



OPINION

Good Questions?

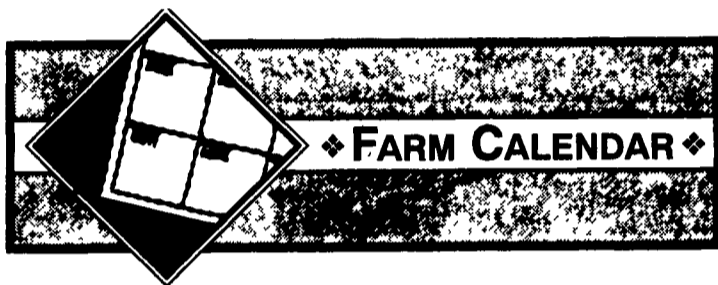
Farmers continue to have a hard time getting accustomed to the low returns they get when they send a dairy veal calf to market. We keep hearing from our farm friends that they send a nice calf to market and instead of getting a check, they get a bill. A local dealer confirms this phenomenon.

The trucking costs, sales commissions, and check-off-for-promotion moneys amount to more than many calves are bringing on today's market. Ten to 20 dollars for a 100 pound calf doesn't cover many expenses.

At one time, many of the dairy calves were bought by other farmers to take home to feed out for beef. But with low beef prices and high feed costs this doesn't pay anymore. So much of the other-farmer-market for calves has dissipated.

In addition, only a very few packers even handle dairy veal calves. All the promotion in the world will do no good if there is no consumer market.

Which brings us to the questions no one wants to face. Why should a farmer be required to pay a dollar per head for promotion of his veal calf that has little or no market value? With all the dollars he has paid for promotion in the last ten years, why isn't there a market?



- Saturday, November 9**
 North American International Livestock Exposition, Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center, Louisville, Kentucky through Nov. 22.
 Northeast Agroforestry Conference, Days Inn, Hagerstown, Md., 3:15 p.m.
- Sunday, November 10**
- Monday, November 11**
 Veterans' Day
 Poultry Management and Health Seminar, Kreider Restaurant, Manheim, Noon.
 Dauphin County Cooperative Extension Association annual meeting, Founders Hall, Hershey, 6:45 p.m.
 Annual Convention of the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, Cavanaugh's Inn at the Park, Washington, D. C., through Nov. 17.
- Tuesday, November 12**
 Ephrata Area Young Farmers meeting on health issues, Ephrata High School cafeteria, 8:30 p.m.
 Pa. Turfgrass Council, Penn State Golf Turf Conference, State College, Pa. through Nov. 14.
 Northeast Regional Greenhouse Seminar, Luzerne Community College Conference Center, Nanticoke, Pa., 8:30 a.m.-3:15 p.m.
 Bradford/Sullivan Forest Landowners Annual Meeting, Wysox Fire Hall, 7 p.m.
 Farm Records Computer Workshop, Penn State Fayette Campus, Eberly Bldg., 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Also Nov. 19.
- Wednesday, November 13**
 1996 FFA Convention, Kansas City, Mo. Nov. 14-16.
 ADADC District 20 meeting, Cartwright Inn, Henrietta, NY, 7 p.m.
 Annal Meeting Pa. Association of County Agricultural agents, Nittany Lion Inn, State College, Nov. 13 and 14.
 Parenting the Preschooler, Pre-

