

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Outward Signs

Each year the Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Program presents the Dairy of Distinction Award to farms that provide a positive image to the dairy industry.

A clean, well-kept, neat dairy makes a good impression on friends and neighbors and shows how distinctive and high quality farm life can be.

It also does one more thing and does it well — promotes the industry to those who know little if anything about farming.

"This program is run by volunteers and recognizes the hard work and dedication of dairy producers who promote a positive image for the dairy industry," said Mike O'Connor, secretary of the program and professor of dairy sciences at Penn State.

Roadside judging begins in May. Judges will look at a wealth of factors, including clean and attractive buildings, good landscaping, stewardship of the land, and well-maintained fences. Animal and barnyard cleanliness are also key. Manure management is on the judges' agendas, too.

It's not too late to apply. We've had ads running in the paper for quite some time now. Call Mike O'Connor at (814) 863-3913 to obtain an application form, or fill in the blanks in the ad form.

These days, you have to promote your industry to stay viable, to stay healthy. Newspapers do it. So should dairies.

❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

Saturday, April 7
 Safe Kids Farm Family Safety Day, Manheim Fairgrounds, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Pond Management For Irrigation, Livestock Watering, and Recreation, Cumberland extension office, Carlisle, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Wye Angus Bull Sale, Frostburg, via satellite, (301) 724-3320.

Barn Meeting: Tour Wo-Bo Farm, Park Rd. and Frog-town Rd., Ottsville, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., (610) 847-2619.
Sunday, April 8
 Palm Sunday.
Monday, April 9
 PennAg Industries Poultry Council Fundraising Banquet, Hershey Lodge & Convention Center, Hershey, 5:30 (Turn to Page A43)

❖ FARM FORUM ❖

Editor:
 Scripture verses, notes of encouragement and compassion have poured into the Swarey household, building their hope and faith. The contributions and auction participation have made it possible for Lena's expenses to be covered.
 The Swarey family has said their gratitude can't be expressed in words. Because of how deeply touched they are and all the emotions still pulling at their hearts, they've asked for help in trying to express their thanks.
 Certainly these words don't do their feelings justice. Thank you to all those who spread the word of Lena's accident. Thank you to St. Christopher's Children's Hospital of Philadelphia for their early excellent care of Lena and to the physicians and hospital staff for their early intervention and treatment. No doubt her current rate of recovery is due in part to their early actions. Thank you also to St. Christopher's for the huge reduction of the actual cost of the

hospital stay, for the unseen foundations, like the Burn Foundation of Philadelphia, that fund St. Christopher's enabling them to provide such a reduction for uninsured burn patients.
 The Swarey family is especially deeply grateful to Shriners Burn Center in Cincinnati. They have been so good to Lena and to the Swarey family. If you have an opportunity, remember the Shriners Hospitals in your charitable giving, which provide free medical care to thousands of children. They will continue to provide free treatment of Lena and take care of her future skin grafts.
 And to our own local volunteer EMT's, who responded quickly and professionally, gaining valuable time in preserving Lena's life, the Swarey family extends their heartfelt thanks. To the many organizations, churches, school children, businesses and individuals who helped, thank you! To all those in our community who brought food, for donations to the auc-

(Turn to Page A44)

Now Is The Time
 By Leon Ressler
 Lancaster County Extension Director

To Understand Foot And Mouth Disease
 The recent outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Europe has caused a great amount of concern for livestock producers in the U.S.
 The first step in developing a program to protect your farm is to gain an understanding of the disease.
 "Foot and mouth disease is one of the most highly contagious animal diseases known," said Penn State Extension veterinarian David Griswold.
 Foot and mouth disease — sometimes called hoof and mouth — is a highly contagious viral disease that can infect cloven-hooved animals such as cattle, swine, sheep, goats and deer, as well as other domesticated and wild animals, including hedgehogs, rats and mice. Infections in humans are rare and nonfatal.
 Infected animals suffer blisters and ulcers in their mouth and nose, and on their feet, teats, and udders. These lesions often lead to excessive salivation and lameness.
 Foot and mouth normally is not fatal to adult animals, but it can sharply reduce agricultural productivity. Painful mouth and tongue lesions can cause reduced feeding. Milk production of infected cows drops sharply and may never fully rebound. Meat animals may not regain lost weight for several months.

The disease also can cause abortion and low rates of conception. An outbreak in the U.S. could cost the dairy and livestock industries billions of dollars in losses.

One of the most challenging aspects of this disease is how easily it can be spread, which makes the disease difficult to contain. "Direct contact with ill or carrier animals is the most obvious method of transmission," said Griswold. "But the virus can survive for several weeks on contaminated clothing and can live for days or weeks in the lungs, nasal passages, or tonsils of humans. In addition, airborne particles can travel up to 40 miles, and the virus can be carried in contaminated meat and dairy products that, if fed to livestock, will cause infection."

The U.S. has been free of this disease since 1929. While it is important to maintain vigilance in light of the European outbreak, it is also important to keep this in perspective.

I spent six years working on an agricultural missions project in Kenya in the early eighties. During those years, we had an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the community about every two years. We were able to maintain a productive dairy herd with a vaccination program while the outbreaks would occur around us. The increased level of news coverage of the current outbreak conceals the fact that this disease has often been a problem in many parts of the world since 1929. However, the increased level of world trade and international travel by people from all nations has made the task of excluding disease much more difficult with each passing decade.

