



OPINION

International Day: Is It Serving The Purpose?

The annual trek to the Harrisburg Farm Show is about to begin for farmers across Pennsylvania. Of course, many visitors from neighboring states come as well.

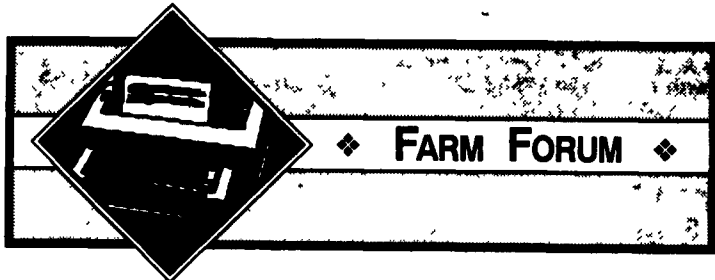
The show that provides the focal point of the state's \$43.7 billion industry is scheduled for January 11 to 16 in the Farm Show Building on Cameron Street. This year again a great deal of attention will be focused on foreign visitors who may become buyers of exported products from our local farmers.

At last count there were over 100 of these representatives coming from 23 countries. What makes this an improvement over last year is the fact that many of this years' foreign visitors represent companies and organizations that are in the exporting business. It is good public relations to invite the heads of state like they did last year, but now it is time to get down to business.

The main event of the International Day will be held in Hershey at the convention center with 90 exhibitors providing samples of their products to the foreign visitors. Then these guests will be feted at the annual Farm Show dinner in the evening. On Saturday the foreign visitors will be free to roam the Farm Show complex to pick and choose the things they want to see. They should get a great education.

This effort to use the Farm Show as an international showcase for Pennsylvania agriculture is a great effort by many people. However, officials report they will take a look at the effectiveness of the event later this year to see if it has been productive. We think this shows good management on the part of the persons involved. To continue a program that does not bring results would be counterproductive. We believe the bottom line for continuing International Day at the Farm Show should revolve around bottom line issues. Did the companies who participated make any export sales as a result of this effort?

To us, it makes a lot of sense to have an International Day at the Farm Show, especially when it is put in the framework of accountability to show if the event is serving the purpose for which it was inaugurated.



Editor:

I felt a response to the "Dairy Farmers Want Immediate Answers" — PRO AG article of Saturday, December 28, 1996 was necessary.

As I read the article, the picture left in my head was of the stereotypical welfare recipient. What business does the government have supporting dairy farmers? We all know the history of milk price supports. My point is, this is now.

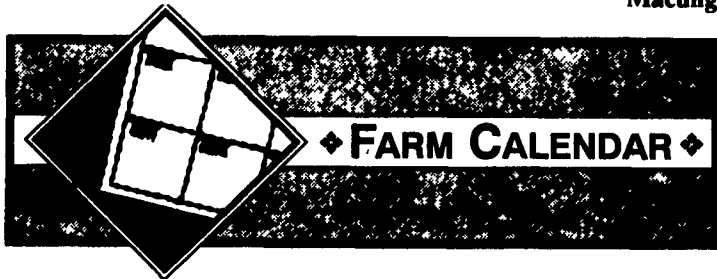
I believe the major outlet for north Pennsylvania milk is the manufacture of cheese. Cheese is not extremely perishable, therefore these producers are competing on the world market. When some countries can produce milk at 1/2 the cost of U.S. dairies, we ought to be grateful transportation costs are high.

The problem is not inaction by some government. We can all recall two different plans in the near past to reduce cow numbers. The problem is too much milk!! A milk shortage is what this country needs to get its priorities straight.

We live under a capitalist economic system. When the price of steel went to historical lows, did dairy farmers unite saying they would gladly pay higher machinery costs so American firms would stay at previous levels? How many dairypersons own for-

foreign manufactured automobiles, appliances or are stock holders in foreign ventures? The only difference between these businesses and dairying is the perishability of the product. If you do not produce for a fluid market, which has a definite volume limit, you are at the mercy of the world economy.

I offer a solution. If each dairyperson would slaughter 1/2 of their cows, the price of milk would go above \$30.00 immediately. As



Saturday, January 11
Pa. State Farm Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, thru Jan. 16.

Tuesday, January 14
Md. Organic Food and Farming Association annual meeting, Md. Dept. of Ag headquarters, Annapolis, Md., 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Monday, January 13
Virginia and West Virginia Horticultural Society's annual meetings, Hotel Roanoke and Con-

Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Register Water Use

Farming operations in the Susquehanna River Basin that use more than 10,000 gallons of water per day over a 30-day period need to register that use with the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) by March 31, 1997.

There are no registration fees. Registering can strengthen your legal position in future water disputes, factor in your water needs during drought, and assist the SRBC in making sound management decisions regarding water use.

Farms using less than 10,000 gallons per day but would like to have the advantages of registration may do so voluntarily. Farms with 200 cows, 2,000 feeder pigs, 900 sows, 125,000 laying hens, 250,000 broilers or pullets, or 100,000 turkeys without any other animals or crops, will probably need to register.

Commercial irrigation of cropland is probably over the threshold. If you did not receive forms in the mail, you may call John Graham, SRBC, Harrisburg at (717) 238-0425.

