



OPINION

The Other Side Of The Story

In case you haven't noticed, one of agriculture's former top spokespersons has gone to the other side. Dr. David Brubaker from Lititz, who until last spring was an executive official of PennAg Industries Association, is now the director of the New York City-based Global Resource Action Center for the Environment's Factory Farm Project. In a recent interview, Brubaker is quoted with many disparaging remarks against the industry that has for a number of years put the food on his personal table.

Let it first be said, there is no such thing as a "factory farm." These are efficient food production units that help make America the best-fed nation in the world. And even the delicious ham and bacon they produce has recently been used in a special diet to help people loose weight.

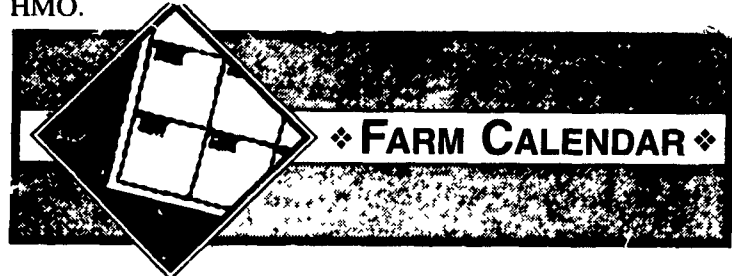
As for pollution of streams near hog and poultry operations, the facts often don't match the accusations. In the article, Brubaker sites the recent floods in North Carolina last month from Hurricane Floyd as proof that manure from giant feedlots were responsible for contributing to "toxic, fish-killing plume in stream and ocean waters." What he didn't say was that every septic tank and municipal sewer in the area was also flooded out with worse "toxic, fish-killing plume" than anything the hogs produced. And he also didn't say that in normal times, the streams that flow by these efficient food production units in North Carolina are some of the cleanest streams in the nation.

In Pennsylvania, Wide Awake Farm, a 1,250 sow, farrow-to-feeder farm, near Clearville, in Bedford County, owned by Purina Mills, has just received the Chesapeake Bay environmental stewardship award. Their manure storage basin is lined in the bottom and frequently inspected. They use the best manure management technology to fertilize the crops on their farm rather than discharge nitrates into the streams like many municipal sewage plants do. To be so favorably recognized, you can be sure Wide Awake Farm is enhancing the environment with their operation and not degrading it.

The men and women in agriculture are in the forefront of insuring that we achieve the best balance of safe, efficient, food production and environmental protection. Members of PennAg Industries cooperate with federal and state governments to set standards and rules. They help develop new techniques for odor control, water conservation, improved feeds and best management practices to protect the environment.

As Walt Peechatka, the present executive vice president of PennAg Industries, wrote in a letter to this editor (Farm Forum this issue), "The article tried to create a picture of pathetically drugged animals wedged in giant factory barns. A tour of a local advanced farm would show that is wrong. The truth is that these livestock get better care and live in better conditions than many people do around our globe."

Most livestock live with better nutrition than most people, and have better health care than you can get from your local HMO.



◆ FARM CALENDAR ◆

Saturday, October 16

Ayrshire Golden Milk Sale, Empire Livestock, Dryden, N.Y.

Wyoming County Sheep and Wool Producers Association annual meeting and roast lamb dinner, United Methodist Church, Centermoreland, 6 p.m.

Sunday, October 17

Monday, October 18

Berks County Open House and 85th Anniversary Celebration, 3:30 p.m.-9 p.m., Berks County Ag Center.

ADADC Dist. 14 meeting, Tally-Ho Restaurant, Kanona, N.Y., 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, October 19

Wyoming County Extension 8th Annual Dinner Meeting, Eldred

Township Fire Hall, Warrensville, dinner 7 p.m.
Forest Management Program,
(Turn to Page A11)



◆ FARM FORUM ◆

(Continued from Page A1)

erinary services who know little or nothing about animals or veterinary medicine. Since the legislation was introduced however, it has repeatedly been pointed out that alternative healthcare modalities are not usually found in the curriculum of veterinary



Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Pick Up Farm Show Catalog

The 2000 Pennsylvania State Farm Show is rapidly approaching. The show dates for 2000 is January 8 to 13. The premium lists are now available at your county Penn State Cooperative Extension office.

The premium lists provides you with information on the Farm Show including rules and regulations, classes, entry forms, entry deadlines and tentative schedule of events. Remember, several of the classes have October, November and December entry dates.

Pick up your Farm Show Premium List now and plan your entries for Farm Show. Also, mark your calendars now and plan to attend the 2000 edition of the Pennsylvania State Farm Show.

To Recognize Environmental Improvement

According to a report from the Pacific Research Institute (PRI), there has been dramatic improvements in environmental quality since 1970. Contrary to public belief, toxic industrial releases are way down and overall United States (U.S.) environmental quality has improved dramatically since 1970. The 1999 Index is PRI's fourth annual checkup on the U.S. environment, which is based on government data collected over the past 20 years.

The report makes the following claims. First, ambient air pollution levels dropped significantly between 1976 and 1997.

