



OPINION

Don't Forget To Write

From the 1980s through the mid 1990s, one common theme has emanated from the advice of experts representing the entire, broad field of agriculture — expect rapid change.

They were not wrong.

Change has proven to be more than rapid and all-encompassing. It has proven to be overwhelming.

It's easy to get lost and get a feeling of being left out and behind.

What the experts forgot to provide was advice on how to handle all the change.

Keep abreast of change in the news? Forget it.

With so much change and commentary on change, it's next to impossible to determine the significance of the change; or if anything has changed at all, really.

From the Internet and e-mail conversational ramblings, to organizations with purposefully misleading names getting their politically twisted takes published in otherwise respected sources of news, to televised "infomercials," who can sift through it?

While the wide "world" of opinions can be reached more rapidly and completely with modern technology, it doesn't mean there is any more value to those opinions.

Perhaps there is even less value than before, because almost invisible are the previous standards used to differentiate between information provided through disciplined research and objective study, and that merely intended to be persuasive and motivate the masses to purchase goods, services and ideas.

What many have acknowledged is the need for some sort of screening device; something to sift through the chaff.

There is no magical solution, but there is something that can really help — a daily or weekly diary.

No, that isn't a typographical error of the word, "dairy," though that error happens frequently enough in all agricultural publications.

A diary doesn't have to be some secretive book of inner thoughts. It only has to be a regular part of the routine, recording notes of what is important to the diary keeper.

Things that may get recorded could include notes about trees that had fallen on a fence, a cow showing heat, a sighting of a raccoon during the day, the temperature, a neighbor helping out or needing help, the weather, the paint peeling from the eaves, spare parts purchased on a run into town, a visit from a relative, an unusual animal sighting, birthdays, etc.

For a reflective, self-management tool, the daily diary would be difficult to replace. It could be kept side-by-side with a daily planner, or incorporated.

A diary serves as a reminder of how life really is for the diary keeper.

Through review of the diary, the keeper can discover the things that really make a difference, and be able to dispense with the daily hype of horror in other places, between warring factions, bad domestic relationships, etc.

This is not head-hiding in the sand. It is recording notes of what was important that day, without being told later on by someone else.

A daily diary is healthy, because it builds a personal history from which true perspective on happiness and values can be remembered and assessed.

This is not self-delusionment. It is documenting real life.

Most newspapers were founded as fulfilling a role in serving to provide a public record of events. That is community history.

A diary contains news to provide a personal record of events. That is a personal history.

A personal history may be more important to keep now than ever before, because it can be used to separate the quieter sounds of real life from the high volume screams for attention by a money hungry, marketing-mad outside world.

It also provides something else that can be considered essential to good mental health — a healthy perspective.

As every public servant who deals constantly with the negatives of life (law enforcement agents, children and youth social workers, prison guards, etc.), too much knowledge of just bad things can get depressing and pervert perspective, because it can create the illusion that all people are bad and evil.

With fewer people knowing their next door neighbor, and more people being more familiar with the events and ideas of "celebrities," it's no wonder that perspective can become easily lost.

Amidst a kaleidoscopic, daily whorl of superfluous information, a diary can be a best friend in finding the way back home.



Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Think Safety

Hay harvest is here. The good quality bumper crop many farmers are harvesting this spring can be overshadowed by a farm accident.

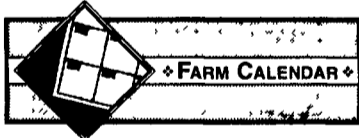
According to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County extension agronomy agent, many farm accidents are associated with harvesting a crop. Following a few safety guidelines should help make the harvest season a safe and enjoyable one.

Operate and maintain harvest equipment as directed in the owner's manual. Keep shields in place during operation. Shut off the power before unclogging, adjusting, or servicing equipment. Adjust ground speed to field conditions.

Keep children and non workers off machinery — no second riders. Operate elevators and forage blowers with care. Keep hands and feet out of the hopper when the equipment is operating. Check the tires, hitches, lighting, slow moving vehicle emblem, and brakes before starting and keep children away from all equipment at all times.

To Avoid Hot Hay

Robert Anderson, Lancaster County extension agronomy agent, reminds us that baling hay that is too green could result in a fire, which could burn down the hay storage facility. This is a result of spontaneous combustion caused by storing hay that is too wet.



Saturday, May 23

Northwest Keystone Junior Beef Classic, Butler County Fairgrounds, thru May 24.

4-H Spring Show, Southern Md., Charles County Fairgrounds, LaPlata, thru May 24.

Sunday, May 24

Monday, May 25

Memorial Day

Lancaster Farming office closed.

