

So, when Jeremiah comes proclaiming, "Amend your ways and your doings," the people are understandably annoyed and even outraged. What is there for them to "amend"? Why fix something that's not broken? They are the religious orthodox, the mainstream Hebrews, and the faithful of the Jerusalem temple. They are proud to protest, "This is the temple of the Lord."

Like those who first heard what has come to be known as Jeremiah's temple sermon, we too find our security in being able to say, "This is a Bible-believing congregation!" "This is mainstream, orthodox Christianity!" Our creeds, our doctrines, our rituals, or being "conservative" or "liberal" — all are looked to for protection and security.

WRONG PLACES

But Jeremiah proclaims that they are finding assurance in the wrong places. "Do not trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord'" (Jeremiah 7:4). Jeremiah then utters a phrase to which Jesus will one day allude: "Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?" (7:11). A den was a place where people could find security and protection.

So what is the source of true security? Jeremiah says it has nothing to do with empty religious observances. "For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly execute justice one with another, if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever" (7:5-7).

If you want true security, Jeremiah is saying, you will find it only in living a life that is founded, not upon material things — the Baals of today — but is responsive to the needs of others who cannot help themselves. "Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, 'We are delivered!' — only to go on doing these abominations" (7:9-10)?

STUBBORN HEARTS

Actually, Jeremiah wants to fix Israelite religion because it is broken — even though the people do not realize it. God is angry with his people and they haven't the slightest idea that he is. To their forefathers he had said, "Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people . . . But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward" (7:23,24).

That couldn't possibly be us, could it — we who are so advanced in our spiritual growth that we don't have to search for it. Is it possible that people so enlightened as we could be going backward instead of forward? Nothing is more likely to disguise our going backward than the illusion that we are really out in front.

So, is it possible that some might say of us as Jeremiah said of his generation, "They did worse than their fathers?" (7:26b).

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