

Lancaster Farming

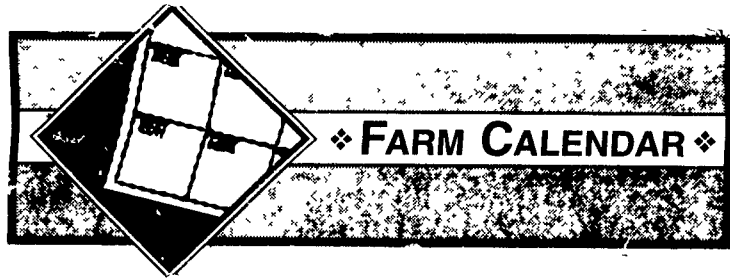
OPINION

Animal Agriculture Essential To Ensure Adequate Global Food Supply

The Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST), an international consortium of 38 scientific and professional societies, released a report in which an international task force of 13 scientists discusses projected demand for human food and the importance of animal agriculture in meeting these needs. These scientists represented a wide range of environmental and agriculture viewpoints. And they concluded that animal agriculture is an integral part of food-producing systems, with foods of animal origin representing about one-sixth of human food energy and one-third of human food protein on a global basis.

The report highlighted one assessment of the role of animals in food production that is usually overlooked. On a global basis, less than three kilograms of grain are required to produce a kilogram of meat from and of the species and less than one kilogram of grain is needed to produce a kilogram of milk and eggs. On the average, ruminants (cattle, sheep, and goats) return more human food per unit of human-edible feed consumed because most of their feed is materials that cannot be consumed directly by humans. Of course, poultry and hogs are most efficient on the basis of total feed intake.

We believe animal agriculture will continue to be an important part of food-producing systems. Investment in agricultural production research and development and implementation of policies that encourage production while protecting the environment will be essential to achieve the goal of an adequate global food supply



Saturday, November 13
 26th Berks County Farm Tour, sponsored by Berks County Farm Bureau, noon-5 p.m., thru Nov. 14.

Sunday, November 14
 North American International Livestock Expo, Louisville, Ky., thru Nov. 16.

Monday, November 15
 Ephrata Area Young Farmers meeting, Mentoring, Ephrata High School Cafeteria, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, November 16
 Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, thru Nov. 17.

Wednesday, November 17
 Northeast Regional Greenhouse Seminar, Luzerne Community College Conference Center, Nanticoke, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 18
 ADADC Dist. 18 meeting, Yoder's Restaurant, New Holland,

Friday, November 19
 Berks County Holstein Association Annual Meeting, Ontalawance Grange Hall, Leesport, 7 p.m.

Saturday, November 20
 Mercer County Holstein Annual meeting, extension office, Mercer, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 21

Monday, November 22
 Passing On The Farm Workshop, Mercer County extension office, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, November 23
 Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Annual Agriculture Industry Banquet, Lancaster Host Resort, 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 24

Thursday, November 25
 Happy Thanksgiving! Lancaster Farming office closed.

Friday, November 26
 National 4-H Congress, Memphis, Tenn., thru Nov. 30.

Saturday, November 27
 Susquehanna County Holstein Association annual meeting, United Methodist Church, Montrose, noon.

Sunday, November 28



Now Is The Time
 By John Schwartz
 Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Do Soil Testing

Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent, reminds us soil testing is a very important activity. A regular program of testing farm fields is a must in today's regulatory environment. After a few years of regular testing to establish a base line information on fields, it is not necessary to test every field each year.

Anderson suggests the field should be tested every time the crop to be grown changes. If crops are not being rotated, then the field should be tested every third or fourth year. This allows you to monitor the nutrient levels in the soil. If the level of nutrients increases over time, fertilizer applications may be reduced. If nutrient levels are falling, additional fertilizer may be needed to keep soils productive.

When taking soil samples, send them to the same lab each year. This gives you more accurate data to look at soil fertility trends over years. Pennsylvania farmers should consider sending their samples to the Penn State lab. Fertilizer recommendations made by Penn State are based on research done in Pennsylvania under Pennsylvania growing conditions.

To Balance Cow Rations

Glenn Shirk, Lancaster County Extension Dairy Agent, remind us if cows have been having low fat tests, appetites are sluggish, lose too much flesh and lose flesh too quickly, fail to peak well and drop off milk too quickly, are "loose" and passing undigested grain and fiber in their feces, tend to be ketotic and develop laminitis, chances are they may be consuming too much grain or protein.

These problems are costly. With today's slim margins, there is no room for costly mistakes. Test your forages for nutritive value and consult a trained nutritionist for specific recommendations. Formulate a balanced ration and feed it properly. Aim to maintain an even level of high activity in the rumen throughout the day. Total mixed rations may help you accomplish this.

Otherwise, avoid feeding large slugs of grain at any one time. Limit intakes to about 6 to 8 pounds per feeding. Try to feed some forages before feeding grain.

