



# OPINION

## Hope For The New Year

The Pennsylvania Dairy Stakeholders moved forward earlier this month. We think this forward motion took longer than it should have, but we believe it's a case of better late than never.

Actually, the idea started about five years ago when a few officials of different organizations, companies, and academia with an interest in saving the dairy industry in Pennsylvania met to discuss a more unified voice for the industry. Over the years, the idea stayed alive, but progress in unification was slow.

At the 1997 Dairy Futures Conference held in State College several weeks ago, not only did a powerful group of dairy leaders get together to hear about the state of the industry, they approved a set of by-laws and elected directors and officers. That's a good start, but only a start.

With dairy prices to farmers not even covering the costs of \$250 a ton hay and various other inflated input costs, the whole industry in the Northeast is on course to become like the Southeast where large gaps are found between consumption and production. In addition, real estate taxes and environmental strangleholds are sucking the life out of the dairy industry as we know it.

No one can say the dairy industry is dead. The commercial disappearance of dairy products has increased in the last five or six years. Many other industries would love to have this kind of record. People will get their milk, cheese, and other dairy products from somewhere.

In the Northeast we have not only close markets, we have the pipeline in place to ship product to the Southeast. With the citrus tankers bringing orange juice concentrate up to our plants, the same plants that handle our milk, we are in position to sell even more milk than we do now.

The problem is supply. And the supply problem is down-on-the-farm economics. If the supply cannot be produced by our farmers, the citrus tankers will just keep on going north into Canada to get their return cargo.

Now that we have the Pennsylvania Dairy Stakeholders, Inc., we hope to see more action than a yearly conference where all the articulate and powerful dairy leaders get together to discuss what is right or wrong with the dairy industry. Every official who attended the futures conference depends on some farmer getting up at 4 a.m. each morning to milk the cows. And until we make sure the farmer can make a decent living, rather than just having a way of life, every one of our businesses and jobs is in jeopardy.

We need economic action. We need political action. We need taxation action. We need environmental action. Our national strength has its roots in American agriculture in general and the dairy industry in particular. We need to take a stand against all forces that would weaken our food supply.

As we begin the new year, we look with anticipation for the activities by The Pennsylvania Stakeholders that are specifically designed to save Northeast dairy farms.



**Now Is  
The Time**  
By John Schwartz  
Lancaster County  
Agricultural Agent

### To Be A Successful Dairy Business

At a recent dairy meeting, Dr. David Galton of Cornell University was optimistic about dairying in the Northeast. A number of things are working in our favor. These include: Our farms are smaller but more secure with greater profit margins per cow. We can grow low cost, high quality forage.

We have an available supply of low cost water. We can sustain higher production levels with less environmental stress on cows. We are within easy reach of about half of the U.S. consumer market. We are the furthestmost distance from the lowest cost milk producing regions. We have a lot of highly competitive, efficient farms. We have a good infrastructure to support a viable dairy industry. Our producers are more willing to share ideas, practices and data for the benefit of all.

### To Know Factors Affecting Profitability

Dr. David Galton, Cornell University, has identified the following as main factors affecting farm profitability. Productivity including per cow, per acre and per worker. Herd size will determine overhead cost and efficiency of the operation. Cost control of both overhead and operating costs. Debt service including total debt, debt servicing cost and investment strategies. Milk price including quality premiums and negotiating prices.

Management characteristics of profitable dairy farms includes:

p.m.  
Keystone Farm Show, York Fairgrounds, thru Jan. 7.  
Eastern Pa. Turf Conference and Trade Show, Valley Forge Convention Center, King of Prussia, thru Jan. 8.

Wednesday, January 7  
Crop Planning Workshop, Hugo's Restaurant, Brownsville, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Berks County Dairy Day, Berks County Ag Center, Leesport. Reproductive meeting, Adams County extension office, 9:30 a.m.-noon.

Options Workshop, Lebanon Valley Ag Center, 7 p.m., also Jan. 21.

Thursday, January 8  
Chester County Dairy Day, Oxford Fire Hall, Oxford. NYS Ag Society Annual Meeting, Four Points Sheraton/ITT, Liverpool.

Leola Produce Auction meeting, Bareville Fire Hall, 12:30 p.m.-3 p.m.

Clarion County Dairy Management Meeting, extension office, 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

Kutztown Produce Auction Educational Event, Getting The

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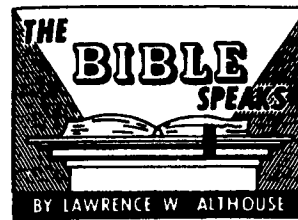
They have excellent control of fixed and variable costs. They work with low debt or no debt. They keep capital investments to a minimum. Cows generate income. Buildings, machinery and equipment do not generate income. They keep cows healthy and productive and improve labor efficiency. But they are an expense item and need to be kept at a minimum. They have high levels of production. They start early to plan for retirement and for the transfer of the business.

