

OPINION

Gave Away More Than We Got

Earlier reports came to our attention that cattle from farther south than Mexico are being imported into the U.S. But our international agreements with our southern neighbors limit imported cattle to only those animals that originate in Mexico. The intent was to exclude the glut of beef cattle produced, for example, in South America.

However, more than a year ago, we editorialized our fear that cattle are being brought into Mexico from the south, housed in paddocks for a few days or weeks, and then shipped north as Mexican cattle.

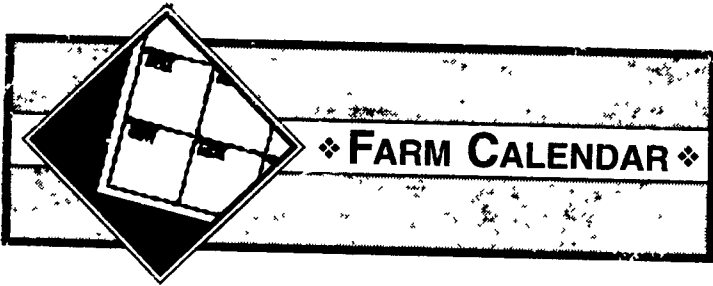
Our fears were not alleviated when again this week a report was brought to our attention by a local beef farmer that Mexico is importing cattle from Australia. More than 30,000 head of Australian cattle have been imported by Mexico. A recent shipment included 8,700 feeder cattle, 2,100 head of beef breeding cattle and 1,500 head of dairy breeding cattle.

The Australian Cattle Council is working with Mexican officials to streamline quarantine protocol in order to facilitate easier shipment of feeder cattle.

According to the report, U.S. officials are concerned that the feeder cattle may eventually find their way into the United States, potentially endangering the general health of the American beef herd. These officials should be afraid. And the concern should go much deeper in the U.S. beef industry and food production chain.

Not only is the health of the beef herd endangered, the health of those who eat beef originating under less stringent food safety regimens are endangered. And our U.S. farmers who must compete in a market flooded with these imports are endangered to the point of going out of business.

We always did think we gave away more with NAFTA and GATT than we got. We still think so.



Saturday, November 7

MSBA 59th Annual Honey Show, MDA Headquarters, Annapolis.

Nittany Lion Fall Classic Sale, Ag Arena, State College, 11 a.m.
25th Annual North American International Livestock Expo, Kentucky Fair and Expo Center, Louisville, Ky., thru Nov. 20.

NOFA-NY Workshop On Alternative Animal Health Practices, NYS Grange Building, Cortland, N.Y., 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
Farm Safety Awareness For Families, Conemaugh's Norcam Community Health Center, Carrolltown, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
Bucks County DHIA Banquet, St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 8

National Farm Animal Identification Symposium, Renaissance St. Louis Hotel, St. Louis, Mo., thru Nov. 10.

Monday, November 9

Dauphin County Cooperative Extension Meeting, Milton Hershey School Founders Hall, Hershey, 7 p.m.
Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers Meeting, Hartly Fire Hall, Hartly, Delaware, 7 p.m.
Poultry Health and Management Seminar, Kreider's Restaurant, Manheim, noon.

Tuesday, November 10

MDIA Annual Meeting Annual Meeting, Four Points Hotel, Hagerstown, Md., 8:30 a.m.
Northeast Greenhouse Seminar, Luzerne County Community

College Conference Center, Nanticoke, 8:30 a.m.-3:15 p.m.
Public meeting to discuss ag preservation, County Annex Building, East York, 7:30 p.m.
Bedford County DHIA Banquet, Everett High School, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, November 11

Veteran's Day

National FFA Convention, Kansas City, Mo., thru Nov. 14.
Beef Quality Assurance Meeting hosted by York and Adams County Cattlemen's Association, York 4-H Center, 6:30 p.m.

Pa. DHIA Delegate Meeting, Bonanza Restaurant, Franklin, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Thursday, November 12

Centre/Clinton Counties Holstein Annual Meeting, Logan Grange Hall, Pleasant Gap, 7 p.m.
Bradford County Holstein Club Tour and Royal Winter Fair, Canada, thru Nov. 13. Departs Wysox 4:45 a.m., returns midnight Nov. 13 (approx.)

Chester County Extension Annual Meeting, The Stone Barn, Kennett Square, 7 p.m.

Berks County 4-H Recognition Night, Berks County 4-H Center, 6:30 p.m.

Pa. DHIA Delegate Meeting, Family Restaurant, Mifflintown, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

National FFA Convention, Kansas City, Mo., thru Nov. 14.

Monroe County Cooperative Extension Association Dinner and 4-H Leader Recognition, Cook's Touch Restaurant,



Now Is The Time By John Schwartz

Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Understand Ag Uniqueness

A recent article in a Lancaster County agribusiness newsletter raised the question "What makes the Mid-Atlantic region different?" It stated the owners of the company have attended meetings all over the country during the past ten years. At these meetings they are constantly being asked why this region's agricultural leaders so aggressively pursue policies that agriculture traditionally opposes.

They cite the egg quality assurance program, environmental legislation crafted by a partnership of environmentalists and agriculture, food refrigeration and numerous Best Management Practices (BMP). They state there are good reasons why these agricultural partnerships have developed the progressive attitudes that resulted in definable programs.

First, it is the right thing to do! The science we know and the technology we employ provide us with the opportunity to produce safer food and enhance our environmental stewardship. Our markets expect the best from us and our neighbors must trust us. Thus, it is very important for every farmer to be willing to "do the right thing". Only by maintaining this progressive attitude can we continue to grow our agricultural operations.

