

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Never Enough Good News

Just for a brief time, perhaps we can set aside fears of hoof and mouth disease, worries about the potential of BSE in domestic meat products, avian influenza concerns in flocks, trepidation about potential drought, or crop prices sharply down.

USDA's Economic Research Service released its April 2001 Ag Outlook this week, looking at the "U.S. Farm Picture In 2001."

Some of it, on the surface, appears bleak, but a good deal of it shows that farmers may have something to be happy about.

Though sheep and lamb inventory continues to decline, with lamb and mutton production totaling about 217 million pounds (down 7 percent from 2000), market lamb prices were expected to peak during the Easter/Passover season, averaging \$81-\$85 in the second quarter.

But it's even better than that.

According to reports provided to us from New Holland, some lambs were selling for as much as \$210 a hundredweight (some up to \$2.10 a pound). Two hundred dollars! This season brings a strong demand for lamb.

According to the USDA report, while the general weakness in agricultural markets of the past couple of years continues, noted the review, early signs of recovery are evident. Many farm sector indicators remain favorable, according to USDA, including asset values and debt levels, due in large part to record government payments.

Global stocks of major crops are not excessive compared with use, prices of ag commodities are generally up, there'll be modest increases in food prices, and reduced plantings in 2001 could lead to a further drawdown of stocks.

USDA remains optimistic, predicting better U.S. exports, further gains in ag commodity prices, and rising farm income.

Not bad!

Just for a brief time, perhaps we can count our blessings.

May you have a wonderful holiday.

FARM CALENDAR

Saturday, April 14
Maryland State Holstein Show, Timonium Fairgrounds, 9:30 a.m.

Short Course In Basic Beekeeping, Dauphin County Ag and Nature Center, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., and Saturday, May 19, noon-5 p.m., Milton Hershey Farm Conference Center and Apiary, Hershey.

Beef Tour To Ohio, Ohio Bull Test Station and Research Center, 6:30 a.m.-10:30 p.m., (724) 287-4761.

Susquehanna County Holstein Club Tour, Pump 'N Pantry, Lenox, 8:15 a.m., and Green Gables, New Milford, 8:30 a.m., Ames, Montrose, return at 4 p.m., (717) 756-2256.

Sunday, April 15
Easter.
National Grange Week, thru April 21.

Monday, April 16
Pork Quality Assurance meeting, Line Mountain High School, 7 p.m., (800) 254-6470.

Water Forum, Holiday Inn N.W., Bensalem, 6 p.m.
Foot and Mouth and BSE meeting, Lebanon Expo Center, 7 p.m., (717) 772-2852.

Ag Boot Camp At Fort Indiantown Gap, 10 a.m.

Tuesday, April 17
Wine Technical Workshop 2, Manatawny Creek Winery, Douglassville, (717) 394-6851.
Stockholders Meeting, Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, Best Western, Westminster, Md., 6:15 p.m.

Delaware County Cooperative Extension annual meeting and dinner, Towne House Restaurant, Media, 6 p.m., (610) 690-2655.

Water Forum, Days Inn Conference Center, Allentown, 6 p.m.

Ephrata Area Young Farmer pesticide meeting slide show, Lincoln Family Smorgasbord, 6:30 p.m., (717) 721-9274.

Clarion Farm Forum On Foot and Mouth Disease, Clarion County Park, Shipperville, 7 p.m.

Foot and Mouth and BSE meetings, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 7 p.m., (717) 394-6851, also Crawford County Courthouse, 7 p.m., (717) 772-2852.

Wednesday, April 18
Bedford County Youth Day, Pennsylvania Holstein Association, noon.

Alleghenies Watershed Network Conference, Penn State Conference Center, State College.
Pasture Walk, Pat and Jill Maier, Mountain Trail Elk Farm, (717) 724-7788.

Chester-Delaware Annual Spring Banquet, West Fallowfield Christian Day School, Atglen, 6:45 p.m.

Stockholders meeting, Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, Level Fire Hall, Level, Md., 6:15 p.m.

