



# OPINION

## Cost Effective Practices Also Good For Animal Well-Being

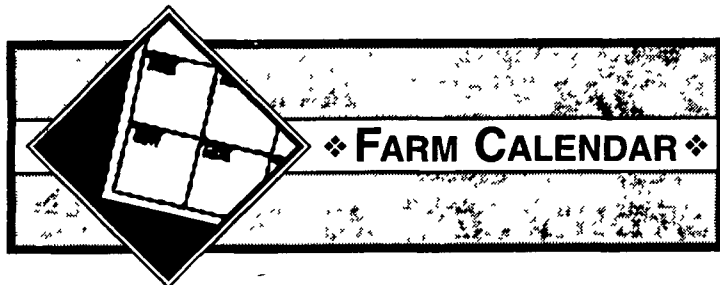
Animal agriculture has a sincere interest in providing optimum care and management of the animals that supply the food and fiber for our society. Not only do farmers have a vested interest, they have a heart for animals as well.

According to Glenn N. Slack, executive director of the Livestock Conservation Institute, initiatives are now in place to provide consistency in improved handling practices among industries. Most of these have evolved from quality assurance programs, which typically have a multi-faceted approach. Others have developed separated guidelines for the appropriate handling and care of their particular species group.

While a study of quality assurance education programs by researchers at Penn State concluded that these programs primarily address food safety and carcass quality, the net result is that animal well-being has also been considerably enhanced too.

By far, the largest segment of society genuinely concerned with animal well-being are the farmers and ranchers who are producing these animals. We must not forget, however, that food animal production is a business. As business operators, those same farmers and ranchers are also seeking to decrease the cost of production. The great fact about this cost reducing effort is the results. Good animal husbandry practices result not only in better animal well-being, these practices also lower cost.

We believe America's farmers and ranchers will continue their progressive efforts to provide appropriate animal husbandry practices, and as new methods and technologies are shown to be effective, they will be applied to every day production.



### Saturday, February 28

- Northeast Regional Produce Marketing Seminar, Holiday Inn, Bartonsville, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Western Pa. Gardening and Landscaping Symposium, Pittsburgh Civic Garden Center, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 4-H Home Economics Extravaganza, Penn State Extension, Dauphin County, 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
- Maryland Jersey Cattle Club Annual Banquet, Woodsboro Activities Hall, 10:30 a.m.
- 1998 Eastern Cattleman's College and Symposium, Holiday Inn, Meadowlands.
- National Cattleman's Beef Association speech on "Mad Cow Disease," Holiday Inn, Meadowlands, Canonsburg.

### Sunday, March 1

- National Association of Animal Breeders Annual Convention held in conjunction with National DHIA, Hyatt Regency, Columbus, Ohio, thru March 2.

### Monday, March 2

- N.W. Pa. Cattleman's Annual Dinner, Mercer County Extension Center, 6:30 p.m.
- Octoraro Young Farmers FFA Awards Dinner, West Fallowfield Christian School, 6:45 p.m.
- Focus on the Future, Somerset County Vo-Tech School, also March 9.
- Farm Odor/Environmental Assistance Program, Middleburg High School, 7 p.m.

### Tuesday, March 3

- Potato Day, Schnecksville Grange,

Schnecksville, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Appalachian Fruit Growers' Winter meeting, Irene's Family Restaurant, Blair County, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Farming For A Better Tomorrow Conference, Chesapeake College, Wye Mills, Md., 9 a.m., thru March 4.

Pesticide Review and Exam, Clarion County Extension Office, 7 p.m.-9 p.m., exam March 4, Clarion County Extension Office, 7 p.m.

Central Susquehanna Valley Turf and Ornamental Meeting, Best Western Country Cupboard Inn, Lewisburg, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Cambria Crops Meeting, Extension Office, Ebensburg, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Focus on the Future Workshop, Erie County extension office, also March 10.

Focus on the Future Workshop, Westmoreland and Indiana counties, Donohoe Center, Greensburg, also March 10.

Alternatives '98, Chesapeake College, Wye Mills, Md., also March 4.

### Wednesday, March 4

Pa. Grazing Conference, Grantsville Holiday Inn, thru March 5.

1998 Potato Growers' Institute meeting, Penn State Nittany Lion Inn, State College, thru March 5.

IPM Bi-Control Conference, Villanova University, thru March 5.

On-Farm Composting Conference and Tour Challenges and Opportunities, Farm and Home



## Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

### To Report New Hires

In December 1997, amendments to Pennsylvania's Domestic Relations Law went into effect. This brings Pennsylvania in compliance with the Federal Welfare Reform Act of 1997. The law requires creation of a national database to support the enforcement of paternity and child support activities.

All employers are required to file a report with the state within 20 days of the hiring or rehiring of an employee. Farmers are not exempt from this law. The new hire date is defined as the first day services are performed for wages by an individual.

Since farmers are exempt from many taxes and reports contained in the databases, many farm employers may not be aware of these new requirements. Fines for not reporting new hires range from \$25 for each employee not reported to \$500 for filing false reports. Reports are to mailed to Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, New Hire Reporting Program, P.O. Box 69400, Harrisburg PA 17106. For more information, call the Department of Labor and Industry at 1-888-PA-Hires.

### To Celebrate Food Check Out Day

According to the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, February 9 was Food Check Out Day. This marked the day the average American has earned enough money to pay for his or her family's entire 1998 food supply. Last year this date fell on February 10. According to statistics from the United States Department of Agriculture, American families spend on average 10.9 per cent of their disposable income for food.