To Enroll In Pork Quality Assurance Program

Chester Hughes, Lancaster County Extension Livestock Agent, states today's pork producer must recognize that what is done on the farm can affect their product all the way to the consumer's table. To keep the pork industry-competitive with other meats, the role of the farmer as part of the pork food chain must be recognized.

In an expanding and competitive market the production of a safe, quality, consumer friendly product is dependent on each link of the pork food chain performing to the best of its ability. Preventing tissue residues is nothing new to pork producers. They have long been required to follow the guidelines of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that define

Mountainhome, 6 p.m.
Penn State Cooperative Extension of Northumberland County Annual Meeting and Banquet, Wolfe's Crossroads Lutheran Parish Hall, Sunbury, 6:30 p.m.
Lebanon County Conservation District Awards Luncheon, Timbers Restaurant, Mt. Gretna, 11 a.m.
Bradford County DHIA Banquet, Bonanza Restaurant, Wysox,

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their responsibilities when using anti-microbial or other health care products.

The Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) program has helped pork producers comply with FDA guidelines since the program started in 1989. Now there are hog slaughter plants requiring pork producers to be PQA Level III certified.

You may achieve this certification by contacting a PQA verifier. This could be your veterinarian, county extension agent or vocational agricultural teacher. By becoming PQA certified, you will update yourself regarding issues on proper drug administration, swine handling and appropriate record keeping. Now is the time to become PQA Level III certified.

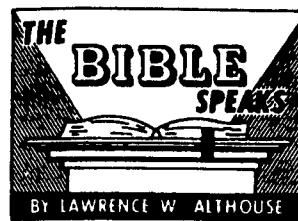
To Rake Leaves

Leaf raking is never much fun, according to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent. It may even be

more of a chore once you have a fairly good size pile of leaves which you must either continue to rake or pick up and move.

An article in Penn State's PENpages, A Bundling Tool For Leaf Cleanup, may help make the job easier. You need a plastic or cloth sheet approximately 3 feet by 5 feet, an old broom handle or similar wooden object which is cut into two pieces. The short edges of the sheet are each wrapped onto one of these pieces of wood and stapled in place. After raking the leaves into a pile, bring the scooping tool down over the leaves, resting the ends on the ground. Next, push the handles together to form a tight roll. The more leaves you scoop, the easier it is to carry them.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "The truth of the matter is that you always know the right thing to do. The hard part is doing it." Norman Schwarzkopf



WHEN 'BAD GUYS'
PROSPER
November 8, 1998

Background Scripture:

Psalms 73

Devotional Reading:

Psalms 27.1-14

The Psalmist may have said it a bit differently, but at some time or other most, if not all, of us find ourselves thinking or even saying what he confesses: "All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence" (Ps. 73:13). To put it in a more contemporary way: "What good is it to be 'good'?"

The Psalmist was not just feeling resentful because his goodness was unrewarded, but because the sinfulness of arrogant men seemed to go unpunished. If we are good and see no advantage over those who are evil, it is logical that we should question being good. Not only were the wicked not being punished, but they were prospering while he was not! "For I was envious of the arrogant, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked" (73:3). Not being rewarded for our goodness is even worse if someone evil is seen to be rewarded.

He was thus challenging the same popular religious concept that occasioned the writing of the Book of Job. If goodness is to be rewarded and evil punished, how do we explain the good person who suffers and the evil person who prospers?

GLARING EXCEPTIONS

These ancient questions are just as current today as they were then. Some Christians assume that goodness is always rewarded and evil is always punished. But, although that often is true, there are glaring exceptions. Not every Mafioso dies unhappy and regretful. In fact, we are told that some of them die smiling. On the other hand, there are lots of good people who die unjustly. At the top of that list, we must remember, is the name of Jesus Christ!

It becomes apparent that being a Christian, obeying God's commandments is no guarantee of justice and satisfaction. In fact, doing the right thing may even bring us pain, anguish and even death. So, Christians have learned to answer these questions with the

assurance of justice and retribution in the life beyond death. If God is just and loving, he certainly cannot permit an evil person to escape punishment on the other side of death.

In the Psalmist's day, however, not many Hebrews believed in a life after death and so they could not comfort themselves with the hope of ultimate punishment for evil and reward for good. (We could say this with more certainty if we knew precisely when this psalm was written.) In fact, it was this enigma that helped to inspire the beginnings of belief in the life hereafter. The Psalmist's conviction that the evil are eventually punished perhaps is leading him to speculate upon punishment in a life beyond death.

MY GREATEST DESIRE

When he "went into the sanctuary of God" during a time of worship he found some answers to his problem. He discovered that, as a man who tried to live rightly, he had found something the wicked person could never have: the promise of God's eternal nearness. "Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou dost guide me with thy counsel, and afterward thou wilt receive me to glory" (23-25).

The Psalmist decides that, to have that assurance of God's eternal presence, is far more important than all the riches and power of the wicked. "And there is nothing upon earth that I desire besides thee" (v. 25). When we can say and mean that, the enigma of evil/righteousness/punishment and prosperity may not be solved so that we understand it, but our assurance of God's presence is better than a logical answer.

When bad guys prosper, what can we do? Instead of throwing in the towel we can, like the Psalmist, determine that their prosperity and power cannot match for a moment the glory of knowing that God is with us forever. With the Psalmist, we then confess: "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (v. 26).

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