- sbyterian Church, Towanda, 10:30 a.m.
 Parenting the School Age Child, Presbyterian Church, Towanda, 12:30 p.m.
- Thursday, November 14**
 Northumberland County Cooperative Extension annual meeting, Otterbein United Methodist Church Social Hall, Sunbury, 6:30 p.m.
 Centre County annual meeting, Logan Grange Hall, Pleasant Gap.
 Lancaster County annual meeting, 7 p.m.
 Cooperative Extension annual dinner, Leslie N. Firth Learning Center, 7 p.m.
 Lancaster County Holstein Club annual banquet, Hoffman Building, Quarryville, 7 p.m.
 Jefferson County Holstein Club Annual Meeting, Astorino's Restaurant, Walston, 7:30 p.m.
 Parenting the School Age Child, Robert Packer Hospital, Sayre, 6:30 p.m.
 Parenting the Teenager, Robert Packer Hospital, Sayre, 8:05 p.m.
 Bradford County Extension Annual Meeting, E. Canton Church, 7:30 p.m.
 Pest Certification exams, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Luzerne County, 8 a.m.
 Pa. Farmers Union Annual Convention, Holiday Inn, Harrisburg, Nov. 14-16.
- Friday, November 15**
 Pa. Farmers' Union Workshop, Holiday Inn West, Wanda's, Mechanicsburg.
 Lackawanna County Cooperative Extension Association annual meeting, Lakeview Lounge, Heart Lake Corners, Jermyn, 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, November 16**
 Nittany Lion Fall Classic Sale, Ag Arena, State College, 11 a.m.
 Clarion/Venango Annual Meeting, Murphy Grange, Reidsburg.
 PSBA Winter Meeting and Banquet, Country Cupboard,



To Figure Corn Drying Costs

Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent, said farmers need to consider drying costs before harvesting corn.

Many corn fields were planted later than normal and we experienced cooler weather for most of the summer. As a result, corn did not mature as fast.

With the bumper crop, the price of corn has drop significantly. This could make drying corn an unprofitable venture.

Two items to consider are field loses and cost of drying corn. Over the next several months, the futures market for corn is about \$2.25 per bushel. Drying costs for corn is about \$0.08 per bushel per point of moisture. You can afford up to 3.5 percent field loss for each point of moisture (0.08 divided by 2.25). This is your break-even point.

For a 135-bushel-per-acre yield this would translate to 4.7 bushels per acre loss per point of moisture. If corn is standing well, the longer it is in the field using natural drying, the more profitable the crop will be.

To Store Firewood Properly

Dr. Timothy Elkner, extension horticultural agent, offers a few tips on how to handle firewood.

Remember, a pile of firewood is an ideal place for insects and spiders to hibernate through the winter. These insects include wood borers, beetles, carpenter ants, termites, bees, and wood roaches.

Store firewood outdoors in an open area, as far away from the house as practical. Stack firewood off the ground to reduce wood rot and pest problems. Never stack wood against the house. Cover the wood pile with plastic or sheet metal roofing to keep the wood dry.

When cold weather arrives, pieces of firewood may be moved closer to the house for easier access. Firewood should be stored on a rack, patio, or deck instead of on the ground.

Bring only enough firewood into the house to be burned immediately. Firewood stored inside the house over an hour may warm up

- Lewisburg.
 Mercer County Holstein Club Annual Meeting, Mercer County Extension Office, Mercer, 7:15 p.m.
 Meat Goat Conference, Pa. Farm Show Building, Rooms B & C, 8 a.m. Registration deadline: Nov. 14.
Sunday, November 17
 Show Series, Grazing Acres, New London, 8:30 a.m.
 Penn-Jersey Equipment Dealers' Association Convention, Pocomo Manor, through Nov. 20.
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enough for the insects to emerge and start spring activities early. Do not store firewood in a heated garage or basement for the same reasons.

To Prepare To Mulch Strawberries

According to Dr. Timothy Elkner, extension horticultural agent, it is still too early to apply straw to your strawberry patch.

The plants are not fully dormant and may still be storing carbohydrates for next year's growth and fruit production. If you cover your plants with straw now, you cut off this valuable production of energy reserves and your berry crop could suffer next year.