### In comparison to Food Check

Center, 8:30 a.m. thru afternoon tour.

Tri-County Agronomy School, Gratz Elementary School, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Focus on the Future, Washington County, Hugo's Restaurant, Brownsville, also March 11.

### Thursday, March 5

Poultry Progress Days, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

South Central Young Cooperator's Day, Area Restaurant, Bedford.

Sheep Management Series, York 4-H Center, Bair, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.

Focus on the Future, Brown's County Kitchen Restaurant, Portersville, also March 12.

Southeast Pa Grazing School, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Lebanon County, 7:30 p.m.-9 p.m.

Small Fruit Series from Blair County, Holidaysburg Brethren Church, 7 p.m.-9 p.m., also

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Out Day, Tax Freedom Day, the day the average American earned enough money to pay their federal, state and local taxes, was May 9 last year, according to the Tax Foundation. Affordable food is a product of our successful food production and distribution system. The per cent of disposable income spent on food has declined over the last 25 years. In 1970, Food Check Out Day would have been 11 days later, February 20.

This speaks well of our nation's increasing standard of living, which would be certainly reduced without the affordable, domestic food supply produced by America's farmers.

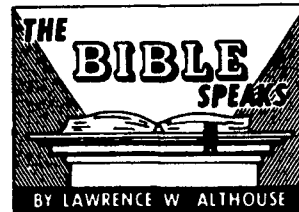
### To Evaluate Varieties Differently

Deciding which variety to plant this year and in the future will take careful study by the farmer,

according to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent. With the introduction of corn, soybean and alfalfa varieties which are resistant or tolerant to certain insects or herbicides, it has become no easy task to decide which variety to grow.

Once the selection could be based solely on the variety which produced the most. Now consider which produces the most, allows the control of a problem pest, how much the seed costs, cost of the herbicide and insecticide you will need to use and the cost of the herbicide and insecticide you will not have to use due to the new technology.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "The wise man has long ears, big eyes and a short tongue." - Russian Proverb



DROP EVERYTHING!  
March 1, 1998

### Background Scripture:

Mark 1:1-20

### Devotional Reading:

Acts 10:34-43

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Mark begins by saying, in effect, this is how the gospel began. Of course, Mark wrote in Greek, not English, so, instead of "gospel" he uses a Greek word, *euangelion*. In Latin, the word is *euangelium*, which in Anglo Saxon was rendered as "god-spell," meaning a story from or about God and was understood as "good" or "glad tidings." In the Revised Standard Version of the Bible *euangelion* is rendered as "good news." (You can see how the Greek *euangelion* was the source of "evangel," "evangelism," and "evangelical.")

The *gospel* was not the books which Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote about Jesus, nor is it even his teachings. Instead, it is the good news that God has acted through Jesus Christ to save us. Grammatically, it is a noun, but actually it is much more a verb for it tells us what God has done and will do through Christ.

Although Jesus preached to great crowds and taught his close band of followers, the gospel was and is essentially a personal invitation. That is one reason that it is good news. This is an invitation that comes not as "to whom it may concern," but to you in all your individuality: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel" (1:15).

### HERE'S A GIFT!

Halford Luccock has written, "Christianity is not primarily a demand. It is first of all, a gift. It does not say first 'Do this' or 'Go there.' It says, 'Here is the gift of Christ in God.' Its first words are not 'Do' or 'Go,' but 'Come' and 'Receive.'" What Jesus of Nazareth is offering us in the beginning of Mark's gospel is the greatest possible gift we could ever imagine. That too is why it is such good news.

Accepting the gift requires a response from us: "Repent and believe in the gospel" (1:15). Even the call to "repent" is a gift because it is a way out of our sin and guilt. And that too is good news, for whether or not we acknowledge it, sin and guilt are the two

most destructive realities in our lives. I know, there are people who don't believe in sin. They feel it is demeaning and disheartening to think of themselves as sinners. But that is only true if there is no way out — and there is a way out.

Quite contrary to what some of us may think, "Repent" means quite a bit more than penitence. Penitence by itself means only that we are sorry about our sin. (Sorry we're caught in it? Sorry for the consequences it costs us? Sorry it hurts our self-esteem?) Being sorry is not enough. One of the things that keeps some of us in a pattern of sin is the release we think we get from being "sorry." We sin, we're sorry, we go and sin again.

### BEYOND 'SORRY'

Mark uses the Greek word *metanoia*, which, according to *The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. VII*, means "a complete change of mind, a new direction of will, an altered purpose in life." Being sorry is the beginning of the process, but, unless it calls for some profound changes in our attitude and sends us forth in a different direction, it is not repentance.

The second response we are called to make invitation is "Believe in the gospel." The call of John the Baptist was to repentance, but the challenge of Jesus calls us beyond repentance. The *Living Bible* renders this as "Turn from your sins and act on this glorious news," while E.V. Rieu (*The Four Gospels*) translates it as "put your trust in the Good News." Mark is not talking about believing in an idea, but of putting your trust in a promise.

Note how frequently Mark uses the word "immediately" — 41 times in his gospel, nine times in this first chapter. It is characteristic of Mark's compelling style. When Jesus calls Simon, Andrew, James and John, all four immediately leave their nets and follow Jesus. The call of Christ to them and to us is an urgent one. It is so imperative that, instead of tucking it into our calendar at some convenient place, we need to drop everything and respond — immediately!

## Lancaster Farming

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