



OPINION

People Must Decide If Milk Is Essential

The minimum on-farm, wholesale and retail prices set by the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board (PMMB) should be seen for what they are — dues paid by all consumers of drinking milk to ensure a continued, inexpensive, wholesome supply of drinking milk from nearby processors and nearby farms.

If the dues are removed, and the milk supply is left unprotected, it will begin to dry up in unprofitable and marginally profitable areas.

Why? Because under a totally free market environment, there is no value to anything unless it is in short supply.

Pure, free-market enterprise is good for the things not needed for survival. It will never provide everything needed to everybody, because there is no incentive to do so.

The only reason to have a government, a society or any other structure of people working together is for a common good.

And if the resulting good isn't common, then everybody shouldn't have to help make it possible.

The reason the PMMB was given the authority to set those minimum prices was because of the common good — ensuring the availability of a nearly perfect food.

And of all the current political issues promoted under the banner of helping children, and all the cause groups claiming to speak on behalf of children, the PMMB structure shouldn't have to explain itself.

But it does, because of a growing, but not well considered, political rhetoric that says that free market forces are all-beneficial.

But, if that's so, why have a government at all?

The goal of the PMMB's authority to set minimum milk prices is to make sure of milk's availability to all.

The goal of free market entrepreneurs is to make money. The easier it is to make money, the better. One of the rules to making money is that those who can't afford to buy it don't get it.

The other rule is, don't spend anything on the business that doesn't pay for itself in providing a profitable return.

The goal of government is to provide all governed with essential services (such as defense, justice and protection from crime), and adequate supplies of essential resources (such as potable water, and nontoxic air) that the governed cannot provide for themselves, individually.

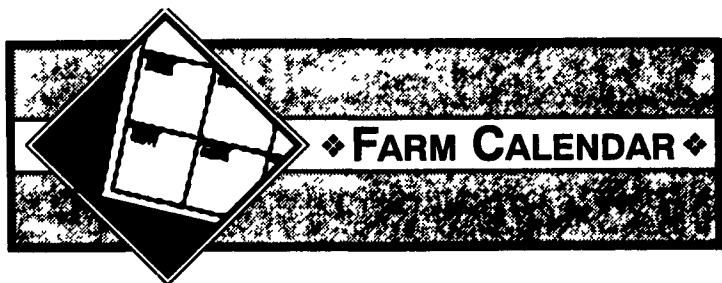
To finally end the ongoing debate about whether the PMMB should continue to have its minimum price-setting authority, a decision must be made.

Do we want a nearly perfect food to be available to all at an affordable price, or just to those who can afford to pay whatever price can be charged?

The decision should not be about, or influenced by, certain business entities positioning to control a market. It also should not be about some businesses yelling, "Unfair!" when they can't otherwise force smaller competitors out of business.

It's about people getting milk.

The battle over the authority of the PMMB to set minimum wholesale and retail prices is never going to stop unless the majority of the people decide once and for all that milk is essential in a healthy diet, and that it should be available to all.



Saturday, November 2

North American Agricultural Equipment Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, Atlanta Marriott, through Nov. 3.

Country Music Show, Talbot County Auditorium, Easton, MD, 7 p.m.

Emu farmers Seminar, Pa. Farm Show Building.

Pa. Equine Council EXPO and annual meeting, Wilson College, Chambersburg.

Crawford County Holstein Annual Meeting, Atlantic Community Building, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 3

Monday, November 4
Preserving Land in Your Town-

ship for the Future Agribusiness System, Paul Zimmerman farm near Strausstown and Shartlesville, 10:30 a.m.

Centre County Farm-City Dinner, Penns Valley Area High School, Spring Mills, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, November 5

Wednesday, November 6

Dairy Practices Council Annual Conference, Syracuse, NY.

Dairy Feed Industry Seminar, Lighthouse Restaurant, Chambersburg.

Thursday, November 7

ADADC District 3 meeting, Salmon River Central School, Fort Covington, NY, 7:30 p.m.

Dairy Feed Industry Seminar,



Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Remember Flowing Grain

Acts Like Quicksand

One measure of a farmer's success is the amount of grain that flows in and out of the wagons and bins each year.

Yet each year flowing grain claims the lives of farmers and family members, reports Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent.

Unfortunately, victims of this type of accident are usually children 16 years of age or younger.

Last year Lancaster County lost a young girl in a flowing grain accident. Children are excited about harvest, attracted by the activity, and intrigued by the thought of playing in a mountain of grain.

Farmers are just as susceptible. They are busy and sometimes become careless, take a shortcut, or simply slip.

Regardless of the contributing factor, flowing grain can grab you and pull you under in 10 seconds. Moreover, it only takes two to three seconds to become trapped and unable to escape.

Remember, a stationary pile of grain may become flowing grain by walking or playing on it. So, respect a pile of grain or moving grain and avoid becoming a victim.

To Look At Feed Supplies

Will you run out of feed before next year's harvest season? Do you have enough feeds of the right quality? Will you need to purchase some additional forage or grain? What prices will you have to pay for the quality of feed you will need?

These are important questions to

Harvest Drive Restaurant, Intercourse, 7 a.m.-Noon.

Erie County Cooperative Extension Annual Meeting and Banquet, Waterfall Restaurant, Erie, 7 p.m.