Susquehanna County Leaders' Recognition Banquet, Montrose Bible Conference's Dryer Hall, 7 p.m.

Foot and Mouth Disease and BSE Meeting, Schnecksville Grange Hall, 7 p.m., also Courthouse Annex, Indiana, (717) 772-2852.

Thursday, April 19
Plan Writing Workshop, Penn State, 8 a.m.-noon, also April 20.

Horse Owners Program, Wayne

(Turn to Page A11)

Now Is The Time
By Leon Ressler
Lancaster County Extension Director

To Attend Meetings

On Foot-And-Mouth Disease

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has scheduled a series of meetings on Foot-And-Mouth Disease to update the agricultural community on this disease and on Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE, or "Mad Cow Disease").

The next meetings will be in Lebanon County April 16 and in Lancaster County April 17.

The Lebanon meeting will be at the Lebanon Expo Center, 2120 Cornwall Rd., Lebanon and the Lancaster event will be at the Farm and Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Rd., Lancaster. Both programs will begin at 7 p.m. If you are a livestock producer it would be wise to come to learn about the disease and the steps being taken to prevent an outbreak in Pennsylvania.

To Place

Pheromone Traps In Your Orchard

According to Penn State Entomologists Greg Krawczyk and Larry A. Hull, pheromone traps should be placed in your orchard now.

Using pheromone traps for monitoring can be an easy way to learn

which moth pests are present in various orchards. It is very important that pheromone traps be hung in the orchard before moth flight begins, so accurate degree-days calculations can be used for timing control treatments.

Oriental fruit moth traps should be placed in the orchard during the first half of April and monitored daily to establish the beginning of the flight (biofix). Traps for codling moth and tufted apple bud moth should be placed in the orchard at the pink stage of apple development and also monitored daily until biofix is set.

The biofix date is defined as the first day of two consecutive days during which moths were collected in the traps. Also, if moths were collected during two nights out of three, the first night is used for setting biofix.

After establishing biofix, all traps should be checked at least weekly and the number of moths should be recorded. Good reliable trap records can be used for the comparison of pest pressure among various orchards/blocks or even between different years.

To Apply Lime, Fertilizer For Spring Alfalfa Seedlings

Managing soil fertility for an alfalfa crop is a process that continues throughout the life of the stand. Adjusting soil conditions to provide an optimum growing environment before planting is an important part of that process.

A soil test is the best way to determine alfalfa fertility and lime needs. The rate of limestone required must be determined by a soil test that has both the pH and lime requirement test.

Ideally lime should be applied six months before planting to allow time for the lime to react with the soil. However, if you failed to apply lime last fall, apply lime before plowing to bring the soil pH to the 6.5 to 7 range. If the amount of lime required is 1 ton or less, the lime should be worked into the surface rather than plowing it down.

It is important to remember that

not all limestone is equal. The rate of application should be adjusted based on the limestone's neutralizing ability. The neutralizing ability is given as calcium carbonate equivalent (CCE) of the limestone. Soil test recommendations are made on the basis of 100 percent CCE. Lower CCE limestone can be used but the rate needs to be adjusted.

The formula for making the adjustment is as follows: Adjusted Limestone Rec. = 100 X Limestone Rec./CCE.

Alfalfa is the most sensitive forage crop to the pH level. With legume crops such as alfalfa, the significance of proper pH is related directly to the nitrogen fixation process. The soil bacteria, which fix nitrogen, do not function well at low pH levels and the crop can suffer from nitrogen deficiency. Planting time is also the time that the soil fertility levels should be corrected to provide for an optimum growing environment for the alfalfa. Alfalfa is a very heavy user of potash, and seeding time is a good time to bring up the potash level in your soil. Alfalfa has a heavy demand for phosphorus as well. Phosphorus and potash are relatively immobile in the soil.

Phosphorus will move less than one eighth of an inch in the soil in a year. To bring the root zone up to the optimum level for phosphorus and potash, these nutrients must be thoroughly mixed in the soil. Since there is no way to do this after the crop is established, it is important to bring up the soil levels to the optimum to high range before planting.

