



OPINION

Grazing In 1906

For everyone who enjoys farming, the opportunity to page through old farm publications is always fun. One of our Maryland readers, Harvey Fristoe, sent us a copy of the November 15, 1906, issue of *The Country Gentleman*, published in Albany, New York. At the time, this old publication was in its "seventy-sixth" year.

Since rotational grazing has become the "new" method of choice today, we thought it was interesting to see what recommendations were given to farmers 90 years ago.

From the Inquiries and Answers column here are some thoughts on the care of meadows.

The farmers in this vicinity are addicted to these practices: 1. They plant and seed wheat and grass together. In July they harvest the wheat, and in August turn their cows on the meadow, watching, however, that they do not eat too closely.

2. Or they cut the grass and stubble in late August, and then, after a little growth, turn their cattle on until the grass has been browned by the cold weather.

3. Others let their meadows alone, never turning their cattle on them.

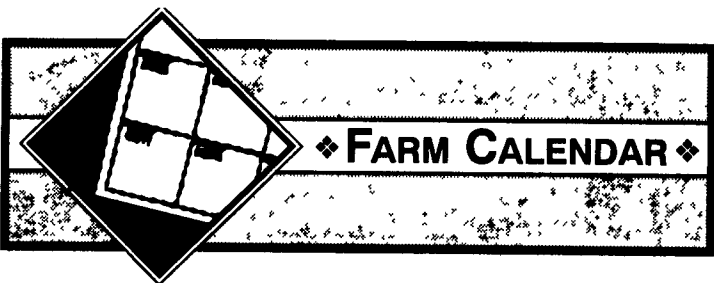
Question: What do you think of the above practices? Are not 1 and 2 injurious to the meadows? G.D.H. Metuchen, N.J.

Answer: Nowhere in agriculture does the old saying "penny wise and pound foolish" apply more thoroughly than to the man who pastures his meadows, particularly the first year after seeding. On some soils, and under certain conditions, this practice may not be suicidal, but we have never seen such conditions. We are inclined to believe that the tramping of the animals and the cutting and breaking of the new roots in the soft earth before the sod is formed does more damage than the biting off, for we have all noticed, as in a lawn, that repeated cutting seems really to stimulate the growth rather than to injure it; yet in that case we are seeking a dense sod rather than a heavy tonnage.

On our eastern soils, the man who pastures under the conditions stated under the second point is picking up a few cents and losing a number of dollars. In the case stated first, we should dislike to trust any man's observation to say just when the animals should be taken off. As stated in the observation regarding the second practice, the tramping is probably what does the damage, and not the grass eaten.

The practice mentioned in the third statement is the ideal one. American farmers place too little store on preserving their meadows and keeping them in the best of tilth so long as they are used for hay; and the safe rule would be never to turn animals on meadow land, even when the ground is dry, but to take off the hay, and, where conditions are favorable, to top-dress slightly in the fall with well-rotted manure, using a spreader if possible.

Yes, it can be said, "the more things change, the more they stay the same."



◆ FARM CALENDAR ◆

Saturday, December 14
Maryland Pleasure Horse Seminar, South Carroll High School, Winfield, Md., 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Sunday, December 15

Monday, December 16

Tuesday, December 17
Comfortable and Productive Tie Stall Barns, Leola Family Restaurant, Lancaster, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Wednesday, December 18
DEP Ag Advisory Board meeting, Rachel Carson State Office Building, Harrisburg, 10 a.m.

Thursday, December 19
LanChester Pork Producers Pork Forum, Weaver's Market, Adamstown, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Friday, December 20
Farm Financial Management Workshops, Wye Research and Education Center, Queenstown, Md., 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Saturday, December 21
Farming For the Long Run, 3-part meeting on improving crop pro-

fitability, Berks County Ag Center, Leesport, also Jan. 9 and Jan. 16.

Sunday, December 22

Monday, December 23

Tuesday, December 24

Wednesday, December 25
Merry Christmas!
Lancaster Farming office closed.

Thursday, December 26

Friday, December 27

Saturday, December 28

Sunday, December 29

Monday, December 30



Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Increase Feed Efficiency

Glenn Shirk, extension dairy agent, reports many progressive farmers have been testing milk for milk urea nitrogen (MUN) and fine-tuning their rations. This has enabled them to improve feed efficiency and reproductive performance and reduce the excretion of excess nitrogen into the environment.

Elevated MUN could be an indication that excess protein is being fed or that feed programs need to be adjusted to allow cows to more efficiently utilize the feeds they do consume. Lower levels of MUN could be caused by rations that are deficient in protein.

The goal is to feed cows a balanced ration to optimize rumen function, improve feed efficiency, enhance milk production, and improve reproductive performance. Also, you want to control feed costs and reduce the excretion of excess nitrogen in the environment.

To Maximize MUN Test Results

Milk urea nitrogen (MUN) test results can vary from lab to lab due to different testing procedures, from cow to cow and from month to month, according to Glenn Shirk, extension dairy agent.

