



OPINION

Handling Differences Productively

With the economic pressures on farmers, the opportunity for disagreement, and contention among farm family members and among employees on the farm is magnified. Gregory Billikopf, from the University California says such differences, when handled properly, can result in richer, more effective, creative solutions. But it is difficult to consistently turn differences into opportunities. When disagreement is poorly dealt with, a sense of psychological distance is forged between people.

When faced with challenges, we tend to review possible alternatives and come up with the best solution given the data at hand. Unwanted options are discarded. While some decisions may take careful consideration, analysis and even agony, we solve others almost instinctively. Our best solution becomes our position or stance in the matter. Our needs, concerns and fears all play a part in coming up with such a position. Misunderstanding and dissent grow their ugly heads when our solution is not the same as other people involved in the farming operation.

The panel on employee relations at the Pennsylvania Holstein Convention last week had some very good ideas. The proposed that you build up employees, not always look for complaints, and keep good relations with past employees. This kind of effort is good for any personal relationship.

Two principles have contributed so much to the productive handling of disagreements that it is difficult to read about the subject in popular or scholarly works without their mention. The first principle, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood," was introduced by Steven Covey, in Seven habits of Highly Effective People. If we encourage others to explain their side first, they will be more apt to listen to ours.

The second communication principle was introduced by Roger Fisher, and William Ury in their seminal work, "Getting to Yes." Simply stated, it is that people in disagreement focus on their positions when instead they should focus on their needs. When we focus on our positions we underscore our disagreements, when we concentrate on needs, we find more common ground than we had assumed. When the needs of both sides are met, agreement can follow.

This aspect of farming is not about cows and plows. But it certainly contributes to the productivity of the farm when differences between people are handled effectively.



Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Consider Drywall

Leftover wallboard could be pulverized and added to the soil to help improve the soil. Wallboard (drywall) is made from the mineral gypsum and paper. When pulverized and spread, the gypsum in the drywall offers the same advantage as adding gypsum directly to the soil.

Each year the US building industry creates over two million tons of scrap drywall. This represents about one per cent of the total landfill contents. Using scrap drywall as a soil conditioner in crop production would save valuable landfill space. The gypsum in the drywall is a good source of calcium and sulfur. Gypsum is the most beneficial when added to high clay content soils that are low in calcium content. Gypsum is also helpful on compacted soils.

On soils that need calcium, drywall may be applied at the rate of 10 to 25 tons per acre according to one Ohio State study. Some construction companies are grinding the drywall and using it at the building site to improve soils. For scrap drywall to be applied to soil, it should be clean, cut off waste from new construction. Scrap from old demolished buildings should not be used because it could be contaminated with lead base paint or other hazardous material.

To Inspect Corn Planter

We are starting to close in on corn planting time. Is your corn planter ready for planting?

According to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent, what your corn planter does or does not do will have a lot of bearing on the type of corn crop you will be

harvesting in the fall. Plant population is the single biggest factor in corn yields that a corn grower has control over. A properly adjusted corn planter has 99 per cent effect on desired plant populations. Step one in getting the corn planter ready to plant is to read the owners manual.

The second step is to go over every nut, bolt, spring, chain and everything else and replace all worn or broken parts. After all worn or broken parts are replaced, it is time to start adjusting the planter.

To Adjust Corn Planter

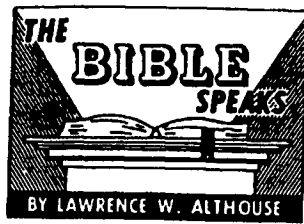
There are many important adjustments to be made to your corn planter, according to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent. The goal of a properly adjusted corn planter is to drop the correct number of seeds, deposit them at the depth at which they will germinate and grow, place the proper amount of any fertilizer or

insecticides applied with the planting operation, and then close the seed furrow.

Penn State research shows that plant populations between 26,000 and 32,000 plants per acre will produce the most corn even in dry years. Check to see what your seed dealer suggests. Once all the adjustments are made, it is time to put some corn in the hoppers and check to see what happens. First drop the seed on top of the ground to see how many seeds are dropped and how uniform the spacing is. If that checks out, put the planter into some prepared ground and see where the seed is placed.

Do not forget to continue to make these checks throughout the planting season. Remember, if you do not plant it, it will not grow!

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "You cannot reach your goals without occasionally taking some long shots."



THE WHOLE STORY

February 28, 1999

Background Scripture:

Titus 2:11-14;
Hebrews 12:18-29;
Revelation 1:17-20; 11:15-19
Devotional Reading:
I Peter 1:3-9

It seems I have known the story of "Pandora's Box" since early childhood — but not the whole story.

Pandora was the lovely bride sent to Epimetheus by Zeus. Pandora and Epimetheus lived happily together until one day Mercury brought them a beautiful golden casket for them to enjoy but with the specific instruction that it was not to be opened under any circumstances. Pandora, however, was as curious as she was lovely and, one day, while her husband was away, she pried open the box, just a little, but enough so that out flew a swarm of biting and stinging insects. She quickly closed it but it was too late. The insects even found and harassed Epimetheus and his friends. The poisons of the insect stings were *suspicion, hatred, fear and malice*. When Epimetheus returned home there was a bitter quarrel and Pandora was reduced to tears.

