

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Farmers Need A Raise

The price of dairy products—from the fluid milk you have on your morning cereal to the yogurt and cheese your kids enjoy—could be going up soon. Lest you assume that Bossy's owners must be livin' high on the hog, allow me to set the record straight.

American dairy farmers haven't had a raise in nearly 20 years. In September of 1997, dairy farmers received a base price of 52 cents for a half gallon of milk, roughly the same as there were paid for their milk in 1979. Meanwhile, equipment costs, veterinary expenses, property taxes, real estate values and everything else they must purchase to run their dairies has gone up at a rate of 3-5 percent per year. In addition, in recent years, dairy farmers have had to make considerable capital investments in order to comply with state and federal environmental regulations.

As a result, many independent dairy farmers are having to call it quits. Four to five dairy farms in America's dairy land—Wisconsin—go out of business every day. This trend is being replicated on a national level, with 10 percent of the nation's dairy farmers going out of business in 1996.

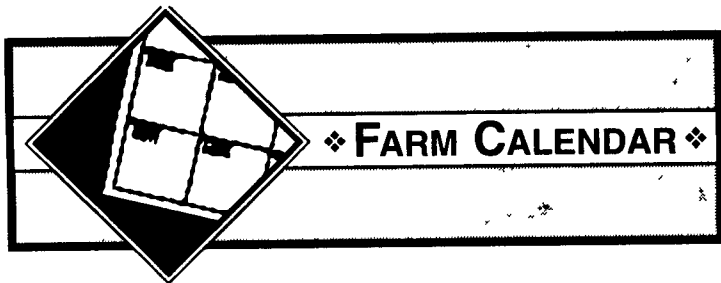
A large number of family owned and operated dairies have for decades provided American consumers with a steady, reasonably-priced supply of wholesome dairy products. When they are gone, the same guys that sell you the milk will own the cows. These new "dairy farmers" won't care if the cows live in Mexico or New Zealand, or if they must make powder and reconstitute it before it hits your grocer's shelf.

While the price paid farmers for their milk is virtually the same as it was in 1979, retail milk prices have more than doubled over the same period. Retail prices always go up when farm prices go up, yet rarely, if ever, go down when farm prices drop. For example, in September of 1996, dairy farmers suffered a 30 percent drop in prices, yet retail prices remained unchanged.

Like dairy farmers, consumers are at the mercy of the price setters, yet the worst is yet to come if today's low prices persist and independent dairy farmers are driven out of business. Corporate owners will not be satisfied with the profit margins—and certainly not the losses—endured by family dairy farmers over the last two decades.

Once corporations dominate milk production consumers can expect steep price increases. Bossy's owners need a raise and they need it now!

Leland Swenson, President
National Farmers Union



- Saturday, December 13**
Holiday Crafts Workshop, Fair Hill Nature Center, Cecil County, Md., 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Sunday, December 14**
- Monday, December 15**
- Tuesday, December 16**
Ephrata Area Young Farmers Christmas Event, Ephrata Middle School, 7:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, December 17**
New England Vegetable and Berry Growers Conference and Trade Show, Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center, Sturbridge, Mass., thru Dec. 18.
- Thursday, December 18**
Pork Production Forum, Country Table Restaurant, Mount Joy, 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Friday, December 19**
Ag Computing and Electronics Expo, Holiday Inn Lancaster Host, 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
- Saturday, December 20**
Soybean Management Workshop, Meadville, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Sunday, December 21**
Passing On The Farm Workshop, Berks County Ag Center, Leesport.
- Monday, December 22**
Pa. Seedsmen's Association Annual Meeting, Comfort Inn, Centerville, 9:30 a.m.
- Tuesday, December 23**
Farming For The Long Run, Berks County Ag Center, Leesport,

- also Jan. 9 and 16.
- Wednesday, December 24**
Risk Management/Commodity Marketing Workshop, Antrim House Restaurant, Greencastle, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Thursday, December 25**
Merry Christmas!
Lancaster Farming office closed.
- Friday, December 26**
- Saturday, December 27**
- Sunday, December 28**
- Monday, December 29**
- Tuesday, December 30**
Farm Business Transfer and Structure meeting, Fogelsville Holiday Inn.
- Wednesday, December 31**
1998
- Thursday, January 1**
Happy New Year!
Lancaster Farming office closed.
- Friday, January 2**
- Saturday, January 3**
- Sunday, January 4**
Retirement Reception for William A. Reagan, Franklin County Senior Extension Agent, St. John's United Church of Christ,



Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Maintain Biosecurity

It has been one month since the state has lifted the quarantine for avian influenza. It has been over five months since we have had an outbreak of avian influenza in a commercial flock of poultry. Biosecurity implemented by producers and allied industry played a major factor in controlling this last outbreak of avian influenza.

However, avian influenza has not gone away. In recent testing of New York Live Bird Markets, seven markets have tested positive for avian influenza. In addition, avian influenza has been isolated from sick birds being delivered to the live markets. This year's outbreak was a result of a break down in biosecurity between the commercial industry and the New York Live Bird Markets. Right now it is impossible to eradicate avian influenza from the live markets. Thus, we must maintain our biosecurity programs at all times. Do not let your operation be the source of the next avian influenza outbreak! Remember, biosecurity is your responsibility.

