

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Ready To Give Up?

Agricultural economist Luther Tweeten, Ohio State University, thinks the three member nations of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) should follow Europe by adopting its own common currency.

According to Tweeten, common currency would help farmers in Canada, Mexico, and the United States by easing the impact of fluctuating international currency rates that affect the value of products sold in cross-border trade. Farming is already one of the riskiest businesses due to unpredictable weather, pests and markets, and a single currency would provide at least one aspect of stability.

"My proposal would reduce what we call 'exchange rate risk' in agriculture," Tweeten said. "It's one of the instabilities in the market we wouldn't have to put up with anymore. We could do away with that if we had a common currency."

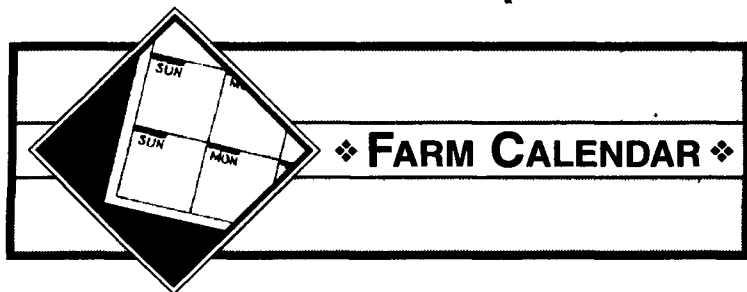
Tweeten, who has argued the case to U.S. trade policymakers, said that a common currency should be the next level for discussion between the three nations, which formed the world's second largest free-trade zone in 1994, although there's still more work to be done on reducing trade barriers. "If France and Germany in the European Union (EU) can get together despite historical animosities that run long and deep, I think surely we can get together," the ag economist said.

The EU, which is the largest free-trade zone, adopted a common currency, the euro, on Jan. 1, 1999. And talk of a common currency is a hot topic among economists, business people and finance ministers in other parts of the world, thus dispelling the notion "it's a revolutionary thing," Tweeten said.

For example, this summer Ecuador boldly adopted the U.S. dollar as its official currency as a step against hyperinflation; to stop devaluation of the national currency, the sucre; and to promote foreign investment in the South American nation.

A common currency is a great facilitator for trade and investment, and I think ultimately it's good for the world," Tweeten said.

But we have questions. Would this inflate the dollar and offset any gains in a lower exchange rate risk? Would this further get us ready to give up our U.S. sovereignty in favor of one world government? Think about it.



Saturday, September 2
Lehigh County 4-H Livestock Roundup Sale, at the Great Allentown Fair, 3 p.m.
Mon Valley District Dairy Show, Washington County Fairgrounds, 9 a.m.
Northwest District Dairy Show, Crawford County Fairgrounds, Meadville, 8:30 a.m.
Berks County Holstein Club visit to Stoltzfus Family Dairy, Somerset County, leaves Fleetwood Grange at 7 a.m., returns 7:30 p.m.
Juniata County Fair, thru Sept. 9.

Sunday, September 3
Cambria County Fair, thru Sept. 9
Spartansburg Community Fair, thru Sept. 9
Monday, September 4
Lancaster Farming office closed.
Ox Hill Community Fair, thru Sept. 9
Waterford Community Fair, thru Sept. 9
West Alexander Community Fair, thru Sept. 9
Tuesday, September 5
Pasture Meeting, William "Red" Whittaker Farm, Berlin, 7 p.m.
Bellwood-Antis Farm Show, thru Sept. 9
Claysburg Farm Show, thru Sept. 9
Jamestown Community Fair, thru Sept. 9
Twilight Meeting, Northumberland County Conservation District, J. Daniel Faus Farm, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, September 6
Luzerne County Fair, thru Sept. 10.
Grazing Alfalfa, Dick Packard, East Troy.
Dairy Alliance Seminar Series, Ramada Inn, State College.
Pike County Fair, thru Sept. 10.
Maximizing Grain Dollar In Tough Times at the Tri-County Agronomy Field Day, Roger Kilbarger Farm, Thornville, Ohio, 2:15 p.m.
Ohio Pork Industry's Competitive Seminar 2000, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Thursday, September 7
Friday, September 8
Thurmont and Emmitsburg Community Show, Catocin High School, Thurmont, Md., thru Sept. 10
Berks County Conservation Tour, Agricultural Center, 9 a.m.
York Fair, thru Sept. 17.

Saturday, September 9
Adams County Farm-City Day, Hollabaugh Brothers Orchard Farm, Biglerville.

Sunday, September 10
Veal 101, Penn State, State College, thru Sept. 12.
Preferred Stock Shorthorn Sale, McElhane Stock Farm, Hookstown.

Monday, September 11
Poultry Management and Health Seminar, Kreider's Restaurant, Manheim, noon.
Green Township Community Fair, thru Sept. 16

Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Delay Corn Silage Harvest

Robert Anderson, Lancaster County extension agronomy agent, has observed some farmers beginning to cut corn for silage.