That is all I remembered of the story, but today I discovered the ending I had either never known or perhaps heard and forgot. While they were quarreling, the lovers heard from within the casket a sweet voice, calling: "Let me out! Let me soothe your pain." Fearfully, they opened the box and out flew a dazzling butterfly. As it lighted on the two lovers their pains were healed and they resumed their happy life together. The butterfly's name, you see, was Hope.

A GREATER HOPE

There are many tragic stories in the world but the healing power of hope is often the part of the story that is either unheard or unremembered. How tragic, for it is an essential element of life. "Man is based on hope," wrote Thomas Carlyle. "He has no other possession than hope." It has been demonstrated by medical researchers that hope — in the physician's skill, the medicine or therapy prescribed or in the providence of

God — is a demonstrable ingredient in recovery from illness and injury.

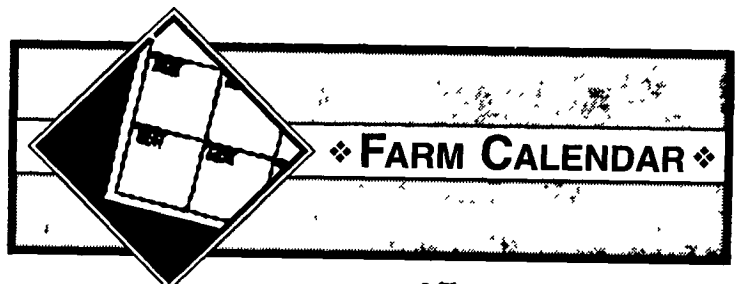
As followers of Jesus Christ our hope, I believe, is even more powerful and trustworthy because our hope is based upon the One who created the universe and sent Jesus Christ to reconcile everything, especially humankind, to himself. In his letter to Titus, Paul calls this "our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior: Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity. . ." (Titus 1:13,14).

This hope is presented in a variety of ways in the New Testament. Hebrews speaks of "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, as our ultimate destination," a promise guaranteed in the new covenant mediated by Christ. There is nothing in this temporal world in which we presently live that cannot or has not been shaken literally and figuratively. But our hope is in "a kingdom that cannot be shaken." When we see things all about us breaking up and collapsing, we look toward that kingdom unshaken and unshakable.

VISIONS OF HOPE

In Revelation, Christian hope is anchored on the resurrected and glorified Christ who assures us, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8). In John's vision Christ says: "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one . . . and I have the keys of Death and Hades" (1:17,18). Revelation 11:15 gives us another allusion to hope: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

In the Bible and in our own lives there are innumerable ways to speak of the Christian hope, but at the bottom line of each there is one reality. I remember how John Bright put it in *The Kingdom of God*: "So it was that Jeremiah could never believe that the national ruin was the end. True, he could see no cause to hope; but he never lost hope, because he never lost God." That's the whole story!



Saturday, February 27

- Woodlot Owners Workshop, Franklin County extension office, 9 a.m.-noon.
- Commercial Rabbit Production, Pleasant Valley Community Center, Oakland, Md.
- Md. Jersey Cattle Club, Woodboro Activities Hall, 10:30 a.m.
- Landscaping Mini-Conference, Carroll County Cooperative Extension, Westminster, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Crop Management Schools, Hamlin Diner, Hamlin, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- Northeast Regional Christmas Tree Growers Meeting and Trade Show, Chateau Resort and Conference Center, Tannersville, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
- York Garden and Flower Show, York Fairgrounds Expo Center, York thru Feb. 28.

Sunday, February 28

- Monday, March 1
- Act 6 Nutrient Management Certification/Plan Writing Seminar, Blair/Bedford, Morris Cove Memorial Park, Martinsburg, fert 3/1, certification 3/8, exam 3/15.
- Corn Planter Clinic, Greenline Supply, Dunningville, 7 p.m.
- Fulton County Applicator Recertification, Forbes Road High School, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.

- Tuesday, March 2
- Lancaster County Dairy Days 2, Farm and Home Center, 9:30

- a.m.
- Tri-County Agronomy School, Gratz Community Center, Gratz, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Calf Feeder School, Walker Township Building, Pleasant Gap, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Central Susquehanna Valley Turf and Ornamental Meeting, Best Western County Cupboard Inn, Lewisburg, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
- Crops Fair, Westmoreland County Extension Office, Greensburg, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
- Washington County Cooperative

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Editor,
Several members of the Progressive Agriculture Organization (Pro-Ag) have been in Harrisburg, during the last two weeks passing out pertinent information concerning the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact (Compact) to the members of the Pennsylvania Senate and House of Representatives.

The information passed out contained fact sheets relating to the Compact from the Northeast Dairy Compact Commission,

Montpelier, Vermont. Also a letter was passed out from Pro-Ag illustrating why the Compact is needed.

Arden Tewsbury, manager of Pro-Ag said we also handed out information illustrating that during the last six months of 1997 there was 21 million pounds more of Class I (fluid) sales in the Compact area as compared to the last six months of 1996.

The Compact was not in exist-

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Lancaster Farming
Established 1955
Published Every Saturday
Ephrata Review Building
1 E. Main St.
Ephrata, PA 17522
- by -
Lancaster Farming, Inc.
A Steinman Enterprise
William J. Burgess General Manager
Everett R. Newswanger Managing Editor
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