



OPINION

Pennsylvania - Leading The Way In Egg Safety

A great deal of discussion has developed recently which questions the safety of eggs in the American food supply. However, Pennsylvania has the most intensely monitored salmonella enteritidis risk reduction program in the United States according to Jim Shirk at the Pennsylvania Poultry Council. Pennsylvania is the 4th largest egg-producing state in the country and takes food safety very seriously, placing it's money where the omelets are, so to speak.

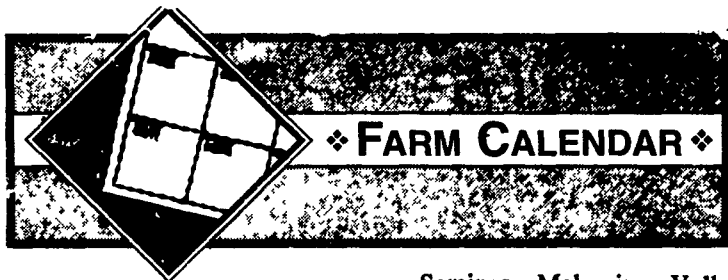
Pennsylvania's consumer protection program for eggs has led the way for almost 10 years and now stands at the forefront of national standards through a program called PEQAP, the Pennsylvania Egg Quality Assurance Program. This is a voluntary program administered by the Penn Ag Poultry Council, created by the egg industry and monitored by the Department of Agriculture. The Department of Health serves as an advisor to the program and the FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition provides additional support. The Pennsylvania Animal Diagnostic Laboratories at Penn State University, the University of Pennsylvania New Bolton Center, and the Department of Agriculture provide laboratory testing of eggs and environmental samples.

The PEQAP guidelines cover egg production and assure the commitment of the producer to implement the best management and monitoring practices most likely to prevent SE contamination.

Refrigeration at 45 degrees from farm to retailer is a mandatory component of the PEQAP program. Other basic measures include continuous environmental testing of layers and pullet houses, buying only SE-negative chicks, utilizing an intensively monitored rodent control program, and cleaning and disinfecting between flocks. Any positive eggs, eggs that are found to contain the salmonella enteritidis organism, are automatically diverted to a pasteurizing facility and then removed from the table egg market.

According to a 15 member Review Team Report prepared by the Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and USDA dated January 18, 1997, it was stated "PEQAP can serve as a prototype for the egg industry in the development of egg quality assurance programs and the industry should adopt quality assurance programs based on interventions developed in the Pennsylvania Pilot Project and used in the Pennsylvania Egg Quality Assurance Program."

Consumers can recognize eggs produced under the most intensely monitored system by looking for the PEQAP symbol on each carton of eggs packed by participating companies.



❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

Saturday, September 25
 Bloomsburg Fair, Bloomsburg, thru Oct. 2.
 Rural Youth Reunion, Leola Family Restaurant, noon-4 p.m.
 Horse Show to Benefit Make-A-Wish Foundation, Quentin Riding Club.
 Howard County Farm Heritage Days, Mt. Pleasant Farm, Woodstock, Md., 9 a.m.-6 p.m., also Sunday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 20th Annual Falmouth Goat Race, Falmouth, 9 a.m.
Sunday, September 26
 1999 World Fertilizer Conference, New York Marriott Marquis, thru Sept. 28.
 Lancaster County 4-H Therapeutic Riding Program Benefit Trail Ride, Fair Hill, Md., 11 a.m.
Monday, September 27
 Northeast Region Fall Turfgrass

Seminar, Mahoning Valley Ambulance Association, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
 Pa. Grazing Lands Forage Conservation Coalition, Pasture Renovation Program, Berks County Ag Center, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.
Tuesday, September 28
 Morrison Cove Community Fair, Martinsburg, thru Oct. 1.
 New Holland Farmers Fair, New Holland, thru Oct. 2.
 Dressage At Devon, thru Oct. 3.
 Pumpkin Variety Demonstration Meeting, Grim's Greenhouse Farm Market, Breinigsville, 1:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.
 Selling Produce To Supermarkets, Weis Markets, Lewisburg, 7 p.m.
 Dairy Systems Management Tour, Pleasant Valley Jerseys, Chambersburg, 10 a.m.-11:40 a.m.
 Dairy Systems Management Tour,



Now Is The Time
 By John Schwartz
 Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Consider Hessian Fly Free Date

Farmers planting wheat will soon be able to plant without regard for the Hessian fly for this fall, according to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent. Although many of the wheat varieties grown today are resistant to the Hessian fly, some varieties should still be planted after the fly free date to avoid damage. About 40 percent of the wheat varieties are still susceptible to the fly.

The fly free date in Pennsylvania ranges from the last week of September in the north to the first week of October in the south depending on weather conditions. With this fall's warmer than normal weather, the fly free date may be a little later.

The adult fly only lives for about one week. If it can find emerging wheat, barley or rye, it will over winter there as a pupa. If it is unable to find one of these host plants, the fly dies. In the spring, surviving pupa will hatch and new adult flies will emerge to lay eggs on the leaves. The eggs hatch and the young will feed under the leaf sheath near the node of the stem.

The stem is weakened and will usually break off before harvest time. If you are planning on using wheat as a forage crop, the Hessian fly is really not a problem.