On livestock farms where manure is applied to corn in a crop rotation, phosphorus and potash levels tend to accumulate during the corn years of the rotation when manure is applied to meet nitrogen needs of the corn. This buildup can provide soil test levels in the high range for the alfalfa planting. A soil test to monitor the levels is an important tool in planning for your soil fertility needs.

Quote of the Week:

"Think positively about yourself, keep your thoughts and your actions clean, ask God who made you to keep on remaking you."

— Norman Vincent Peale

THE BIBLE SPEAKS
BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

HAS ANYONE HERE SEEN JESUS?

Background Scripture:
Luke 24:1-12; Acts 9:1-31.
Devotional Reading:
John 20:1,11-18.

If you compare the narratives of the resurrection in all four gospels and add to that the experience of Paul on the Damascus Road in Acts 9, it is impossible to know precisely what happened on that first Easter Sunday and the days following, during which various disciples experienced the risen Lord.

Matthew's and Mark's accounts are quite similar, except that in Mark we are told the women "said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid" (Mk. 16:8) and in Matthew the women "ran to tell his disciples" (Mat. 28:8). Luke tells pretty much the same story except that the words of the "two men" are different: "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" (Lk. 24:5).

John's telling, however, is quite different. Mary Magdalene is joined at the tomb by Simon Peter and "the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved..." (Jn. 20:2-4). Then, when the disciples have returned to their homes, Mary encounters the Risen Lord, although she does not immediately recognize him.

'Do Not Hold Me'

Not only do the details of the resurrection story vary, but the appearance or nature of the Risen Lord.

According to Luke 24:13-35, two disciples encounter him as a stranger on the road to Emmaus and only recognize him as Jesus when he breaks bread with them and then disappears. When he appears to Mary at the tomb, he tells her: "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to my father" (Lk. 20:11-18). In Matthew 28:9,10, he appears to the women coming back from the tomb and we are told "they... took hold of his feet and worshipped him."

The Risen Lord comes to the assembled disciples, appearing and then again disappearing from a locked room (Jn. 20:19-23) and then again when Thomas is present. He tells unbelieving Thomas to touch his wounds so that he may know he is flesh and blood.

In another appearance at the Sea of Galilee he eats breakfast with the disciples.

In Acts 1 we are told that "To them he presented himself after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days..." Years later, while Saul (Paul) was on the road to Damascus, he saw a great light and heard the voice of the Risen Lord and was blinded for three days (Acts 9:1-9). His traveling companions also heard the Lord's voice.

Later, writing of this, Paul claims it as an experience of the Resurrected Lord on a spiritual basis equal to those of the original disciples. Paul recounts that "he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve... then... more than five hundred brethren at one time... then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles... Last of all as to one untimely both, he appeared also to me" (1:Cor. 15:5-8).

Persuasive Differences

So what does all this say to us about the Risen Lord? It tells us, first of all, that no one saw Jesus in the act of being resurrected; the various disciples experienced him only after

he was risen from the tomb. So we have no idea how that happened — and we do not need to know.

The experience of Christ resurrected is not something that can be caught on film, motion detectors, or infrared film, and then displayed on the evening TV news. It was a spiritual experience that different people experienced differently and reported differently.

Paul's experience was different than what Thomas experienced, but Paul held it just as valid, just as authentic. The discrepancies do not bother me either; I would be dubious if they all read alike.

Some may encounter the Christ in a dream, a vision, a palpable physical experience, a "heart strangely warmed," an ecstatic out-of-body encounter, or even a simple growing conviction that Christ lives in one's heart. Like the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, it may take us a while to realize that "It is the Lord!"

The real question is not just how it happened then or happens today, but what it meant and means to those who experience it. The power of the resurrection is measured not in watts, volts, or megabytes, but in how it changes and charges those who encounter the risen Christ.

Has anyone here seen Jesus? If the answer is "yes," then we don't need to explain the "how."

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