This may be due for the need of feed and fields are being opened to supply this need or being done based on the calendar.

Corn silage harvest should be delayed this year because many fields were planted a little later than normal. This means they will mature later than normal.

In addition, the cool summer weather and lower-than-normal amounts of sunlight did not promote the normal growth rate for corn.

Corn likes hot weather, including hot nights. This year we had very little hot weather and almost no hot nights.

We have lost slightly over a week of growing degree days for corn this summer. The loss of growing degree days and later-planting could amount to nine or more days delay in the maturing of corn.

To Check Corn For Maturity

Before starting to harvest corn silage, each field should be checked for maturity and moisture, according to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County extension agronomy agent.

Corn continues to add dry matter content up until the time the black layer is formed on the kernel. When this happens, the plant has reached maturity. However, the moisture content may still be too high to cut silage.

A simple way to estimate plant moisture content is by checking the kernel. At full dent the whole plant moisture is about 74 percent. When the milk line is halfway, the whole plant moisture is about 68 percent, a good time to fill the silo.

Do not be in a hurry to fill silo this year because you always fill silo around Labor Day.

Check the plant maturity and its moisture content before you harvest. This will minimize the amount juices running out of the

silo while producing good quality silage.

To Look At Corn Cutting Height

A recent Pioneer Management study looked at what happens when you raise the cutting height for corn silage.

Tall corn plants have reduced grain-to-stover ratios. Raising the cutting height leaves more stover and fiber in the field and results in higher quality silage. It also reduces yield.

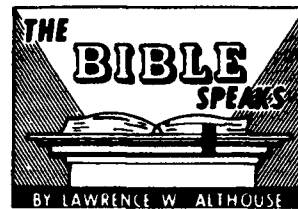
So does it pay? The Pioneer study indicated that for every six inches of stalk left in the field, yield is reduced by 1.2 tons per acre. At the same time, quality is improved by 0.6 percent (whole plant digestibility).

These numbers can be converted to milk. For every six inches of stalk left in the field, you gain 72 pounds of milk per ton in quality and lose 258 pounds of milk per acre in lost yield.

If your corn yields 20 tons of silage per acre, you will net 1,182 (1,440-258) pounds of milk per acre by raising the cutting height by six inches.

This may be a good year to raise the cutter bar and improve your silage quality, particularly if you have a lot of low quality hay to feed this year.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "It is one of the laws of our being that only in seeking happiness of others can we find our own."



THE WILLING RESPONSE

Background Scripture:
Judges 4 through 5.
Devotional Reading:
Psalms 68:1-6.

Slow Learners!

When we read Judges, we cannot help wondering why these people never seemed to learn. We can see them forsaking the Lord perhaps once, or even a second time. But because each time they "did what was evil in the sight of the Lord," they suffered grievously and had to beg the Lord to save them, wouldn't you think they would eventually learn to straighten up and fly right? They weren't just slow learners; they were essentially nonlearners.

Ah, but then maybe no more than we. When Winston Churchill wrote "Triumph and Tragedy," the third volume in his magnificent history of The Second World War, he described its theme as "How The great Democracies Triumphed and so Were able to Resume the Follies Which Had so Nearly Cost Them Their Life."

Isn't that the theme of just about every great crisis through which we have come? And that is true, not only of our societies, but our lives as individuals.

We, too, come through one scrape after another and then quickly settle into doing what is "evil in the sight of the Lord."

What made the Lord so angry with these people time and again? Essentially, it was because, "forgetting the Lord their God..." they served the Baals and the Asheroth of their neighbors. They did not say, Lord God, we will not serve you any longer. No, what they did was to pretend to serve the Lord, but base and fashion their lives on the values and practices of their pagan neighbors.

Does life in this country, your community, or your home reflect the rule of Christ or the Baals and Asheroth of today?

God Always Responded

Yet, no matter how often the people of Israel forsook their faith, God always responded to their cries for help and sent them someone to deliver them. For the most part, that's who the "judges" are in this book.

In Judges 4 and 5, the savior whom God sends is a surprise, given the generally low status of women in the Old Testament and the ancient world. Deborah, a woman upon whom God bestowed the gift of prophecy, would be the one who would be God's instrument. To be sure, she enlisted a man, Barak, to lead the armies, but without her persuasiveness, Barak would have done nothing. When God called Deborah to assume this most unusual role, she had a perfect excuse. She could have protested that I'm only a woman; no man is going to listen to me.

We should be able to identify with Deborah because when we are called by God to do something (and don't think you are not!), we have the same temptations: *Lord, you can't mean me, I'm only a youth; I'm too old; I don't have the skills; that's not my line; I can't influence anyone, and so on.*

The difference, Judges tells us, was that "the people offered themselves willingly" (5:2b).

When God calls us, no matter how ill-fitted we may think we are for the task, he can use us if we offer ourselves willingly.

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by—

Lancaster Farming, Inc.
A Steinman Enterprise

William J. Burgess General Manager
Everett R. Newswanger Editor

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