

# Lancaster Farming

## OPINION

### The Christmas Story

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them; Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child. All they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Holy Bible

❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

**Monday, December 25**  
Merry Christmas!  
Lancaster Farming office closed.

**Monday, January 1**  
Happy New Year!  
Lancaster Farming office closed.

**Tuesday, January 2**  
Solanco Young Farmer Meeting,  
Accelerated Calf Grower, Solanco High School, 7 p.m.

**Wednesday, January 3**  
Lancaster County Tobacco Show, Farm and Home Center.

Farm Financial Management Using Computers, Cumberland County extension office, thru Jan. 4.

**Thursday, January 4**  
Dairy Feeding Employee Training, Mason-Dixon Farm, Adams County.

**Friday, January 5**  
Dairy Feeding Employee Training, Mason-Dixon Farm, Adams County.

Franklin County Dairy Day, Kauffman Community Center.

Fresh Cow and Transitional Period Protocol, Robert and Linda Fenchak Farm, Knox, 1 p.m.

**Saturday, January 6**  
Pennsylvania State Farm Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, 9 a.m.-9 p.m., thru Jan. 11.

Pennsylvania Hereford Association Meeting and Banquet, Harrisburg Marriott.

**Sunday, January 7**  
Pennsylvania Angus Association Membership Banquet, Holiday Inn, Grantville, 5:30 p.m.

**Monday, January 8**  
Ice Cream Short Course, Nittany Lion Inn, University Park, thru Jan. 18.

Pa. State FFA Convention, Farm Show Complex, 4:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, January 9**  
Keystone Farm Show, York Fairgrounds, thru Jan. 11.

Eastern Pa. Turf Conference and Trade Show, Valley Forge Convention Center, King of Prussia, thru Jan. 1.

Ephrata Area Young Farmers Introduction To Ephrata School District Demo Farm, Ephrata High School, 7:30 p.m.

**Now Is The Time**  
By John Schwartz  
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

#### To Look At Odor Control

Leon Ressler, Lancaster County extension environmental agent, reports that in the summer of 1999 Penn State Cooperative Extension conducted an odor abatement study on eight swine farms across Pennsylvania.

Three technologies were evaluated for their odor control potential. These technologies were bio-filters on exhaust fans, dust control on exhaust fans, and floating straw covers on manure lagoons.

One unique aspect of the study was that the neighbors to the swine farms were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the treatments and keep odor diaries for six weeks during the study. Each neighbor received a survey concerning his or her perceptions of animal agriculture and odor evaluation cards. The cards were to be filled out each day between

6 p.m. and midnight. Odor was evaluated on a scale of 0 (no odor) to 5 (intense odor). The odor control technologies were installed approximately midway through the evaluation period, allowing comparison of scores before and after installation.

On two of the three farms where biofilters were installed, the average score declined after their installation. On the farms where floating biocovers were used, the overall average showed a decline in odor levels. The dust filtration treatment appeared to be ineffective in reducing odors.

#### To Look At Factors Affecting Odor

The evaluation of responses from the farm neighbors participating in the 1999 Odor Abatement Study conducted by Penn State Cooperative Extension has yielded some interesting results.

Dr. Ken Kephart, Penn State professor of animal science, summarized five factors that influenced odor scores:

1. Whether the neighbor knew the swine producer. The more the neighbor was acquainted with the swine producer, the lower the odor score.
2. Attractiveness of the farm in question. If the farm was perceived as more attractive, lower odor scores were recorded.
3. The respondent's overall health. Very healthy people recorded lower scores.
4. Whether the neighbor had refrained from inviting friends from visiting because of the odor. The more often they chose not to invite friends, the higher the odor score.
5. Whether the neighbor wished he or she did not live in this location because of the swine facility. The more they wished not to live here, the higher the score.

There were also a number of personal factors that had little or no impact on scores. These included income, gender, ages, education, whether the neighbor had been raised on a farm, length of time the neighbor had lived there, and the neighbors' reported knowledge of swine production.