Second, the releases of toxic chemicals have dropped at least one third since 1988. According to PRI, only two percent of the cancer cases are caused by manmade environmental factors (chemicals) while 75 percent of all cancers are caused by lifestyle factors such as diet, tobacco and alcohol.

Third, the discharges of toxic metals and organics from point sources have dropped 98 percent since 1993. Fourth, There has

schools, which would render veterinarians less qualified to utilize those modalities than properly trained practitioners.

During the course of hearings recently conducted by the House Professional Licensure Committee, it became evident that there is a great deal of

(Turn to Page A35)

been a 97 percent reduction of lead in the U.S. air. This was achieved primarily by introducing unleaded gasoline and eliminating lead compounds in paints and coatings. The report notes the average blood lead level in children ages one to five has dropped 76 percent since 1976 and 83 percent in children ages 6 to 19.

To Look At Land Conversion

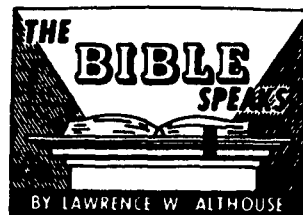
According to a report issued by the Pacific Research Institute (PRI), a San Francisco based think tank, land conversion has slowed. They say almost 30 percent of the total land area in the United States is now covered by forests.

The net growth of trees has exceeded net harvest every year since 1950. More than two thirds

of the United States deforestation had occurred between 1850 and 1910. In addition, wetlands to cropland conversion is decreasing dramatically. PRI says for every 60 acres of wetlands converted to cropland annually from 1954 to 1974 only three acres were converted from 1982 to 1992.

This is an excellent example people are responding to public policy and not having their results reported. Thus, the general public is operating under the impression nothing is being done. We need to be more active educating people about our successes and the changes we are making to our businesses to improve food safety and protecting the environment.

Feather Prof's Footnote:
"Coming together is a beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is a success."



YOUR DESERT YEARS

October 17, 1999

Background Scripture:
Deuteronomy 1:41 through 2:25
Devotional Reading:
Isaiah 35

How curious! For much of the time they were in the Sinai wilderness, the people of Israel longed to return to Egypt. Once they had settled in the Promised Land, however, they forever looked back to the 'good old days' in the desert. True, it had been a time of great peril and hardship, but the desert years had also been a time when they felt they were very close the the Lord.

A few years ago on a cruise, we anchored at Sharm El Sheikh, a resort on the Red Sea coast of the Sinai peninsula. From there we journeyed inland to St. Catherine's Monastery and Mt. Sinai, the traditional site where Moses received the Ten Commandments. As we drove through miles and miles of desert waste, I could envision the Hebrews plodding through this inhospitable land. It is easy to understand how, in this vast, stark, lonely wilderness people saw visions and experienced mysteries of the Lord. There is nothing here of manmade sights and sounds to distract the spirit.

So, the desert may have both negative and positive connotations. It is a hard place, granting few if any comforts. It is also a lonely place and we often feel totally miniaturized by its vastness. Living here is mostly a matter of survival, enduring physical, mental and even spiritual deprivation. It constantly tests us.

THE MIDST OF A CROWD

We can experience 'desert years' without actually going out into the physical desert. It is possible to experience it wherever we are. One can feel lost and lonely in the midst of a crowd. Like the 12 tribes of Israel we can wander aimlessly through life, not living so much as simply surviving.

The wilderness experience, whether literal or figurative, can have positive effects. I have heard more than a few couples tell me that the happiest years of their lives were those when they had to struggle to make ends meet. As uncomfortable as these times were, they gave

these people a sense of God's presence and provision for their daily needs. God was more real to them then because they knew they were so dependent upon his providence. The Lord's Prayer petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," meant so much because they were living day to day on God's goodness. Later, prospering and living in abundance, they admitted, they were less likely to acknowledge God's presence.

Lonely as the desert may be, we are even more aware of God's presence. Moses says to the people of Israel, "Surely the Lord God has blessed you in all your undertakings; he knows your going through this great wilderness" (Deut. 2:7). In the wilderness it may seem God is more aware of us and we are more aware of him. Perhaps we 'see' him here because there are fewer 'things' to get in our way.

LEARNING TO TRUST

The desert tests our faith, just as Jesus was tempted there. When I arrived in Dallas, Texas in 1975 I was confronted with an opportunity to continue my ministry on a fee basis. For all of my working life I had earned and lived on a regular salary. The thought of cutting myself loose from a regular salary really made me fearful. After much wrestling with God and myself, I finally told God I would trust him to make ends meet.

That was almost a quarter of a century ago and I still marvel that somehow God always seems to provide enough for us. The '70s and the '80s were my 'desert years.' In them I learned to appreciate what Moses told the people of Israel in the desert: "These 40 years the Lord your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing" (Deut. 2:7)

The desert years are those in which we may learn to entrust ourselves in his hands. That is one of the hardest, yet most necessary things the Christian can learn. If there are still some desert years before you, don't fight them. They could turn out to be the best years of your life.

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 Editor

Copyright 1999 by Lancaster Farming