### To Look At Business Parameters

Dr. David Galton, Cornell University, offers the following business parameters. These figures are debatable and vary with size

and kind of farm. They are good benchmark figures to compare your numbers with and for developing your own goals. Cows per worker: 30 to 50. Milk shipped per cow: 19,000 pounds. Add another 1,500 to 2,000 pounds for three times a day milking. Milk sold per worker: 600,000 to 1,000,000. Cost per hundred-weight of milk: \$10 to 11. Profit margin per cow: over \$600. Capital investment per cow: \$4,000 to 6,000. Keep to a minimum. Debt per cow: less than \$2,000. \$3,000 temporarily during expansion. Debt service per cow: less than \$300 to 500.

*Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "In life what appears to be the end is really a new beginning."*



**THE BIBLE SPEAKS**  
BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE  
**WE SHALL OVERCOME!**  
December 28, 1997

### Background Scripture:

1 John 5: 1-12

### Devotional Reading:

Romans 8:31-39

Green Bay Packers Coach Vince Lombardi has often been quoted as saying, "Winning isn't the best thing; it's the only thing."

On reflection, I think he was quite wrong about football and all other sports. It is certainly 'not the only thing.' I played several sports and if winning was all there was to my effort, I would have felt cheated.

When it comes to life, however I think Coach Lombardi's words are right on target—even though he apparently meant only sports—*winning is the only thing that counts.*

Now, before my readers rise up in indignation at that statement, let me hasten to say that it all depends upon what you mean by "winning." In Football, unless there's an unbroken tie score, one team wins and the other loses. I'm not talking about that kind of winning.

Nor am I thinking about that series of contests throughout life in which we struggle to be victorious; school, career, marriage, parenthood, avocations, and so forth. One can be victorious without being first. I certainly wasn't first in my class at college or seminary, but I did feel victorious in earning my two degrees.

Being victorious in life is not less than being number-one, but more. When Admiral Nelson sent home to England his dispatches following the battle of the Nile, he wrote: "Victory is not a name strong enough for such a science as this." I feel the same way about life: victory is not a name strong enough to describe what we all seek to achieve.

### OVERCOMING THE WORLD

1 John uses the work "overcome." "For whatever is born of God," he writes, "overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith" (5:4). When he says that this victory "overcomes the world," he means not that the Christian has conquered the world as Tamerlane, Napoleon and Hilter attempted to do. Rather, it means not letting the world take away our faith in

God through Jesus Christ.

In *Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan writes, "A Christian can never be overcome, unless he shall yield of himself." We lose our faith when we believe in something else more strongly than in our God. If we believe more strongly in defeat, fate, our own weakness or unworthiness, yes we will be overcome by the world.

Overcoming the world is really a matter of faith. When one nears the last stages of earthly life, we begin to realize the trophies we have won—recognition by the world—are not really comforting at all. Then it is that we begin to yearn for something else, something that assures us we will not die in vain or in defeat.

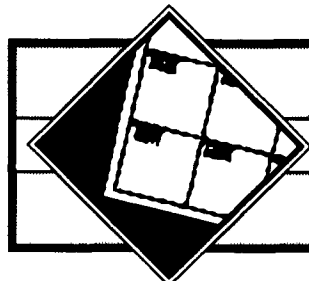
### A FAITH MATTER

As important as I have been to myself throughout life—that is human ego—I have presided over enough funerals to know that that sense of importance will die with me. People will remember me for a while. Some of the things I did will have last for a time. But 100 years from now my name, like yours, will probably amount to no more in this world than at best an electronic blip on someone's data bank. Relatively few ever beat those odds.

So, ultimately, all I have to cling to is my faith that I will be in God's loving, redeeming hands. "Who is it that overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (5:5).

"When he was about to cross the Adriatic to fight the Romans, the Greek hero Pyrrhus was asked by an old philosopher, "What will you do after you have conquered Rome?" "Next, I'll take Sicily" was the reply. "And then?" "Next Greece!" Pyrrhus replied. "After all this," countered the philosopher, "You won't have anything left to conquer, so what will you do then?" Pyrrhus thought for a moment and then replied: "We'll go home and have a grand banquet with wreaths and flowers on our heads." "Ah," said the philosopher, "but you could do that now!"

The victory is still out of sight, but we can start celebrating it now!



## FARM CALENDAR

Saturday, December 27  
Sunday, December 28  
Monday, December 29  
Lebanon County 4-H Winter Roundup and Sale, Lebanon Area Fairgrounds, 8:30 a.m.-roundup, 6:30 p.m.-sale.  
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, Chambersburg, 2 p.m.-4 p.m.  
Monday, January 5

Crop Pest Update, Blairsville Grange Hall, 10:20 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Crop Pest Update, Worthington Fire Hall, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.  
Tuesday, January 6

Pesticide Update Meeting For Ephrata Area Young Farmers, Family Time Restaurant, 6:45 p.m.

Franklin County Dairy Day, Kauffman's Community Center, 9:35 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Bucks/Montgomery County Dairy Day, Family Heritage Restaurant, Franconia, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Lancaster County Tobacco Show, Farm and Home Center, judging 1 p.m.

Meeting on the Deregulation of Electrical Energy, Clarion County Extension Office, 7:30

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