#### To Report Manure Spills

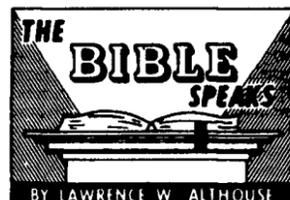
Occasionally things do not work out as planned. Sometimes manure spills occur because of mechanical breakdowns, operator mistakes, or natural disasters such as floods.

Jeffery Stoltzfus, Eastern Lancaster County School District Adult Farmer Program instructor, reminds us that you are required to call Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) immediately when manure reaches any body of water such as a stream, lake, or pond. The phone number for DEP is (800) 541-2050. In addition, you should also contact your county conservation district.

Remember, if a manure spill occurs, immediately stop the flow, contain the spill, and contact DEP and the conservation district. These steps will work in your favor during the DEP investigation.

If you do not have an emergency plan in place, you should develop one. The plan should include ways you can stop and contain the spill, and names, phone numbers, and agreements with contractors who will immediately be available to assist you in stopping and containing the spill.

**Feather Prof's Footnote:** "The only way to discover the limits of the possible is to go beyond them into the impossible."



### DO YOU HEAR THE ANGELS?

**Background Scripture:**  
Luke 2:1-20.  
**Devotional Reading:**  
Matthew 16:13-16.

On a summer afternoon in 1933, in a band of traveling evangelists in Murphy, N.C., one Annie Morgan sang a striking folk melody that captured the heart of John Jacob Niles. Asking Ms. Morgan to repeat the words so that he could copy them, Niles wrote out the text to a carol that today is sung and heard by millions every Christmas:

*"I wonder as I wander, out under the sky,*

*How Jesus the Savior did come for to die*

*For poor on'y people like you and like I,*

*I wonder as I wander, out under the sky."*

#### Poor On'y People

Niles later tried to locate Annie Morgan, but without success. She had slipped back into the humble obscurity so typical of the mood of this plaintive Christmas song. Sometimes, great contributions are made to humanity in the same anonymous manner.

That's what the song suggests: the Savior came to earth "for poor on'y people like you and like I." And that is why this song so beautifully captures the meaning and mood of the Christmas

story — it is a story about the humble of the earth, for the humble of the earth.

The first news of the Christmas story came to two humble but receptive women: Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, and Mary, mother of Jesus of Nazareth. Although Mary's betrothed, Joseph, was of the lineage of King David, he was an obscure tradesman from a hill town of Galilee that was often the target of derision.

Reaching Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary did not have the clout to get a room in the inn, and so their child was born in a lowly animal's feeding trough. The only people that night who were aware of a great cosmic event taking place in Bethlehem were lowly shepherds tending their flocks in the fields surrounding Bethlehem.

There was hardly a job on the social scale lower than that of shepherd. The central characters in this story were "poor on'y people, like you and like I," and the supporting cast was composed of even more "poor and on'y people." As Howard Thurman wrote, "the birth of Jesus remains the symbol of the dignity and inherent worthfulness of the common man."

Christmas Eve is a time of special meaning for the poor and lowly.

There is a legend about a church in Mexico where parishoners brought great quantities of flowers to the altar on Christmas Eve. While the priest observed hundreds of parishoners entering the church with their arms laden with flowers, he heard a little girl weeping because she had no flowers to bring. The priest smiled and told her to go to the roadside and pick any weed she saw.

The little girl was puzzled, but she did as she was told. As she

placed it on the altar, the soft green leaves glowed with a soft red light. The little girl's offering turned out to be the most beautiful flower placed at the altar! According to the legend, since that time, the poinsettia plant has been the special flower of Christmas.

#### 'Be Not Afraid...'

There is also dimension to the Nativity scene. In addition to the babe in the manger and his humble parents on either side, in addition to the shepherds kneeling close by, there are the heavenly hosts, angelic messengers with Good News: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord; and this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

Then, the angelic messenger becomes a heavenly host, and, unheard by the rich and mighty, they sing the Christmas news to humble shepherds: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is well pleased." The heavenly host still sings that magnificent message, but only those with humble heart will hear it.

What about you? Do you hear the angels?

**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 2000 by Lancaster Farming