

Lancaster Farming
OPINION

The Holiday Season - Count Blessings, Make Changes!

The holiday season is a time to reflect on the past year's events - to celebrate our accomplishments, to realize opportunities for improvement, and to count our blessings

Yes, that's right, count our blessings. Many times we take for granted in the daily rush to get things done how fortunate we actually are. We are often reminded that farming is the most dangerous occupation; however, seldom do we think of this when we are rushing to get a field of hay in before it rains, or hanging a milker on a fresh heifer for the first time. Taking risks and chances has become so much a part of our daily lives that we assume that nothing will happen to us

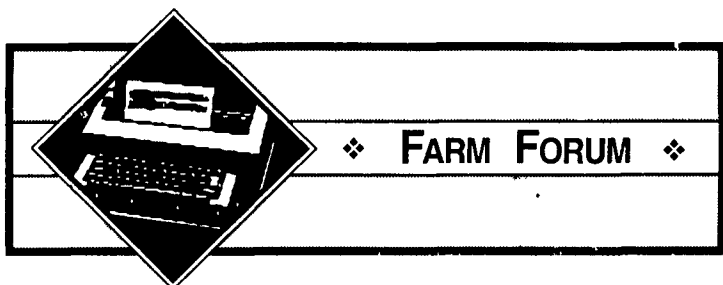
Unfortunately, no one is immune to farm accidents. This past summer, my grandfather, Russell K. Dietrich, was tragically killed when the skid loader he was operating tipped forward, ejecting him from the operator's platform. Recently, 13 year old Nathan Peifer of Cochranville was a victim of a power takeoff accident. A few years ago, I also was involved in a PTO entanglement. When some silage fell down the front of my shirt from the wagon I was unloading, I hurriedly untucked my shirt and flushed it through, never bothering to tuck my shirt back in. A few loads later, when I reached over the PTO shaft to shut the beaters off on the self-unloading wagon, my shirt tail became entangled in the shaft. The only thing I knew to do at that point was to hold on with all my strength to keep myself from going around. It kept winding my shirt and ripping it off my body, until it got to the collar. Then it started to pull me down towards the shaft. I came so close to becoming entangled that my chin had cuts on it where it was hitting the shaft. At the last final second, my collar tore and I was free. It was a complete miracle! Half of my shirt was going around the shaft, and half of it was still on my body.

I was very fortunate to be given a second chance. However, there isn't a day that goes by that I don't feel the effects of that accident. Many people are not that fortunate.

Please, take time this holiday season to talk with your kids, your parents, your hired help - anyone who helps out on your farm, and remind them of the dangers present in their daily routine. Many of them will think it's silly and unnecessary. Do it anyway

The winter months are also a good time to do some needed repair on your equipment. Remember those shields you took off and threw next to the barn because they were "in the way"? Well, it's time to dig them out of the weeds, bang them straight with a hammer, and re-install them. If they're beyond repair, buy new ones. It's a good time to fix hydraulic leaks, too, which can be severe fire hazards, and maybe even fix that gate which has been tied with baler twine since early summer. The list can go on forever.

Farming will always be a dangerous occupation. This will never change. However, with a positive attitude and a conscious effort, we can reduce the risk, and continue to farm into the next millennium --Steve Dietrich, Chester Co extension agent.



Editor:

It saddens me deeply to read your OPINION in last week's edition.

In fact I know your are speaking from your heart, or you would not have said it

The heart of the dairy industry is also broken. It's my opinion, that three quarters of them don't know why they are sad.

They are supposed to be living the good life. With the best technology, the newest pricing structure and large co-ops helping them make a living

They are sad however

Confused and weak from being helplessly dependent on "their leaders."

Again I could go on for a long time here, describing to you, feelings of grief. However, I want to compliment you, editor, for making your opinion short and plain and deliberate. Making many very good points, with common sense slang.

I have followed your paper for years and have heard many wonderful things about the variety of articles and advertisements from many farmers all

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Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Understand Highway Safety

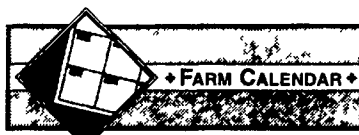
Farming is dangerous in the field. However, the danger often increases when you leave the field and enter the highway. Despite the increased use of the Slow moving Vehicle (SMV) emblems, there are still too many deaths and injuries to farm equipment operators on the highway

According to the National Safety Council, over 40,000 unintentional fatal injuries are caused by motor vehicles. Motor vehicle collisions with farm vehicles and horse drawn vehicles contribute to that staggering number. It is estimated that there are more than 20,000 highway accidents involving farm equipment resulting in 125 deaths annually. The number of farm accidents can be reduced with advance planning and the use of safety equipment. Most farm machinery accidents happen during daylight hours on dry highways that are open and level.

