



OPINION

Future Vision

At the Pennsylvania Council of Cooperatives annual meeting this week, their executive director, Crystal Smithmyer, presented a heartfelt report of her experiences with farmers and the farm. In the opening of her talk she mentioned a visit with Sam Minor a well-known western Pennsylvania dairyman who expressed the desire for the Council to find the right people to move the industry forward. We pick up the conversation in Crystal's own words.

"But what I suspect, deep down, is that most of all he (Sam Minor) cares for the farmer, just like himself, who is just trying to make a good living while doing what he or she believes their vocation to be.

"I can certainly relate to that. On Sunday, with the incredible golds and reds of fall unfolding in the trees around us, I walked with my two young children through the potato fields as we followed their daddy and the harvester around the fields. This time of year, it's a daily ritual that after work or on the weekends, if the wind isn't too bitter or it isn't yet dark, that the three of us trek off to the field with a snack and a drink for Dad to just spend some time near him as he tries desparately to get the harvest in before the first snow flies.

"My nearly four year old son, Eli, races up and down the rows, picking up small potatoes and attempting to throw them at his uncles and their buddies as they ride the harvester and trucks. And my almost two year old Molly sees life in her own sweet time as we stop to examine (nearly) every rock and bug and bush before us.

"Their heritage — and their future — rest in the earth at their feet. But it also rests with each of you who have so courageously accepted the responsibility of providing leadership to the farming organizations that support our being on the farm. And so, like Sam, I trust that you will have the faith and good sense to look ahead — and I mean some distance ahead — and not just a few feet in front of you — to make the right decisions for the long-term good of your farms, your cooperatives and their supporting organizations.

"As most of you can tell, I'm pretty young, not yet thirty and still getting knocked around pretty hard learning life's tough lessons. One that I've struggled with, and been educated by pretty severely in the past few years has been this need to look farther ahead, not just at my feet. When my mom got cancer before she was forty and died before she was fifty I was filled with this desperation to live life a bit like a person possessed to get all my living done before it was taken from me. I was always running around thinking it can't get any worse, or it can't get any better, and you know what? Things would get worse — lots worse. Or I would experience joy unlike I'd never believed possible.

"So what does all this have to do with PCC? As we face some very difficult decisions about the organization's future in the coming months I expect that there will be moments, like a few I've had already, when I stare at the very real possibility that an organization that has served farmers for over six decades will fold and fade into the wind.

"And there will be other moments, like many I have had in my five + years with the Council when I am consumed by the excitement and vitality expressed through the people that we serve as our work touches their lives and, truly, hope springs anew for our farms and farmers and the cooperative community.

"And it will be those moments that will carry me, and others, forward as we explore new possibilities and partnerships that will provide support to the cooperative members.

"As I thought about what I would say to you today I attempted to look critically at this job and the organization to think about what we had achieved this past year. As I reflected, images of people that I had touched through this work kept flitting through my mind:

"The young farmer who had first come to a conference shy and reticent, who, now with some training and opportunity stood before my "new" young farmers and confidently and articulately talked about his work with the Ag Awareness project and his pleasure in conducting workshops to the eager educators who wanted to know how they could share the message of agriculture and cooperatives.

"The youth scholar who went on to be first-alternate in the national ambassador competition. I had helped coach this young man, and when he "only" placed second I felt in my heart his disappointment. So I sent him a copy of Dr. Seus's "Oh the Places You'll Go," and I prayed, gave him the hope and confidence to never fear trying to achieve that which may seem unattainable. And, when, at the closing ceremonies of this year's youth institute he and his fellow lead scholars read from the book to encourage and inspire the seventy-five youth he had been charged to lead, I felt that we had indeed served some purpose.

"And finally, I remembered a young woman who with her husband attended this year's YCL conference. During the opening segments when self-introductions were required her looks to the planning committee were lethal for making her talk before the group. And during the brief moments that she spoke she literally quivered with fright. A metamorphosis truly occured as we watched her get involved and gain confidence and feel some place to belong in her husband's farming world. And my joy knew no bounds when they came to me near at the end of the conference and said — several times — that they really wanted to come back and they had a great experience.

"You folks pay me to do many things as your director, all of them under the heading of administering the program. What that means is administering things like: hope, self esteem, opportunity, direction, understanding, self confidence and ownership.

"Now if this all sounds a bit mushy and warm fuzzy to you I suggest that when you sit in your board rooms or offices or ponder while you milk the cows or plough the fields that those words that I just mentioned to you are the soul of what you do. And when bottom-line and

(Turn to Page A31)

Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Plant Cover Crops

Growing cover crops offers many advantages to the farmer at a very small cost, according to Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent.

Cover crops help to manage nitrogen. Depending on the species used, a cover crop may either add nitrogen or conserve nitrogen in the soil.

A legume cover crop may add 80 to 100 pounds of nitrogen per acre with a value of \$25 to \$30 per acre in added fertility alone.

If the soil contains high levels of nitrogen, a grass cover crop (small grains) will capture nitrogen and hold it until the next growing season. Cover crops also make good feed.

A cover crop harvested as a pasture, hay or silage crop makes a high quality economical feed. When fed to livestock, they provide additional home grown feed which reduces the amount of purchased feed.

In addition, cover crops increase the soil organic matter, help to reduce weeds and reduce soil erosion. Cover crops provide all these benefits at only a few dollars per acre cost in seed and planting expenses.

To Attend Animal Housing Expo

Northeast farmers may learn more about how to remodel and expand their livestock, dairy and poultry facilities at the fifth annual Animal Housing Expo.

