



OPINION

A Salute To 4-H

Beginning Sunday, March 15, the 4-H program across the nation and in each one of the states is honored for the work done for the youth of America. From the heart of the city (the largest 4-H chapter in Pennsylvania is in center city Philadelphia) to the most rural of communities, 4-H Awareness Week celebrates the leadership of 4-H youth.

Each year "4-H week" celebrates the opportunities in the programs by calling attention to the diversity of the lives and backgrounds of 4-H youth. This year the theme, "4-H...Are You Into It?" is appropriate. Young people between the ages of 8 and 19 learn to develop leadership, citizenship, interpersonal, and workforce skills in a wide variety of 4-H programs. The subjects fall within four major academic disciplines: biological sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities, and physical sciences. For example, in Chester County, over 4,700 young people completed 6,300 projects this past year. Multiply these numbers by the large number of counties in the nation and you get a little idea of the impact of the program on those who participate.

In addition, dedicated, volunteer leaders give their time and their talents to teach and to encourage young people and their caregivers. We can never say enough good things about the 4-H program and the extension service personnel that run the programs.

To everyone in the 4-H program we say, "You are doing good work that is obvious to many of us in the community, especially to those who have been helped by the program when we were teenagers. The hands-on experience is invaluable. Keep up the good work!"



FARM FORUM

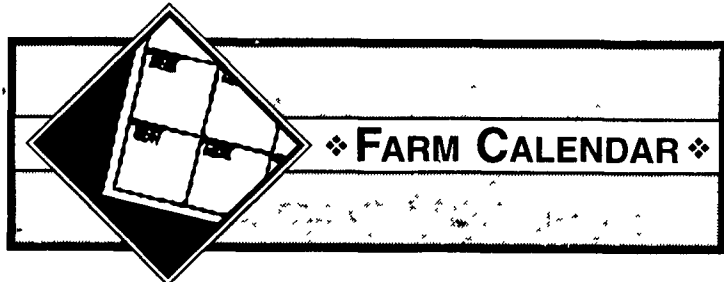
Editor,

I appreciated the excellent editorial Opinion — "Enhance Soil Ability," in last week's edition. Lancaster County loses an estimated 12 tons of topsoil per year from every acre of crop land and organic matter levels are at best being maintained instead of increasing. Long term soil health and productivity hinges on how we manage organic matter and the "animals" who live in it. (Last week's lead article in "Corn Talk" is a great example.) I believe the biggest challenge to adopting a no-till system is lack of information and experience. We have used steel in the last 150 years in order to prepare the soil for a crop and have gotten pretty good at it. But now these fields are "addicted" to tillage and require frequent operations in order to break up the com-

pacted soil. Organic matter is burned up during tillage and soil microbes are hindered from multiplying to their full potential. A properly managed no-till will become more tilthy and mellow over time a nature is allowed to do its work. Earthworms proliferate and soil aggregate stability increases which leads to better water infiltration and moisture holding capacity. Success in no-till is all in "art and technique." We have the equipment available now to handle high residue levels and collectively have enough information to make this a profitable, environmentally friendly, and productive system to use.

We owe it to future generations to make the soil better than when we found it!

Steve Groff
Holtwood



FARM CALENDAR

Saturday, March 14

1998 Maryland State Holstein Convention, Maryland State Fairgrounds, Timonium.
Garden Wise, York County 4-H Center, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Pasture Night for Part-Timers, Calvert Grange Hall, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Home Gardener's School, SUN Area Career and Technology Center, 9 a.m.-3:45 p.m.
Ag Alternatives, Honesdale High

School.

Cambria County Extension Day, extension office, Ebensburg, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Sunday, March 15

Monday, March 16
Pesticide License Test Date, Lebanon Valley Ag Center, 8:30 a.m.

Penn State Tri-County Weed Management School, Keystone Agway Building, Shippens-

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

To Increase Cow Longevity
Are you breeding good genetics into your herd but preventing cows from attaining their genetic potential? This is a question Glenn Shirk, Lancaster County Extension Dairy Agent asks. Cows are a big investment and the life blood of your dairy farm business. Are you protecting your investment in cows so they have a long and productive life and an opportunity to generate a good return on your investment?

The road to a long and profitable life for cows begins with the mating of good cows with good bulls. This must be followed with good management from day of birth to the date of first calving and beyond.

The challenge is to protect cattle from the things that may scar them for life. They are the things that seriously impair their health, production, conception and longevity. These things put a cap on the cows potential to be profitable.

To Control Diseases

Glenn Shirk, Lancaster County Extension Dairy Agent, reminds us it is important to control things that scar cattle for life and reduce their longevity in the herd. High producing cows need healthy lungs. Respiratory problems, such as pneumonia and lung worms,

burg, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Pesticide Core Credit Meeting, Montgomery County 4-H Center, Creamery, 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m.
First On The Scene For Farm Families, Coudersport Elementary School, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Tuesday, March 17
St. Patrick's Day

Turf and Ornamental Day, Allegheny College, Meadville.
Beef Management Short Course, York County 4-H Center, also April 28.

