

# Lancaster Farming

## OPINION

### A Diligent But Optimistic Concern

Last week in the paper, on page A28 under the headline "FBI Alerts Pesticide Dealers," the FBI notified the state ag department of the importance of reporting suspicious sales of or attempts to purchase and/or use pesticides.

We have been practically inundated with mail from all sorts of places that are pointing out pesticide security tips (one from Colorado State University) and how agribusinesses and farmers are urged to enforce security measures since the Sept. 11 attacks (including a news release from the Ohio State University).

The Ohio State release of Oct. 5 noted that a "consortium of U.S. organizations, including the Environmental Protection Agency, is encouraging individuals and businesses to enforce a variety of security measures."

In a release Oct. 11, the National Farmers Union proposes a biosecurity task force in a letter to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman. This task force is to protect the nation's food system, in light of recent scares.

An article in our local newspaper pointed out that the emergency management agencies sometimes receive "suspicious activity" reports. What exactly IS suspicious activity? In some cases, just seeing lights on late at a neighbor's house, or unexpected vehicles show up in someone's driveway... those kinds of things are a bit much and verge on the paranoid.

I think this is a time for many businesses that sell field treatments of whatever type to keep a cautious, persistent eye out, to know and recognize customers, and perhaps to thank those who are loyal and obey the rules. But we worry about too much worry, when those concerns verge on paranoia.

These are difficult times, indeed, and the terrorist attacks have underlined the need for more information, concern, and cooperation than any other time in our nation's history.



**Now Is The Time**  
By Leon Ressler  
Lancaster County Extension Director

#### To Conserve Water

The United States Geological Survey, in cooperation with The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, operates observation wells across Pennsylvania to monitor groundwater levels.

Of the 45 wells in Pennsylvania in the network with data for September, 22 are below normal and two wells (in Lebanon and Montgomery counties) are at record lows.

Many times when we experience dry summers, heavy rains related to hurricanes often provide some recharge in the fall. This year we have not received any significant recharge from fall storm systems. While we have seen worse drought conditions in the past, these low well levels remind us of the need to conserve

water whenever possible in our operations.

This requires more than just short-term responses to an immediate need. While these short-term responses are important, your operation should be evaluated to see what long-term changes could be made to save water.

With an ever-growing population and a finite water supply, water conservation is not just a drought-year concern anymore. To be successful in the future, we all must do our part to efficiently use this common resource.

#### To Practice Biosecurity On Livestock Operations

Earlier this year the concern for accidental introduction of foot and mouth disease caused the animal industry in this country to review and improve biosecurity procedures on our farms. Recent events in this country have now caused an increased awareness of the potential for a bioterrorist attack on our food supply.

The USDA has called for increased surveillance and reporting of foreign animal diseases. It is important that no potential case of a foreign animal disease be ignored, and even possible hoaxes need to be treated as real until proven otherwise.

Producers should check their livestock regularly and immediately report signs of unusual disease to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, the USDA, or their veterinarians. Prompt reporting can make a significant difference in our ability to quickly diagnose, control, and eradicate a disease. Signs to watch for in livestock include sudden unexplained deaths in a herd or flock,

severe illness that affects multiple animals in a herd or flock, blisters around an animal's mouth, nose, teats or hooves, unusual ticks or maggots on the animals, or central nervous system disorders.

Additionally, the USDA asks producers to report suspicious activities, intruders, or circumstances to local police or sheriff's departments. License plate numbers and descriptions of trespassers should be recorded if possible.

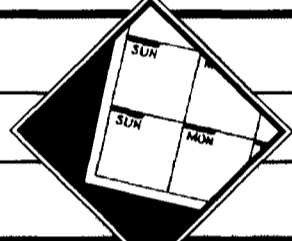
Suspicious cases can be reported to the PDA at (717) 772-2852 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and after normal working hours to the PDA at (717) 772-2852, or any other main office phone number. After-hours calls will be forwarded to a voice mailbox, and instructions will be given for leaving an emergency message that will cause the veterinarian on call to be paged.

The USDA also has a 24-hour phone number: (800) 601-9327. Daytime calls can be made to the USDA Harrisburg office at (717) 782-3442. Anyone reporting a case should be prepared to provide a description of the signs of disease, the species and number of animals involved, and the location of the animals.

When a suspicious case is reported, a trained foreign animal disease diagnostician (FADD) will be dispatched to the premises to assess the situation, inspect the animals, collect samples, post quarantines, if appropriate, and take additional steps to protect animal and human health.

Quote Of The Week:  
"Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadows."

— Helen Keller



❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

#### Saturday, October 20

New York State Sheep and Wool Festival, Dutchess County Fairgrounds, Rhinebeck, N.Y., 8 a.m.-5 p.m., (914) 756-2323.

Adams County Holstein Club Annual Meeting, Community Firehall, York Springs, 6:30 p.m.

Pa. Brown Swiss Association meeting, Bonanza Restaurant, Carlisle, 11 a.m., (717) 993-8995.

Pa. State-Graded Feeder Cattle Sale, Bedford Cattleman's Association, Bedford County Fairgrounds, 1 p.m.

Pa. State-Graded Feeder Cattle Sale, Westmoreland County Cattleman's Association, Westmoreland County Fairgrounds, Greensburg.

#### Sunday, October 21

Zone II Hunter Finals Horse Show, Farm Show Complex, (716) 377-4986.

9th Annual N.E. Regional Natural Colored Sheep Show, in conjunction with New York State Sheep and Wool Festival, Dutchess County Fairgrounds, Rhinebeck, N.Y., (914) 756-2323.

