



# Lancaster Farming

## OPINION

### Hope All Is Fair, And Reported.

Every once in a while we strive to provide a personal reflection on what may be a very common, widespread concern.

Over the course of some time, we have witnessed a very interesting development: how time and again local media tend to either ignore the concerns of the farm community or get those concerns completely wrong.

Often at the fairs we attend, we hear about how such and such weekly or daily newspaper in certain areas never covers the fair. Many never run 4-H or FFA happenings. When an event of particular interest will suit and possibly benefit a wide range of readers, invariably the local media are not present.

Why?

That's the question some of our staff receives. We may not have direct, well-documented, correct answers, but we have our observations and beliefs.

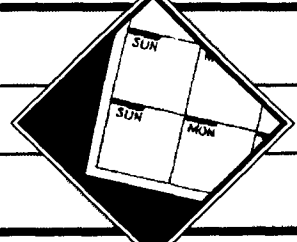
- One "belief" the general public may have is that many small-town newspapers, regional weeklies, and even the large dailies don't cover ag events, particularly fairs, much anymore. (Fortunately, this is far from the case here in Lancaster, where most fair events get complete coverage on a consistent basis. Maybe they listen to us, we don't know.) Possibly it's because ag in general is given low priority on the slugsheet (the sheet used to track headlines and reporters covering stories), handled by rookie reporters or stringers. We consider this desperately unfortunate.

- Belief number two, "positive ag news in general doesn't get reported." Some in the general public believe some news media simply find reporting about agriculture either boring or unappealing. We find that unprofessional attitude quite profound in its own juvenile, simplistic way.

- Three, "bad news sells newspapers." Another myth, like the one above about good news not getting reported. Unfortunately for some daily and weekly general news media, they've obtained this cynical attitude somewhere, perhaps unintentionally. The bad news: sometimes they believe in and subscribe to this myth.

- Four, "nothing can be done about ag news coverage." This is completely, undeniably wrong. Every newspaper has a managing editor. He or she is the one responsible for what the newspaper publishes. Seek that person out and talk to him or her. State your case, your reasons, and reasonable editors will make the changes and you may find your event covered.


Remember that there is a face behind what news gets reported. It isn't some untouchable council or high assembly reporting out of some wordless monastery. It's more like a tired, sometimes overworked, ordinary person who simply may have forgotten how important agriculture is to the town and community. It's a situation we believe can be fixed.



### ❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

**Saturday, September 1**  
 Juniata County Fair, thru Sept. 8.  
**Monday, September 3**  
 Mon Valley District 4-H Roundup, Westmoreland County Fair.  
**Sunday, September 2**  
 Maryland Holstein Futurity Number 17, Timonium Fairgrounds.

Cambria County Fair, thru Sept. 8.  
**Monday, September 3**  
 Labor Day, Lancaster Farming office closed.  
 Ox Hill Community Fair, thru Sept. 8  
 Spartansburg Community Fair, thru Sept. 8.  
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### ❖ FARM FORUM ❖

Editor:

I would never have thought the Maryland and Virginia Cooperative would have ever considered merging with Land O'Lakes. Up until now, I felt that I was in a very safe cooperative. I thought that my managers and elected directors were very capable at running our cop.

Since our recent change in

management, I have seen more change just for the sake of change. I have felt more distress in the last two years than in the previous eight years of our membership. I believe that we have been manipulated and put in positions that we would not have been in because our leadership has forgotten that they are working for our members and

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### Now Is The Time

By Leon Ressler  
 Lancaster County Extension Director

#### To Harvest Corn Silage At The Proper Moisture

Harvesting corn silage at the proper moisture is one of the most important steps in producing quality silage. The ideal moisture for your operation will be determined by what kind of storage structure you will use. For sealed airtight silos the ideal range is 60-65 percent; for upright silos, 63-68 percent; and for bunker silos, 65-70 percent moisture is the desired range.

Ideally, one should monitor moisture during harvest to stay within the optimum moisture range. If this is not practical, you can monitor moisture by the stage of crop development.

There is a simple method you can use to determine this optimum stage for harvesting your corn silage. When the kernels reach early dent stage, a separation can be seen between kernel starch and milk. Take an ear and snap it in half. You will see the firm starch deposited in the outer part of the kernel while the milk will occupy the base

of the kernel. This gives the appearance of a whitish line separating the two areas.

As the kernels continue to mature, the milk line moves down the kernels. When this line reaches the midpoint, 90 percent of the kernel dry weight has been achieved. When the milk line reaches the base of the kernel, a black layer is formed separating the kernel starch from the cob and the crop is mature.

When the crop reaches full dent and the milk line first appears, the crop is usually about 70 percent moisture. When the milk line reaches the midpoint, silage yields should be at their maximum and the moisture is at 65 percent. When the milk line reaches the base of the kernel, the crop moisture is usually about 60 percent. By observing the development of the milk line, one can determine optimum harvest time.

The one limitation of this method is the weather variation. If you have experienced extremely wet or dry conditions for a few weeks before harvest, the moisture can vary by as much as 5 percent from the predictions given above.

#### To Eliminate Mosquito Breeding In Tires Used To Cover Bunk Silos

Bunk silos are a very efficient way to store silage and numerous tires are used to hold the plastic tarps which cover them. The recent arrival in this country of the mosquito-borne West Nile Virus has raised awareness of the importance of eliminating mosquito-breeding areas around the farm.