Tuesday, May 26

Septic System Management and Well Protection Workshop, Penn State Fruit Research Laboratory, Biglerville, 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 27

Cream Ridge Twilight Tour Meeting and Strawberry Breeding Showcase, Rutgers Fruit Research and Extension Center, Cream Ridge, N.J.

Thursday, May 28

Philadelphia County Fair, Philadelphia, thru June 7.

Friday, May 29

Dairy Festival Dinner, Troy Fire

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Hay should not be stored until the moisture content reaches 20 percent or less. At high moisture levels, there is a greater risk of fire.

In addition, hay which is baled above that moisture level has a high risk of becoming moldy and dusty.

Haylage, on the other hand should be put into storage before the moisture content drops below 50 percent. Depending on storage structure, haylage is best preserved for feed when it is between 50 and 60 percent moisture. Haylage with a moisture content of 45 percent moisture poses a significant risk for fire.

To Monitor Stored Hay

To be safe from fires, inspect hay mows at least twice a week during the harvest season. Check for hot spots for their exact temperatures using a thermometer.

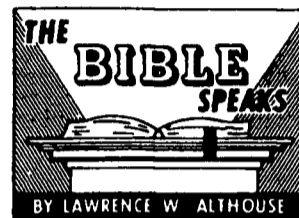
If hay temperatures reach

150 degrees, there is a danger of fire and a daily monitoring of hay temperature is recommended. If temperatures reach 160 degrees, monitoring should be at 4-hour intervals.

Fire pockets may be expected if the temperature of the hay reaches 175 degrees. You should notify the local fire department to be on standby and ready to remove hay. If the temperature reaches 185 degrees, have the fire company on hand to put out fires which may erupt as the hay is taken out of storage. At 210 degrees, hay is certain to ignite.

Even with these safety precautions, fire may start and barns burn to the ground. Do not wait until it is too late to call for help. You may also want to check with your insurance company to see what type of coverage you have.

Feather Prof's Footnote
"Enthusiasm is like a ripple in the water — it spreads"



THE SECRET WAY TO FIRST PLACE

May 24, 1998

Background Scripture:

Mark 9:33-37, 10:35-45

Devotional Reading:

John 13:3-17

Put yourself in the disciples' sandals! In the company of Jesus they had been walking on the road to Capernaum, talking as they walked. Apparently, because they were in a group they did not think that Jesus could hear them. But, when they got to their destination, Jesus turned to them and asked, "What were you discussing on the way?" (Mk. 9:33).

Ouch! Suppose Jesus were to listen in on all your conversations? Or read the thoughts that remain unspoken in your mind? That would be very compromising, wouldn't it? But what makes you think that he does not hear your words and read your thoughts? Jesus knew his disciples and he knows us too—the good, the bad and the in-between. Mark tells us simply: "But they were silent; for on the way they had discussed with one another who was the greatest" (v. 35).

I can't think of a teaching of Jesus with which we have a harder time than what he said on this question of *who is the greatest?* Our only consolation is in realizing that the disciples had the same problem. They already knew that Jesus thought on this problem. If that were not so, they would not have remained silent. Perhaps he had not said it in exactly this way, "If any one would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all" (9:35), but I don't think his position was really unknown to them. He had demonstrated it in his own actions.

OUR PROBLEM, TOO

Their problem was exactly what our problem is. It wasn't that they did not know where he stood, but that they did not understand him, but that they did and simply did not like what they understood. Jesus was not just asking them to make some slight modifications of their behavior, but to see life and themselves in a totally different way.

It is interesting that these words of Jesus did not settle the matter for the disciples. Later, in Mark 10:35-45, the same question would arise again. This time it was specifically James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who brought the question to Jesus. Should we assume that they had not been present on that other occasion? Not necessarily: just think how many times you have heard Jesus speak on this subject and yet have not put it fully into practice!

This time the question was right out in the open. "Teacher," said James and John, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you" (10:35). You and I cringe when we read this statement; it is so baldly presumptuous to think that anyone would ask Jesus to "do for us whatever we ask of you!" But was their request any more presumptuous than those we carry to him?

ARE YOU ABLE?

We cringe to hear them ask, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." But notice how calmly Jesus responds to this outrageous request: "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am to be baptized?"

In their blissful ignorance, they give him the same kind of answer we often give him: "We are able." They didn't have a clue what it meant, but then often neither do we. The other disciples did not know either, for they interpreted it as a matter of status: "And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John" (10:41).

Once more Jesus answers in a manner that should not have left any room for error in understanding: "... whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all." (10:44, 45)

Now, have you got that?

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