South East Grape Assn. Intensive Viticulture, 9 a.m.

Lehigh County Cooperative Extension 81st annual meeting, Lehigh County Area Vo-Tech School, Schnecksville, 7:30 p.m.

13th Annual Farm-City Banquet,

Riveredge Restaurant, Greenfields, 6 p.m.

Parenting the School Age Child, Behavioral Science Center, Robert Packer Hospital, Sayre, 6:30 p.m.

Parenting the Teenager, Behavioral Science Center, Robert Packer Hospital, Sayre, 8:05 p.m.

Chester County Annual Meeting, East Brandwine Fire Hall, 6:30 p.m.

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consider as you embark on your winter feeding program, according to Glenn Shirk, extension dairy agent.

Take time now to calculate your herd's feed needs and compare them to your feed inventories. Even with the good grain crop we had this year, we are expecting tight grain supplies again next summer.

Thus, prices could increase before next year's harvest season and be similar to this year's grain prices.

Grain and hay prices may not drop much lower than current prices. If this is the case, it might make good business sense to take action in the weeks ahead to lock in your feed supplies, prices, and quality. That way you know what you will be working with in the months ahead.

Options include contract for future deliveries, secure a line of credit, or borrow money to purchase feed for immediate delivery and storage or look at alternative feed sources.

To Know Your Feeds

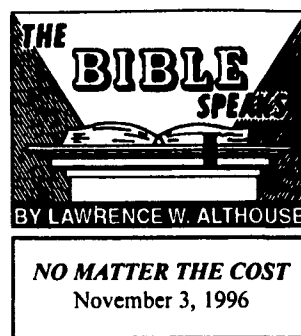
Feed quality varies considerably from year to year. To fine-tune your feeding program and enhance performance and profitability of your herd, feeds should be tested periodically, according to Glenn Shirk, extension dairy agent.

Forage tests may not be completely accurate, but they are one of the best guides we have for balancing rations properly.

Once you start feeding your newly balance ration, observe the herd's eating habits, feed intake, milk production, metabolic problems (ketosis, DA's, etc.), changes in body condition and nature of manure.

Discuss your observations with your nutritionist and veterinarian. Make necessary changes in the ration and continue to observe the herd closely. This is the art of feeding and the mark of a good herd manager.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "The sky is the limit when your heart is in it."



NO MATTER THE COST

November 3, 1996

Background Scripture:

Ezekiel 3:22 through 5:17

Devotional Reading:

Acts 10:9-16

Normally, I can write three or four columns of "The Bible Speaks" in the time this one has taken. Will Rogers used to say that he never met a man he didn't like. And I used to say I had never met a Bible text from which something couldn't be gleaned. But, for the better part of this day I was confronted with a text that didn't speak to me at all.

However, during my fifth or sixth reading of this long passage, Ezekiel 3:22 through 5:17, I jotted down some probing thoughts that came to me and I share these with you for whatever enlightenment God can shine through this "glass darkly."

The first thing that occurred to me was that nothing in my life — despite what I had considered to be a fair number of crises and defeats — can compare with what it cost Ezekiel to be God's prophet. There have been times when I thought it cost me a lot to be a preacher and pastor, but the price I paid was a paltry sum compared to what Ezekiel had to pay.

PAYING THE PRICE

Well, no, it wasn't that he "had to pay" this price, but that he did choose to pay it rather than turn aside from God's call. Presumably he could have run away, had a nervous breakdown, or checked into a hospital. But Ezekiel, although he couldn't have enjoyed this experience, never even seemed to consider failing to fulfill God's purpose.

So, when I look at Ezekiel, I feel both inspired and chastened by his example. I should never again complain of the cost of Christian witness — but I probably will. And what about you?

Secondly, I was struck by the fact that the one man who truly understood God's message of warning and repentance was the very man who suffered its conse-

quences before those whose obstinance brought ruin upon the nation. He heeded God's message and they rejected it. They should have paid the price first, but he did it in a set of symbolic acts that are hard for us to comprehend. God called him to act out the calamity that was to fall upon the people and inflict torture upon himself, first for the period of Israel's punishment — 390 days, one for each year — and secondly for the period of Judah's exile — 40 days representing 40 years.

NOT FAIR!

It hardly seems fair or reasonable that this obedient prophet should be called to suffer so much for an unresponsive and rebellious people. But that is the heart of the Good News of Jesus Christ, isn't it? One man suffered and died on a cross for all humankind forever. It wasn't fair. And life is not fair, but it can be redemptive. In every age there are few here and there who take upon themselves suffering and hardship far beyond their share, who anticipate in their own persons the impending fate that is brought on by others. Do you know anyone like that?

Finally and most of all, this passage says to me that, no matter how unhearing and rebellious we may be, God never stops sending us the message. He sent Ezekiel to the people of Jerusalem — no response. Then to the exiles in Babylon — no response. And then, the voice of prophecy was to be stilled, he sent Ezekiel to live out in dramatic symbolism the fate that his people refused to acknowledge.

They may not look or talk like Ezekiel and the prophets of old, but I believe that God still sends us people through whom he sends the message, whether or not we hear or see it. Somewhere in this world God is speaking to us through people like Ezekiel who cannot resist God's command to be his prophets — no matter what it may cost.

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