Jay Smoker, the West Nile Virus Program coordinator in Lancaster County, suggests that if you are still using whole tires to cover your bunk silos, this would be a good time to consider exchanging them. Old tires lying around can contribute to the mosquito problem around the farm.

Mosquitoes can breed in any standing or stagnant water. Tires and tire piles can produce a large crop of mosquitoes in a short time.

There are no natural predators such as fish or other aquatic life to eat the larvae in the tires.

Also, the warm autumn sun beating on the tires accelerates the life cycle. Bits of silage or other organic debris found in the tires provides an ideal decaying food source for the developing mosquitoes.

In addition to being a nuisance around animals and humans, some species of mosquitoes carry the West Nile virus. They circulate around the animals, the female mosquitoes looking for a blood meal to fertilize their eggs. Infected females can transmit the virus to humans.

The best method of control is to eliminate standing water around the farm where mosquitoes breed. In bunk silos, the way to solve this problem is to use cut tires. Not only are halves easier and lighter to handle, water will not accumulate in them when turned upside down. Other advantages: there is no muck and they can be conveniently stacked.

Some tire recyclers now use a process called bageling where they cut the tire in three parts. The resulting sidewall looks like a bagel, thus the name. These sidewalls are very desirable for covering bunks. They are flat and tend to have fewer problems with protruding wires. The cost for these sidewalls is \$.90 to \$1.

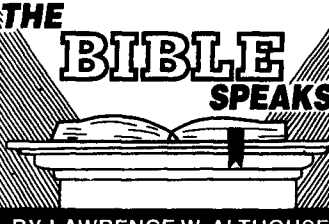
Perhaps you may be able to arrange a swap. Take the old tires and bring home the sidewalls. You will want to check prices first with the tire-recycling dealer. Expect a fee to get rid of old tires as well. If you consider the cost in relation to the reduced health risk for humans and animals, the balance will be positive for your operation.

For more information on where to acquire split tires, contact Jay Smoker in the Lancaster County extension office at (717)-394-6851 or e-mail jaysmoker@psu.edu.

Quote of the Week:

*"No race can prosper 'til it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem."*

— Booker T. Washington



### THE BIBLE SPEAKS

BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

### THE PROOF IS IN THE TASTING

Background Scripture:

John 2:1-11.

Devotional Reading:

Psalms 77:11-15.

The incidents recorded in John's gospel may be read on several different levels of meaning. This episode often serves as a scriptural blessing on the institution of Christian marriage. It is also a story that gives us some insight into the relationship between Jesus and his mother. On a metaphorical level John is telling us that the "new wine" of Jesus is superior to the sacramental waters of the Jewish purification ritual.

John also speaks of this as "the first of his (Jesus') signs." We may mentally translate "signs" into the more common term "miracles," but that word occurs only 12 times in the RSV Bible and none in any of the four gospels. Ancient peoples had no concept of scientific laws and thus no concept of "miracle."

As a boy I used to love to read the rhymed Burma Shave signs along the road — "Joe said... his car couldn't skid... This monument shows... it could... and did!... Burma Shave." These red and white signs and their humorous verse were not intended to be the message. The message was

"buy Burma Shave." So it was with the wondrous works of Jesus. They were not the message, but the power and glory of God manifest in Jesus was.

#### Levels Of Meaning

In the 35 years that I have been writing this column, I have addressed this passage many times. Still, each time I read it, something pops out that I had not thought of or fully explored previously.

For example, Mary's simple statement to her son, "They have no wine" (v. 3). Why would Mary have said this to Jesus? Was she simply reporting on what had happened to the celebration, or was she in expectation that her son could do something about it? I doubt that Mary expected him to turn water to wine or had any idea just how he could alleviate this crisis, but there is in it a tone of expectancy.

I have sometimes thought that, for his "first sign," Jesus might have picked a more important crisis than the host's embarrassment when the wedding celebration lasted longer than his supply of wine. But it also occurs to me that Cana stands as a reminder that nothing in my life is too trivial to God in prayer. If a mere wedding feast was not too unimportant for God's concern, then there have certainly been lots of things that I have not shared with God in prayer because I thought them not worthy enough.

I am also intrigued at Jesus' response, "O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour is not yet come." This reply could be taken as a rebuke, but to me it sounds like some of the subtle playful banter between two persons who know and understand each other pretty well. Whatever his intention, her instruction to the servants indicates that Mary and Jesus have understood each other quite well: "Do whatever he tells you."

#### Mary's Confidence

Note that Mary never said to Jesus that he should run out and buy some more wine, much less suggest that he turn the water into wine. She doesn't presume to tell him how to solve this problem, but she is confident that he can do something.

This high expectancy must certainly be an important factor in what follows. Jesus tells the servants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them to the brim." That done, he instructs them again: "Now, draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast."

Up to now they had no way of knowing what Jesus was doing and no guarantee that their obedience would bring them anything but humiliation and censure.

But Mary's expectancy was contagious and, although they understood nothing of what was going on or how it would end, they did as they were told. On a rudimentary level this is faith — taking the risk to act on a promise or assurance.

I have no way of knowing if this "sign" would have occurred if Mary had not come expecting her son, if he had not reacted to this need with compassion, and if the servants had not done as they were told. But this incident, I believe, is instructive for us and our relationship to God in Christ. Prayers that are not expectant are not really prayers. We can not often know how God will help us, but we need to live in expectation that he will and discover for ourselves that the proof of the promise is to be found in the tasting.

### Lancaster Farming

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