To Beware of Silo Fires

The summer's dry weather in many parts of Pennsylvania may be causing an increased risk of tower silo fires from a lack of proper forage moisture content and/or from poor fermentation of silage. This could lead to the production of greater amounts of volatile gases that could ignite a silo fire.

Dennis Murphy, Penn State Farm Safety professor, explains that the moisture content for forages stored in a silo should be between 45 and 65 percent. If the moisture content falls below 45 percent, fire risk increases. He adds that several gases including hydrogen and methane, are by products of fermenting silage.

If excess gases are present, they could burst into flames if exposed to a source of ignition, such as static electricity or sparks created during the loading or blowing of silage. Other potential ignition sources are barn lights or other electrical equipment near or at the base of unloading chutes.

To reduce the risk of silo fires, take the following precautions:

- Peckman Homestead Farms Inc., Chambersburg, 1 p.m.-3 p.m.
- ADADC Dist. 5 Meeting, Howe's Cavern Restaurant, Howe's

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1. Test moisture of the forage being ensiled.
2. Water down silo unloading chutes.
3. Provide plenty of ventilation around the silo, especially at loading areas and the up chutes. Use a barn fan to keep extra oxygen moving up the silo chute. This helps prevent the generation of excess silo gases and dilutes the gases present, keeping them from reaching explosive concentrations.
4. Clean off chaff and other debris from the silo chute and from around the rungs or frame of chute doors.

To Beware of Silo Gases

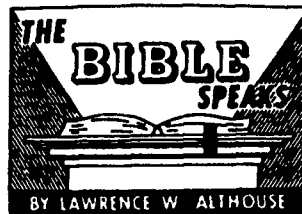
Dennis Murphy, Penn State Farm Safety professor, reminds us that silo gases are toxic, especially in the first 48 to 60

hours after filling.

If you must enter the silo within the first 48 to 60 hours, protect yourself by wearing a self-contained breathing apparatus. If you do not have access to one, stay out of the silo. Dangerous levels of silo gas may be present for an additional two to three weeks.

To enter without a self contained breathing apparatus during this period, ventilate with the silo blower. Open all doors, run the blower fan for 20 minutes and leave it running while you are in the silo. Enter only after you have put on a respirator for toxic dust. Also, have a second person with you to assist in an emergency.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "Countless, unseen details are often the only difference between mediocre and magnificent."



FINDING YOUR 'HOLY PLACES'
 September 26, 1999

Background Scripture:
 Exodus 40:1-33; Leviticus 26
Devotional Reading:
 Psalms 84

When I was a teenager, I went to our church camp in Perkaspie, Pennsylvania. The place was called Perkaspie Park and it wasn't so much a camp as an old-fashioned camp meeting grounds. We lived in wooden cottages that surrounded a large wooden tabernacle. It really wasn't a camp experience at all, but that is what we called it and for me, as well as many others, it was life-changing.

When I think about it now, I realize that teenagers today would not want to go to a place like that. The buildings had only a minimum of the basic comforts. Today, they would probably be judged fire hazards. Even then in the mid to late 1940s, the physical set-up seemed antiquated, a step back into the prior century.

Carved into a modest wooded hill, was a simple amphitheater overlooking a small stream. We called it "The Dell" and it was for us a holy place. A Perkaspie tradition required that we maintain silence from the time we approached the Dell until at the conclusion we passed the first cottage. The silence was broken only by the words of the worship leader and the singing of hymns.

A HOLY PLACE

Many years later, I happened to be in the neighborhood and I went to see what had become of Perkaspie Park. Vacant of youth and their leaders, the park seemed a sad and deserted place, a virtual ghost town. I walked to The Dell, now overgrown and obscure in disuse. At first, I felt nothing, but remembering the inspiring moments I had experienced there, for a few moments The Dell was a holy place again.

Since those distant days, I have traveled around the world visiting sites held to be holy places. For me, some of them were holy and some were not—Lourdes was, Fatima was not, Assisi was, the Vatican City was not—and I have thought much about what it is that makes a

place holy. What made the burning bush of Moses holy ground? Why was the tabernacle of the Israelites believed to be "most holy"? Did God make The Dell for us a holy place or was it our faith that generated that numinous response. Or was it both?

All of use need to have one or more holy places, sites where God seems more present, where that indefinable but almost palpable sense of holiness envelopes us. I realize that what makes a place feel holy is not that God is more truly there than somewhere else. God is everywhere, but there are some places where we feel him more truly. I believe it is our heightened sense of faith that admits more of God into our hearts in some places that accounts for that intensified sense of holiness.

MORE KEENLY FOCUSED

This is perhaps a key to understanding the tabernacle that became so important to the people of Israel while Moses led them in the wilderness. God was everywhere then, too, but the Israelites needed somewhere specific where their sense of God's presence could be more keenly focused. "Then you shall take the anointing oil," God told Moses, "and anoint the tabernacle and all that is within it, and consecrate it and all its furniture; and it shall become holy. You shall also anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar; and the altar shall be most holy" (Exodus 40:9, 10).

All of us today, maybe as never before, need some holy places where God is most keenly experienced and obeyed. For many people, their churches are holy places, not because God has blessed a particular style of architecture, a specific church location, or a strange brand of denomination, but because the faith and devotion people bring there can make them holy places.

If your church is not a holy place, if there are no holy places in your life, don't ask God for a reason. Ask yourself.

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