To Select Christmas Tree

Many people are now placing Christmas trees in their homes. Dr. Timothy Elkner, Lancaster County Extension Horticultural Agent, offers the following pointers in selecting a tree. The best needle retention is with members of the pine family. Scotch and red pines hold their needles longer than white pines. Blue and Norway spruce trees quickly drop their needles in a home setting. Firs

Chambersburg, 2 p.m.-4 p.m.
Monday, January 5

- Tuesday, January 6**
Pesticide Update Meeting For Ephrata Area Young Farmers, Family Time Restaurant, 6:45 p.m.
- Wednesday, January 7**
Franklin County Dairy Day, Kauffman's Community Center.
- Thursday, January 8**
Bucks/Montgomery County Dairy Day, Family Heritage Restaurant, Franconia.
- Friday, January 9**
Crop Planning Workshop, Hugo's Restaurant, Brownsville, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
- Saturday, January 10**
Berks County Dairy Day, Berks County Ag Center, Leesport.
- Sunday, January 11**
Chester County Dairy Day, Oxford Fire Hall, Oxford.
- Monday, January 12**
NYS Ag Society Annual Meeting, Four Points Sheraton/ITT, Liverpool.
- Tuesday, January 13**
Pa. State Farm Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, thru Jan. 15.
- Wednesday, January 14**
- Thursday, January 15**
- Friday, January 16**
- Saturday, January 17**
- Sunday, January 18**

will lose their needles a little slower than the spruces.

If your tree was already cut, tap the butt of the tree on the ground and check how many dry needles fall out. Many lost needles mean the tree is not fresh. The cut end of a recently cut tree should be sticky with sap. Before placing the tree in a stand, make a fresh cut across the bottom of the trunk to aid in water uptake. Keep the cut end under water at all times since a tree will use a lot of water in the warmth of your home.

Avoid placing the tree near hot or cold drafts which will promote needle drop. Remember, trees do not remain fresh much longer than three weeks.

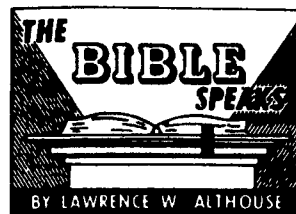
To Beware of Manure Gas

Manure pits are a confined space hazard that can often claim

multiple lives before someone realizes there is a danger with manure gas. Never enter a manure pit. Manure pits can be oxygen deficient, toxic and explosive. Label manure pits and manure storage areas to warn of hazardous gases such as hydrogen sulfide, ammonia, carbon dioxide and methane.

If entrance is necessary, obtain and use monitoring equipment to determine the level of gases present. If entrance is necessary, a self contained breathing apparatus must be worn by someone trained in its use. A safety harness should be worn and monitoring should continue while someone is in the manure storage area.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "A warm smile is the universal language of kindness."



BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE
WHO ARE YOU HURTING?
December 14, 1997

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Background Scripture:

I John 3

Devotional Reading:

Micah 4:1-7; 5:2-4

The First Epistle of John reads more like a musical score than a letter, treatise or sermon. As in a piece of serious music, I John has a number of themes that recur throughout, like musical ideas woven into the fabric of the composition. Each time he brings back a theme, he modifies it or develops it further.

In I John 2:9 the writer warned us: "He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still." Now, in I John 3 he comes back to this theme, saying: "Any one who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (3:15).

This is strong language! Is the writer overstating the case? Can't we hate our brother without murdering him?

Of course, there are lots of people who hate without committing acts of murder. Legally, yes, the pronouncement in I John 3:15 is an overstatement. But morally — and legality and morality are not necessarily the same — the writer of this epistle is on firmer ground. He sees love and hate on the spiritual, rather than legal level. Love gives life: "We know we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" (3:14a). And Jesus demonstrated this supremely: "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (3:16).

SPIRITUAL DEATH

Conversely, hate — or in its less virulent form, lack of love — takes life. "He who does not love remains in death" (3:14b). We may not actually murder someone, but hate always makes us an accomplice. Hatred creates a climate within which murder eventually occurs. Our hateful thoughts and words foster hatred which saps life and causes death, not only of the body, but also of the spirit.

Hatred of black people on the part of many of us in the United

States, enabled and encouraged others to actually commit racial murders. Hatred of the Jews by millions in Nazi Germany made possible the extermination camps that murdered millions of Jews. Hatred of Roman Catholics by Protestants and of Protestants by Roman Catholics has made possible the murder of both in Northern Ireland. The reason is that hatred is not just an emotion that we experience withing ourselves, but a force for evil that snowballs outside ourselves.

I'm sure that you are consoling yourself with the assurance that, you really don't hate anyone. So the writer of John carries us a step further where that realization is not so comforting. "But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us no love in word or speech but in deed and in truth" (3:17,18).

CLOSING YOUR HEART

OK, you don't have to actually hate someone: closing your heart against another has the same effect. If you see someone in need whom you can help and you don't do it, you qualify for the judgment. Not to open your heart to someone in need is a sin, too — a very serious one. And here he catches us all, doesn't he?

One of the most disturbing things I see in our society today is the mushrooming disdain which we the "haves" feel and display to the "have nots." I don't hear people verbalizing naked hatred for the poor and needy, but what I do hear and see fits nearly into the category of irrational hostility. We blame the poor for their poverty, the needy for their needs, the helpless for their helplessness. When we "see a brother in need," the response I John calls for is one of compassionate, giving love, not hostility and disdain.

Unfortunately, much as it hurts those on whose needs we turn our backs, we are the ones who are hurt the most by our failure to love. It is easy to "love in word or speech," but we are called to love, not with words, but "in deed and in truth."

Who are you hurting the most? Three guesses.

Lancaster Farming

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