The expo will be held October 29-30 at the Lebanon Fairgrounds, Lebanon, PA. It is sponsored by Penn State Cooperative Extension and agri-businesses.

Admission is free and the hours for the expo are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The expo will feature approxi-

◆ FARM CALENDAR ◆

Saturday, October 19
Lebanon County Forest Stewardship Organizational Meeting and Field Trip, Lebanon Ag Center, 12:30 p.m.-5 p.m.
Fall Harvest and Sawmill Show, Jacktown Community Center, 7 p.m. thru Oct. 20.

Sunday, October 20
Show Series, Equestrian Center, Cochranville, 7:30 a.m.
Family Day on the Farm, Mt. Ararat Farm, 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Raindate Sun., Oct. 27.

Monday, October 21
1996 National Poultry Waste Management Symposium, Marriott-Harrisburg Hotel, Harrisburg, thru Oct. 23.

ADADC District 9 meeting, Tally

(Turn to Page A29)

mately 40 commercial exhibitors, presentations by nationally known and local experts and a variety of educational demonstrations and exhibits.

Educational topics include odor control, obtaining building permits, milking parlor for every budget, nutrient management, greenhouses and other dairy shelter alternatives and your family business goals.

To Control Diseases in Wheat

Farmers may use a few simple strategies this fall to help ensure a healthy stand of wheat according to Dr. Elwood Hatley, Penn State agronomist.

The first step to a healthy wheat crop is the selection of a wheat variety which is resistant to the common diseases found in the area.

The Penn State Agronomy Guide lists most of the common diseases and ranks most of the sold varieties in the state. Also, planting wheat during the recommended time will help prevent diseases.

Wheat that is planted too early has a greater potential to become infected with several diseases. Cold weather will kill rust but has little effect on powdery mildew.

When mildew becomes a problem in the fall, most of the time it will return full force in the spring. Fungicide treatment of wheat will control powdery mildew.

Fields which were planted with seed treated with a fungicide out performed those not treated. However, the best treatment is still the use of a mildew resistant variety. On the other hand it is just as important not to delay planting.

When wheat or any crop is planted too late, it may not have sufficient time for growth to withstand cold winter weather. If wheat is planted late, it is recommended that the seeding rate be increased by 30 percent to help offset the winter plant loss.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "Respect cannot be learned, purchased or acquired - it can only be earned."

SITTING ON SCORPIONS October 20, 1996

Background Scripture: Ezekiel 2:1 through 3:2
Devotional Reading: Ezekiel 3:16-21

From the perspective of history, it might appear to us that being the prophet Ezekiel would have been a rewarding experience. Although he lived more than 2,500 years ago, his name is one of the best remembered in Judeo-Christian history, his book is one of the most formidable of all the prophets in the Old Testament, and he had been celebrated in sacred art and song, including the popular spirituals, "Ezekiel Saw The Wheel" and "Dry Bones."

But Ezekiel probably didn't see his role that way. A prophet's life is not a bowl of cherries! All of us should be grateful that God has not called any of us to be prophets! — or hasn't he?

At least God didn't give Ezekiel any false expectations. He told him exactly what kind of life he was facing: "Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels, who have rebelled against me ... The people also are impudent and stubborn" (Ezekiel 2:3,4). Can you imagine how a ministerial candidate would respond if he were told that by his bishop or ecclesiastical superiors? It might be enough to make him reconsider his vocation. And in God's call to Ezekiel he characterizes the people of Israel as a "rebellious house" three times, using the terms "rebels" and "rebelled against me" once each. Not an inviting prospect.

BE NOT AFRAID

But God tells Ezekiel that he is not to let this stand in his way. "And whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house) they will know that there has been a prophet among them. And you, son of man, be not afraid of them nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you sit upon scorpions" (2:6). Being God's prophet is going to be a painful

experience.

Sometimes the tasks to which God calls us is like sitting on scorpions. Given a choice, we might prefer the scorpions. Maybe it is a matter of saying something that should be said, but is not likely to be received gladly. Years ago at a wedding reception, I was introduced to a man by a mutual friend who said, "Larry, this is Judge Blank" (not his real name), "he's the guy who keeps the niggers in their place here." Shocked, I shook the offered hand in silence, knowing I should say something, but not wanting to embarrass my friend in public.

CONSEQUENCES

Many times since then I have thought about what as a Christian I should or might have said. That opportunity to speak as a Christian had come and went and I failed to speak because I didn't want to rock the boat. It was only many years later that in a similar situation my remorse over that incident enabled me to say that I found another remark offensive. And I survived the experience!

There are lots of times in life when God wants us to speak or act, but we are held back by our fear of the consequences — what people will think or say or do. People, we think, will not like us, — and often we are right in thinking that. But God says to us what he said to Ezekiel: "And you shall speak my words to them, whether they hear or refuse to hear" (2:7).

In other words, the results of our witness are in God's hands, not ours. If people do not respond positively to our witness, that is between them and God. It would be gratifying if they did, but if not, that isn't the end of our world. Far better for us to do God's will and be rejected by others, than for us to curry their favor and thereby offend the Lord.

It is better to sit on scorpions and contend with briars and thorns than to fail to do or be what we know God wants of us.

Lancaster Farming
Established 1955
Published Every Saturday
Ephrata Review Building
1 E. Main St.
Ephrata, PA 17522
- by -
Lancaster Farming, Inc.
A Steinman Enterprise
Robert G. Campbell General Manager
Everett R. Newswanger Managing Editor
Copyright 1996 by Lancaster Farming