Levels are affected by how soon cows are sampled after feeding, stage of lactation, ration changes, etc.

While not perfect, MUN tests may still be a useful tool for monitoring the feeding program.

To maximize test results:

- Use the same lab.
- Because MUN levels of individual cows may vary from time to time because of metabolic problems and other stresses at time of sampling, look at group averages rather than a single test from one or

◆ FARM FORUM ◆

Editor,
The recent announcement that the Basic Formula Price has dropped \$3.76 per cwt. has stimulated dairy farmers to the point where they really want to do something this time.

The Basic Formula Price (B.F.P.) is used as the benchmark to establish milk prices to dairy farmers. On December 5th this price was announced at \$11.61 per cwt. for November's milk. September's price was \$15.37.

During the last two months I have talked with hundreds of consumers and they positively agree that something has to be done immediately to shore up prices to dairy farmers.

Calls are coming into us on an accelerated basis from farmers

a few cows. The group should consist of eight or more cows that are similar in nature.

- Sample cows at the same time and the same number of hours after feeding.

- Sample different groups of normal heifers, early lactation, late lactation, dry cows, etc. at different times of the year and when fed different rations. This will help you establish MUN levels that are normal for your herd. Use these normal levels as reference points to compare abnormal cows and practices that cause abnormal MUN levels.

Most of this data may be gleaned from your DHIA MUN testing results.

To Provide Winter Protection For Pets

Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent, reminds us if you

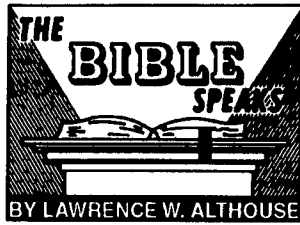
have a pet which is kept outdoors, spend a little time to make sure its living quarters are ready for winter weather.

Most animals can adapt to cold weather if they are provided good housing and adequate amounts of food and water.

The most important aspects of good outdoor housing is being dry and draft-free. When animals become wet or spend time in drafty conditions, they become sick.

Check now and throughout the winter to see that some type of dry material is available for pets to sleep on and that drafts are eliminated. During cold weather, check on a regular basis to make sure that food and unfrozen water are available.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "Some people make things happen, some watch things happen, while others wonder what has happened."



BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE
NOTE: TO ALL SHEPHERDS
December 15, 1996

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Background Scripture:
Luke 2:1-20

Devotional Reading:
Micah 5:2-9

Many years ago, when I was working in a suburban New York church, I was asked to take part in an ecumenical Easter dawn pageant held at a large shopping center just off the Bronx river Parkway.

At 5:15 a.m. I was zipping down the parkway. But, within moments, the flashing red lights of a police car ordered me to pull over. As the officer got out of his car and walked toward me, I began to be nervous, for I was in the costume of an angel - complete with wings and halo! When he looked in the window, I thought his eyes were going to pop out of his head.

He regained his composure to ask, "Do you have any idea how fast you were going?" I told him I didn't, but I really had to hurry because "I've got to get to the resurrection on time." As he stared at me, his face clouded over and he blurted out: "Go! Just go!" And I did.

Angles sometimes appear in the most unlikely places. Like the fields outside Bethlehem where shepherds kept "watch over their flock by night." Angels - in a field? In unimportant little Bethlehem? They should have showed up in Jerusalem - at the temple or the house of the high priest.

NO PLACE FOR ANGELS
But God chose the humblest of beginnings for the birth of Jesus. Two commoners from a backwater town. Mary was with child, says Luke. Some of the locals might have observed that she was just another pregnant single girl giving birth to another welfare boy! Nothing very important could possibly come from a baby born in a manger.

And then look who gets the engraved invitation - common shepherds, one of the most humble vocations. Nevertheless, "an angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them ..." Now why would God squander his glory on people like them? They knew nothing; they

were nothing; they would never be anything. Just shepherds, common people who would not be turned off by a child lying in a manger.

How do they respond to this angelic visitation? "... and they were filled with fear" (2:9). Zechariah had been troubled by Gabriel's appearance. Mary had been troubled by his words. So it is not surprising that these simple shepherds should have been filled with fear. But the angel reassures them: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news ..." (2:10). Once again the angel emphasizes that the message is "good news" - "for to you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior who is Christ the Lord."

"And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger" (2:12). It was not by chance that the Christ would be born in the most common of circumstances. That was the sign: God with us, even among the most lowly and humble.

GOING WITH HASTE

The angels did not make a mistake in appearing among shepherds on a hillside instead of the temple of Jerusalem. Humble as they were, these men knew what to do when they heard angels sing: "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened" (2:15). "And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger." (Do you know what to do when you hear an angel singing?)

That wasn't the end of it "And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them" (2:17). They didn't have to be scholars or orators; all they needed to do was to seek the Christ child and share what they found with others.

That's where we fit in the picture. In Advent we, like the shepherds, keep watch in the midst of our busy lives. Waiting to hear the good news that the angels brought to the shepherds so that we, too, may go over to Bethlehem to see this thing and then to make known what we have found there.

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