To Prepare For Government Inspections

The past two weeks I have read articles where large agriculture firms have paid big environmental fines.

The rules are changing as we increase the productivity on our farms. Society is beginning to take another look at agriculture and farmers and placing the same environmental and safety standards as

long as dairypersons are unwilling to take action to solve their own problems how can they expect non-farmers to care what happens to them?

John Berry Macungie

ference Center, Roanoke, thru Jan. 15.

National Limousin Show and Sale, Denver, Colo., thru Jan. 15.

Tuesday, January 14
Vegetable Growers' Association of New Jersey 1997 Trade Show, Taj Mahal Hotel Casino, Atlantic City, N.J.

Frederick County Milkiers' School, Mountain Gate Restaurant, Thurmont, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

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they place on other industries.

Farmers should take warning from these recent fines and do an environmental and safety inspection on their farms and start correcting deficiencies. Areas to look at include manure storages, manure spreading practices, barnyard runoff, and waste disposal methods including plastic, pesticide containers, syringes, and oil.

Also, look for unsafe conditions and practices. Worker safety including family labor must take a high business priority on the farm. Accidents will trigger government inspections and possible fines.

Prevention of problems is not a very glorious and thankful job, but top managers prevent problems. By preventing problems you create a pleasant work environment, produce a quality product, operate an ethical business, and reduce the possibility of government interference.

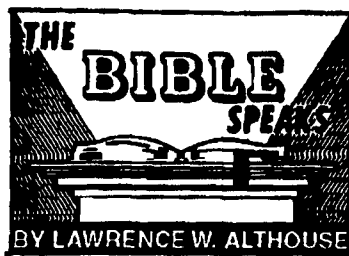
To Know Minimum Wage Requirements
Pennsylvania exempts agricul-

ture from the minimum wage (\$4.75 per hour currently and \$5.15 per hour on Sept. 1, 1997) and from overtime pay requirements (one and one half times the regular rate of pay when an employee exceeds 40 hours work in a single week).

However, federal agricultural exemptions for minimum wage are restricted to employers who do not exceed 500 man days of labor in a three-month period. In addition, the federal agriculture exemption for overtime is restricted to normal farming activities and work incidental to those activities performed only for the farmer/employer.

If, for example, the employee packs any eggs not produced by the employer, the agricultural exemption does not apply. In another example, a farm employee was not considered an agricultural exempt employee any week in which the employee filled the soda machine.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "Do more than touch. Feel."



"PUTTING ON THE DOG!"
January 12, 1997

Background Scripture:
Luke 10:38-42; John 12:1-8
Devotional Reading:
Psalms 27:1-6

Just a few weeks ago I stood at the place in Bethany where tradition tells us was the house in which Mary, Martha and Lazarus entertained Jesus and where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Today, the village hears the Arabic name el-Azariyah, preserving the ancient Greek *Lazarion*, "The place of Lazarus," by which it was known as early as the 3rd century A.D. The name Bethany means "the house of poverty" and, in fact, the village today is one of poverty-stricken Palestinians.

The church that stands there today is reputedly on the site of Lazarus' tomb and one can still see traces of the original 4th century church built there, as well as of the subsequent Byzantine and Crusader structures. On the exterior wall of the modern church are appealing mosaics depicting Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

Although the emphasis in Bethany is upon the dramatic raising of Lazarus, I could not help but recall the other gospel remembrances of Martha and Mary and what they teach us about following Christ.

SIDING WITH MARTHA

I particularly recall the story of Martha and Mary in Luke 10 because my initial reaction in reading this story was one of siding with Martha. I could very well identify with her complaint, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone. Tell her then to help me." (Lk. 10:40).

Is there anything half so aggravating as trying to entertain an important personage and having to do all the work myself while others who could help are goofing off! After all, Martha, Mary and Lazarus are entertaining the Messiah. Is it not an act of devotion to him to be about the details of cooking, serving and hosting him?

One of the things I like about Martha is that she doesn't mince words. She doesn't whine about

sister Mary; she shoots straight from the apron: "Lord, do you not care . . .?" He may be the Messiah but she is not loathe to tell him what to do: "Tell her then to help me!" In John 11, when Jesus comes to Bethany to console Martha and Mary about Lazarus, we are told, "When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary sat in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died.'" (Jn. 11:21). Surely Jesus must have appreciated her gut-level honesty and John tells us: "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus" (11:5).

Jesus' response to this blunt woman is patient and loving: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her" (Lk. 10:41). Gently, he tries to teach her that, although he understands her concerns, she needs to profit by her sister's example in choosing to listen to Jesus rather than try to impress him.

THE BETTER PART

Ouch! That gentle rebuke wounds me as much as it does Martha, I, too, get lost in a maze of efforts and desires, losing sight of "the better part," that which should claim my highest loyalty and commitment. There were too many times in my work as a pastor that I was "distracted with much serving." And for the same reason as Martha — because I wanted to impress someone with my hospitality or my serving. All of us need to be good hosts for the sake of our guests, but, if we plan to entertain too lavishly, it may be for ourselves, not our guests, that we are working. Relationships are more important than things and our relationship with Jesus most of all.

Sometimes even our busyness for Christ may get in the way of our choosing "the better part." Instead of taking up our cross, we may simply be putting on the dog!

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