To Test For MUN

Excess protein in the ration and in the blood stream is expensive and unhealthy, according to Glenn Shirk, Lancaster County Extension Dairy Agent. One good way to monitor protein metabolism in dairy cattle is to use the milk urea nitrogen (MUN) test on individual cows on a regular basis. This may be done through the DHIA program. Normal MUN values are 12 to 16 mg/dl. Higher levels mean:

- 1 Too much protein is being fed
- 2 Rumen degradable protein

levels are high. 3 Too little rumen degradable energy is being fed. Thus, not all of the rumen degradable protein can be utilized and some of it spills over into the blood stream as urea nitrogen. This is a costly situation for several reasons:

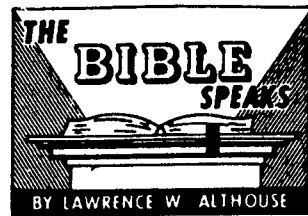
1 More purchased feed ends up being excreted and wasted.

2 A considerable amount of energy is needed to metabolize and excrete the excess protein. Less energy is available to the cow. As a result, milk production, body condition and conception suffer. MUN values generally

increase when rations contain increased amounts of haylage, lush pastures and rapidly digested protein supplements such as

soybean oil meal and urea. This is especially true when there is not an accompanying decrease in the use of protein supplements and an increase in the amount of rumen degradable energy being fed, such as high moisture corn, barley, wheat, molasses, etc. Low levels of MUN may result from feeding too little protein, too little rumen degradable protein or too little energy. This is more apt to occur on rations containing considerable amounts of hay, especially low protein and low energy hay.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "Integrity is one of several paths. It distinguishes itself from the others because it is the right path and the only one upon which you will never get lost."



DRYING UP YOUR JORDAN

November 14, 1999

Background Scripture:

Joshua 3

Devotional Reading:

Joshua 4:15-24

I could write a whole column on Joshua 3 and skillfully avoid the point at which you the reader may stumble. I could talk about how God confirmed Joshua's leadership. I could write about how the faith which the people displayed in obeying Joshua's command. I could ignore completely the difficult questions raised by this passage.

The story is not as complicated as it appears. Joshua called the people together to tell them that their crossing of the flooded Jordan River would be a sign of God's presence. Twelve men—one from each of the tribes—were to be selected. When the priests' feet touched the flood waters of the Jordan, wherever they stood, the waters would be backed up so that the people of Israel could walk across.

It is a fascinating and inspiring story, but it leaves us with some nagging questions. Did God really dry up the Jordan River so that the Israelites could cross over? Or is this simply a mythical retelling of an actual event in which the people witnessed God's help? Shall we look for similar miracles today? And, if God does not give us signs such as these, what does that mean?

SIGNS & WONDERS

First of all, I need to remind you that the term "miracle" is not a common term in the Bible. In my RSV concordance there are only twelve verses in which a word in Hebrew or Greek is translated as "miracle." In fact, even these translations are not accurate renderings of the original words. Some Bible translations do not use the word "miracle" at all. In neither the Old or New Testament was there a concept of "miracle," which is today popularly understood as a supernatural event. The terms "supernatural" and "natural" had no meaning in Biblical times.

Instead, the usual rendering of such events was "signs and wonders" and my Bible dictionary speaks of it as an "event... in which one sees an act or revelation of God." The three principal New Testament words for miracles are *dunamis* ("powers" or "acts of power," "mighty works"), *terata* ("wonders") and *semeia*

("signs"). The question as to whether these signs and wonders violated the natural order—the problem with which we wrestle—never occurred to them.

So, in both the Old and New Testaments people saw God at work in wonderful events which were beyond their ordinary experience. If that is what you mean by "miracle," that I have no problem in confirming that God still performs signs and wonders today. He may have divided the Red Sea for Moses, stopped up the Jordan for Joshua, and multiplied the loaves and fishes for Jesus. I don't doubt that these things can happen. At the same time I don't believe they have to happen today in order for us to see God in the signs and wonders he does perform in our midst.

GOD'S PRESENCE

I have never seen anyone walk on water, but I have seen a man walk on coals so hot I could not approach them. I have known people who believe that they received a healing by means which appeared to them to be a sign of God's love and care. I knew a woman who was so accurate in prophesying airplane crashes that the FAA gave her a direct line to report her visions. You see, it is not the possibility or impossibility of the events that makes them "signs and wonders," but the extent to which we can see in them the presence of God.

My call to the ministry 48 years ago, an indescribable experience on a high speed trolley line between Philadelphia and Norristown, PA, was a mystical experience that changed my life. I can't tell you whether it was "natural" or "supernatural": but I think I would be content to call it "supernormal"—beyond my normal experience. I realize that psychologists might explain it away, but all that matters is that in that experience I heard God speak to me.

So, the question remains: must God perform "impossible" extravaganzas in order to reveal himself to us? Must God dry up your own Jordan River in order to give you a sign for your life? I think not. If he does, that is a bonus, but in the meantime look for the "signs and wonders" he places all about you.

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