The three most common types of collisions involves the following: left turn collisions that happen as motor vehicles attempt to pass, rear end collisions that happen when motorist fails to slow down for the slow moving farm equipment; and collisions as motorists try to pass extra wide or extra long farm vehicles

To Improve Highway Safety Methods

Research at Iowa State has concluded that one device is not adequate to warn motorists of a slow moving vehicle (SMV). SMV emblems, highly visible flags and rotating lights were all effective warning devices for motorists. In a separate test, motorists were asked by highway patrolmen what they had seen in the past mile. Thirty percent did not remember passing a tractor with a SMV emblem. This emphasizes the need for defensive driving and the use of all possible and practical warning devices available to warn motorists of the slow moving equipment on the road. Farmers need to make equipment more visible.



Saturday, December 18

Sunday, December 19

Monday, December 20

Capitol Region Crop Insect and Disease Management School, Landisville Research Center, Landisville, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., thru Dec. 21.

Octorara Young Farmer meeting,

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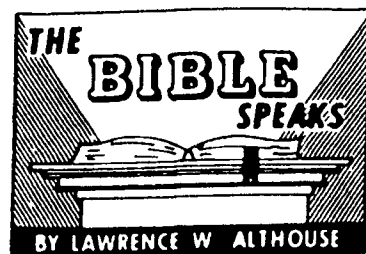
To Practice Highway Safety
The following are some safety tips to reduce highway accidents.

Consider using battery powered intermittent lights. New tractors that are equipped with running, turning and stopping lights should have these lights extended to include all pulled equipment. Use routes that are less traveled and have good road conditions even if it takes longer to go that way. Avoid traveling at dawn, dusk or anytime visibility is poor. Use proper signals for turning and stopping. Only licensed experienced drivers

should operate slow moving vehicles on the road.

Make sure you lock brakes together when traveling on the road. Keep equipment on the traveled portion of the road. When traffic builds up, make a safe pullover and allow the vehicles to pass. Use a safety hitch pin and safety chains. Use an extendible rear view mirror. Never allow passengers on the equipment.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote "We must adjust to an ever changing road while holding onto our unchanging principles."



ARE YOU SURE YOU KNOW THE STORY?
December 19, 1999

Background Scripture:

Matthew 1

Background Scripture:

John 1:1-14

Matthew tells us that Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, when he learned that Mary, his betrothed, was pregnant, "being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly." (The divorce would have been from betrothal, not 'marriage'). But in a dream, Joseph was warned by an angel: "... do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit, she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." So, when Joseph awoke from his dream "he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him."

I think not enough is made over Joseph in doing this. He truly was magnanimous and obedient to the Lord. Some old legends have inferred that Joseph didn't accept this turn of events quite as passively as Matthew would have us believe. The "Cherry Tree Carol," which probably dates back to Medieval times, tells a story that is both humorous and poignant. The carol says that Joseph was an old man when he wedded Mary. One day, Joseph and the pregnant Mary were walking through a garden and Mary spotted a cherry tree. Instantly craving the cherries, Mary asked Joseph to get her some and this ensues:

*O then bespoke Joseph,
With answer most unkind,
'Let him pluck thee a cherry
That brought thee now with child.'*

*O then bespoke the baby
Within his mother's womb—
'Bow down then the tallest tree
For my mother to have some.'*

The cherry tree bends down to give its fruits to Mary

*O then bespoke Joseph—
'I have done Mary wrong,
But now cheer up, my dearest*

And do not be cast down.'

There is, of course, nothing of this story in the New Testament. It was simply an attempt by Medieval Christians to put the Holy Family in a somewhat more human, understandable light. Many of our traditional carols attempt to humanize the Nativity of Christ. This makes Joseph's forbearance even more impressive, for he was not an actor from central casting, but a real live man with human emotions and limitations. Unfortunately, we are so accustomed to the ethereal images of Mary, Joseph and the Baby Jesus, that we forget the very human side of the story. Joseph, despite the angelic dream, undoubtedly experienced some local contempt and humiliation in Nazareth. Mary suffered the pain of childbirth. Jesus experienced what all infants experience— including wet diapers.

The stable/cave was not a Christmas card setting, but probably smelled bad as stables smell. It was not romantic, the colors were probably not pastels, and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir had not yet held its first rehearsal.

In other words, this was not just the first ever Christmas pageant; this was real life with real people in a world that was all-too-real. Today as in Medieval times, Joseph would be ridiculed, Mary disqualified and her child would be the object of derision. The miracle of the Nativity story is that in this all-too-human milieu, God caused a child to be born to "save his people from their sins." In this most improbable setting, God fulfilled what the prophets had looked for: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (1:23).

Whenever we get to thinking we really know this story too well, we need to take another look and see what new message God might be imparting to us in it.

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—by—

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