It is also important to note that routine use of the vaccines as done in Africa would have serious implications for our markets. The disadvantage of using vaccines is that one can no longer distinguish infected animals from clean animals, therefore sale of meat products and breeding stock to other nations is limited. Therefore, an aggressive program to exclude the disease is certainly warranted.

To Practice Biosecurity

To reduce the risk of an outbreak, dairy and livestock producers should maintain good biosecurity on their farms. "A good biosecurity plan is always an essential part of good farm management, but it's especially important now," said Griswold. Producers should quarantine and

observe new animals for at least four weeks before mixing them with their herds. If any animal displays excessive salivation or lameness associated with blisters of the mouth, nose, or feet — or other suspicious symptoms — producers immediately should contact their veterinarian, a state or federal veterinarian, or a county Penn State Cooperative Extension agent.

"Early recognition of warning signs and prompt notification of veterinary officials are vital for successful isolation and eradication of infected animals," said Griswold. "Fast action may prevent the disease from becoming established in the United States, or at least reduce the time, energy, and money needed to wipe it out."

Avoiding unnecessary travel to other livestock farms and excluding visitors from livestock farms is a good, common-sense practice.

The USDA has banned the import of all animals and animal products from the European Union. USDA and Customs Service inspectors at international airports and seaports are questioning travelers and inspecting cargo to prevent the importation of banned meats, cheeses, and other products that could contain the virus.

Travelers coming from countries where the disease exists are being asked to launder their clothing before returning to the U.S. The clothes and shoes of those who visited agricultural areas may be disinfected at the airport. "If you visit rural areas overseas, buy some comfortable but inexpensive clothes and shoes that you can leave behind before flying home," Griswold said. "Once back in the United States, refrain from visiting animal agriculture areas for at least 14 days."

The USDA has established a toll-free telephone center to respond to questions from the public, industry, and media regarding USDA's response to the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Europe. The toll-free number is 1-800-601-9327. International callers can reach the center by dialing 01-301-734-9257.

For more information about foot and mouth disease, contact any Penn State Cooperative Extension county office, or visit the Web at <http://fmd.cas.psu.edu>.

Quote of the Week:

"There is no finer investment for any community than putting milk into babies."

— Winston Churchill

THE BIBLE SPEAKS
 BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

THE 'GOOD NEWS' ON THE ROAD

Background Scripture: 8:4-40.
Devotional Reading: Micah 5:7-9.

While I do not think that God sends us hardship and persecution — it is easy enough to get that without divine intervention! — I never doubt that he can use them for his purposes.

The first clear explication of this idea is found in Genesis 50:20, where Joseph comforts the brothers who had sold him into slavery: "As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." The sinful act was that of the brothers, but God was able to use their sinful act for his good purposes. He was able to make something good out of evil.

Living a life of faith is not so much being protected from misfortune and evil, as in learning to read it as an opportunity for God to reveal the Good News of Jesus Christ. Scholars have speculated as to what might have happened in the course of Christianity had the earliest disciples continued to live as a community in the midst of Jerusalem, instead of taking the gospel on the road. The inertia to stay where they

were and enjoy their congregational life together might have been a powerful detriment to the spread of the gospel.

A Closed Door

After the stoning of Stephen, however, there was a dramatic change in their situation: "Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But Saul laid waste the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison" (4:2,3).

God was not the author of the turmoil that Saul unleashed on the church. Saul was able to do that without any divine help.

And this was no temporary, minor tribulation the church would experience at his hands. Many of the Jerusalem Christians were scattered into Judea and Samaria, so by the grace of God this tragedy was turned into an advantage for the gospel: "Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word" (4:5).

Samaria, if you will remember, was the home of those who were alienated from the Jews. Many of them had come to inhabit Samaria after the people of Israel were carried off into captivity. Although they presumed that they were worshipping the traditional God of Israel, they were a polyglot mixture of peoples. Jews and Samaritans despised each other, which is what made the parable of the Good Samaritan so poignant. The Samaritans were regarded as "the bad guys."

Yet, the Jerusalem persecution of Christians forced many to flee into Samaria, where they made the Good News available to the maligned Samaritans.

Without the persecution in Jerusalem, would Luke have been able to write: "Philip went down to a city of Samaria, and proclaimed to them the Christ" (4:5)? Saul was the catalyst for this wave of persecution, but it was God who shaped the end result.

Scandalized!

Keep in mind that the Jerusalem Christians still thought of themselves as Jews (albeit Jews who followed Jesus Christ) and we would expect that they would have been scandalized about the Samaritan mission. Instead, a great barrier began to crumble: "Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit" (4:14,15). In the midst of persecution, God broke down a wall between Jewish Christians and Samaritans — no small accomplishment!

Note that there were no angels sent to Saul to inspire his shameful violence against the church. The persecution came from Saul's misguided zeal. But an angel was sent to Philip: "Rise and go toward the south, to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza" (4:26). Having stirred Samaria, Philip was now to turn southward to another barrier that could represent another opportunity for the gospel.

When bad things happen in our lives and when doors seem slammed shut in our faces, let us remember that, for all the evil that caused this, it may be an opportunity for God to help us take the Good News on the road.

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