Midwest and Northeast Dairy Conference, Holiday Inn, Westlake, Ohio, thru March 19.
Soybean Management, Holiday Inn, Bartonsville, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Expansion Strategies For Dairies Seminar, Franklin County Administration Annex, Chambersburg, 9:45 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
Mercer County Sheep and Wool Growers meeting, Mercer County Extension Center, Mercer, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 18
Pasture Management, Firth Learning Center, Mercer, 1 p.m.-4 p.m.

Cover Crops — Making Them Work For You, Tidewater Inn, Easton, Md., thru March 19.
HACCP Training For Cider Producers, Nittany Lion Inn, University Park, thru March 19.
Garden State Grazing Coalition meeting, Broadway Grange, Warren County, N.J., 7:30 p.m.
Solanco Young Farmers Tour to (Turn to Page A26)

may cause permanent scarring of the lungs.

These are the cows that pant the most, go off feed and drop in milk production when pushed hard or when exposed to stresses such as heat. Coccidia, intestinal worms and Johne's bacteria may cause permanent damage to the digestive tract. Affected cattle utilize feeds less efficiently and are unable to absorb the nutrients they need to support good milk production and good conception.

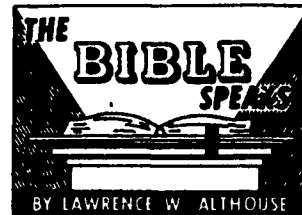
Several contagious diseases, such as BVD and lysteria, may cause serious reproductive problems. Failure to prevent and control udder infections allows mastitis organisms to do permanent damage to the udder's secretory tissue.

To Feed Cattle Properly
Poor feeding practices may

cause acidosis. This results in laminitis and permanent damage to the feet or cause severe stomach ulcers and liver abscesses. Under feeding of young stock may severely stunt their growth for life, reminds Glenn Shirk, Lancaster County Extension Dairy Agent.

On the other hand, getting young calves to fat may trigger excessive fat deposits in the developing udder at the expense of milk secreting cells. This will jeopardize future milk production potential. Thus, it is very important to be constantly monitoring your feeding program and observing your cattle weekly for best performance.

Feather Prof's Footnote
"Some people dream of worthy accomplishments while others stay awake and do them."



ON EATING WITH TAX COLLECTORS

March 15, 1998

Background Scripture:
Mark 2:1 through 3:6
Devotional Reading:
Acts 2:22-36

One of the things that really alienated Jesus from the religious authorities of his day was the company he kept. In fact, Jesus probably would not have ended up on a cross if he just cultivated the "right" people.

But he had that infuriating habit of associating with the worst sort of people: lepers, sick people, foreigners, sinners and (ugh!) tax collectors. (Lepers, foreigners and sinners for obvious reasons, but sick people because it was assumed they were sick because of sin and tax collectors, because they worked for the enemy, Rome!)

So, in Mark 2 when Jesus says to the paralytic whose friends have lowered his pallet through the roof of the house where Jesus was staying, "My son your sins are forgiven" (2:5), they are irate. I suspect they were angry because Jesus released this man from the paralysis of both his body and his spirit. They weren't ready to have this man healed. So, instead of giving thanks and praise to God that this man had been made whole, they turned to theology and grumbled instead: "It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

AN ACCUSATION

Jesus' "error" might have been overlooked if he had just made that one faux-pas, but, as Mark makes abundantly clear, Jesus kept on doing it again and again. Next Mark tells us that Jesus and his disciples are sitting at table with "many tax collectors and sinners." When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that, they challenged the disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (2:16). Obviously it wasn't so much a question as an accusation.

The scribes were caught up in one of those infernal "good guy/bad guy" systems of classifications. The essence of this kind of classification is the division of people into groups with labels, so that they are dismissed or condemned, not as individuals, but as "kinds" of people. Tax collectors were definitely bad. Everybody with that vocation could be condemned and shunned without a

moment's hesitation. Sinners, of course, were also bad and could be treated accordingly.

I read in the newspaper the other day that there is a lot of conflict in parts of India today where the "untouchables" are beginning to revolt against the caste system that denies them recognition as human beings. They are rejected by the upper castes, not on the basis of who they are personally, but as members of the "untouchable" caste, a caste to which other people have assigned them.

OUR CASTE SYSTEM

Our caste system operates on a considerably higher level, but we have it all the same. We use labels to characterize unfavorably people whom we do not know. Some of these insidious labels scarcely need mentioning; we are all aware of the existence of racial, ethnic and religious prejudices. But one which we may overlook is, in my mind, the most destructive of all: ideology.

Increasingly, many people are more concerned with what ideological camp you're in than what kind of person you are. To some, if you are tabbed a "liberal" or a "conservative," that, depending upon the one who is doing the labeling, is the worst thing that can be said about you and you are written off as "undesirable." People do the same thing with "Democrat" and "Republican," "fundamentalist" and "modernist," "anti-abortion" and "Pro-life." Challenged as to why he ate with "tax collectors and sinners," Jesus replied, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (2:17). All of us are sinners.

Three more times in Mark 2:18 through 3:6 they challenge him: on why his disciples are non-fasters while the Baptist's practiced fasting, and whether he violated the sabbath by plucking and eating grain and healing a man with a withered hand.

Jesus' response is instructive; "And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart . . ." (3:5). Their labels truly grieved and angered him. How do you think he reacts to ours?

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