#### Monday, October 22

Pa. Economic Development Association Fall Conference, Nittany Lion Inn, University Park, thru Oct. 24, (717) 441-6047.

Lancaster County Poultry Banquet, Palm Court, Willow Valley, 6:30 p.m., (717) 367-1195, ext. 311.

Cambria County class on computer finance programs, Cambria extension office, Ebensburg, 6:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

#### Tuesday, October 23

Midwest Dairy Marketing Association public hearing, Wadsworth, Ohio, 8:30 a.m.

Dairy Works Workshop, Quality Inn, Chambersburg, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m., thru Oct. 24.

#### Wednesday, October 24

Human Resource Center for Livestock Farm Managers, Bucyrus Public Library, noon-4 p.m., (419) 562-8731.

Ohio Woodland Steward Program, Ag Center, Fairfield County, Ohio, also Oct. 26.

Northern Tier Dairy Improvement Tour, eight farms in Bradford and Potter counties, (814) 793-3783.

Plasticulture and High Tunnels Short Course, Gloucester County office building, Clayton, N.J.

National Rural Policy Conference, Renaissance Hotel, Washington, D.C., (202) 408-1273.

Second Annual Crop Insurance Conference, Pennsylvania Farm Show Building, Harrisburg, 4:30 p.m.

Pennsylvania Council of Cooperatives Annual Meeting, Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel, 11 a.m., (717) 238-1044.

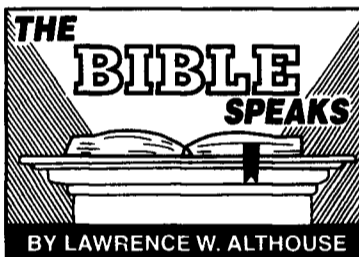
Managing Price Volatility Dairy Workshop, Penn State Extension, Lezelhouse Restaurant, Chambersburg, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Berks County Farm Bureau Clean and Green Ag Tax Assessment meeting, Berks Ag Center, 7:30 p.m., (610) 488-6201.

New Jersey Cattle Health Workshop, Larry Freeborn Farm, North Tranquility, N.J., 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., (973) 579-0985.

#### Thursday, October 25

New Jersey Cattle Health Workshop, Woody Eachus Farm, Woodstown, N.J.,



### EXHAUSTING GOD

**Background Scripture:** Luke 18:1-14.  
**Devotional Reading:** Genesis 32:22-30.

Valere and I maintain an intercessory prayer list that we lift up to God at least once a day. At times when, having prayed intercessorily in the morning, I wonder whether in my evening prayers I ought to repeat some of the same concerns for which I have already prayed. It has occurred to me that, in offering the same prayer twice in one day, I may demonstrate a lack of trust in God's attention to the first prayer?

So Luke 18:1-8 is a good reminder to me that we need to always to persevere in prayer. It is not how often we pray for the same thing, but how we pray.

That is what the parable of the unjust judge is about. Jesus told them a parable to encourage them to "always pray and not lose heart" (Lk 18:1). When in doubt, he seems to be telling us, pray too much rather than too little. If you are going to err, do it on the side of bold perseverance, not timidity.

In his The Age of Faith, Will Durant writes of a Spanish lad, who, persuaded he is mentally

sluggish, runs away from home. On his way, the exhausted youth sits down by a well and his eye is caught by the deep furrow in a stone at the edge. A passing maid explains that the furrow was worn by the attrition of the rope that lowered and raised the bucket. "If," said Isadore to himself, "by daily use the soft rope could penetrate the stone, surely perseverance could overcome the dullness of my brain." He returned to his father's house and became the learned Bishop of Seville.

**Is God Reluctant?**  
This does not mean that we persevere so that we can persuade God to do what we ask. It is not the reluctance of God that we are trying to overcome in prayer, but, like the Spanish lad, the dullness of our own spirits.

Prayer doesn't change God; it changes us at least, if we stay at it long enough to make a difference. What happens when this "dullness" begins to be overcome in us? It gives God an opportunity to enter into our lives.

Henry Ward Beecher said, "Prayer is not the conquering of God's reluctance, but taking hold of God's willingness." With that "willingness," God can answer the purpose of our prayer, if not the specifics of our request.

In the parable, please realize that Jesus is not suggesting that God is like that judge. Just the opposite. He is saying that if an unjust judge, who fears neither God nor regards man, will eventually respond to a persistent petitioner, then how much more will a loving God respond to us? God is infinitely more gracious and loving than any human authority and his response can only be more gracious and more loving.

#### Will Jesus Find Faith?

Persistence in prayer doesn't wear down the reluctance of God, but our own reluctance to commit ourselves trustfully in his hands. Persistence is the result of faith, the kind of faith Jesus has in mind when he asks: "... when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" The expectation of easy and quick answers to prayer is not evidence of faith but sheer will. The task is not to exert our will over that of God, but surrender ourselves to his. To "cry to him day and night" means that we are not easily deterred from our faith. So, our "continual coming" is not an affront to God but a confession of faith.

But the perseverance of this "continual coming" is motivated, not by the arrogance of getting from God what we want because we are deserving, but by a genuine humility that has convinced us that we are not worthy, but dependent upon his grace. Persistence in prayer, therefore, must be coupled with humility. Otherwise our persistence may be nothing but arrogance, an assumption that we can exhaust God's resolve.

Our problem is not that we ask too much or too often of God, but that we ask too little and too infrequently. Our persistence cannot exhaust God, but our self-righteousness does. So, like the tax collector, we must persevere in our prayer, because we know that we are sinners dependent upon God's mercy and willingly commit ourselves to his grace.

### Lancaster Farming

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