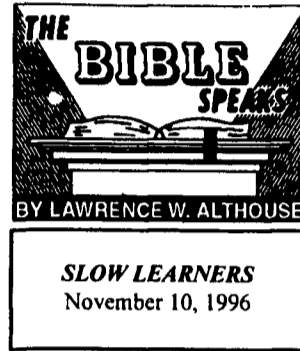
Your plants could also rot under a mulch, especially if the weather stays wet. Straw mulch should only be applied to fully dormant

plants. Exposure to increasingly cold temperatures and shorter days is necessary to properly harden your strawberry plants and cause them to go dormant.

The correct time to apply mulch is after several freezes occur in the high 20's or low 30's for one week. This will not usually happen in southeastern Pennsylvania until after Thanksgiving.

You can tell that your plants are going dormant when the leaves change from green to gray. However, be sure to have your plants mulched by December 15 since temperatures below 17 degrees F. can cause crown injury.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "Far away in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I may not reach them, but I can look up and see their beauty, believe in them and try to follow where they may lead."



SLOW LEARNERS
 November 10, 1996

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Background Scripture:
 II Kings 24 through 25
Devotional Reading:
 Psalms 74:1-12

It is hard to imagine a national and personal calamity greater than what befell the people of Judah in the sixth century B.C. Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians (Chaldeans) and Judah became a puppet state of King Nebuchadnezzar, King Jehoiakin, "his mother, and his servants, and his princes and his palace officials" were carried off to Babylon, along with all the treasures of the temple of the Lord. In all, there were 10,000 captives, including "all the princes, all the mighty men of valor" and "all the craftsmen and the smiths." Only the poorest people of the land remained.

King Jehoiakin's uncle, Mattaniah/Zedekiah was made king of Judah by the ruler of Babylon, but in time he rebelled and Judah and Jerusalem suffered again at the hands of the Babylonians. The Jerusalemites suffered a terrible siege and famine. The Chaldeans broke into the city and caught up with the fleeing Zedekiah on the plains of Jericho, where in punishment he was forced to watch the execution of his sons before the Babylonians put out his eyes.

The victorious Babylonians broke down the walls of Jerusalem, desecrated the temple and burned the city to the ground. Once again, they carried into exile most of its inhabitants, leaving only "some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and plowmen" (25:12). The two highest priests and other officials were executed. The prophecy was fulfilled and the destruction of Jerusalem complete.

REFUSING TO LEARN

What can we learn from these terrible chapters that close II Kings?

We can see, first of all, that the fulfillment of the prophecy came in stages. One gets the impression that, had the kings and leaders of Judah hearkened to the prophecies, and changed their ways, the destruction and misery could have been substantially reduced. Instead, the people suffered the

maximum penalty because they refused to learn from their experiences.

One after another, we see young kings ascend the throne of Judah and making the same mistakes as their predecessors. "Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 11 years in Jerusalem . . . And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done (33:36,37).

Upon the premature death of Jehoiakim, his son, Jehoiakin, at 18 succeeded his father — for three months. Surely, in light of what had happened to Judah under his father, he would not follow in his father's terrible footsteps! But II Kings tells us: "And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father had done" (24:9). And he and his people pay for this evil with captivity in Babylon.

STUPIDITY'S PRICE

So the King of Babylon appoints Jehoiakin's uncle, Mattaniah, as puppet king at the age of 21, changing his name to Zedekiah. Surely he would learn from the sins of Jehoiakim and Jehoiakin! But, no, "he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakin had done" (24:19). And the price he pays for refusing to learn is even more terrible (25:6,7).

From the safe perspective of history, we may wonder how these kings could have been so stupid to repeat the same disastrous acts again and again. We may even wonder why, if the kings could not learn the lessons, their subjects at least did not gain any understanding. But this same stupidity has plagued humankind from the dawn of history into our own times. Both as individuals and societies we have often refused to learn from our worst disasters. Again and again we perpetuate our disasters. Why else would history be regularly and disastrously punctuated by warfare? Why else would we continue to win the wars and lose the peace?

And in our personal and family lives do we fail to learn from bad experiences and thus perpetuate them?

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