

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Be Careful With Leasing

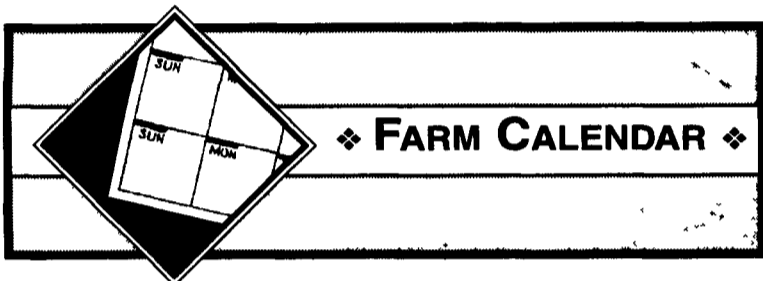
Several readers have apprised us of a situation where new farmers have signed documents to lease cows.

While leasing has its benefits to new and beginning farmers, please be aware of the "fine print." In many cases, some unfortunate dairy producers sign their way into some hidden clauses, many of which can include the equivalent of "loan sharking." Some of the lease agreements demand 36 percent return on the leased animals!

In one case, three young boys in their 30s and 40s signed dairy animal leasing agreements — and those rates can be quite costly. They didn't read the lease. Some hidden charges were present in the agreements.

When in doubt about a lease agreement, don't sign up! Instead, take it to an extension agent who understands leasing. Some of these agreements shouldn't have been signed unless looked over by an attorney.

With any leasing agreement, don't forget to read the fine print. Start the fiscal year right and read every line of the agreement. And remember — you're not indebted to sign anything you don't completely agree with.



❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

- Saturday, December 29
- Sunday, December 30
- Monday, December 31
- Tuesday, January 1
Happy New Year!
Lancaster Farming office closed.
- Wednesday, January 2
- Thursday, January 3
Two-Day Basic Dairy Farm Management Workshop, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, also Jan. 10.
- Maryland Grain Marketing Meeting, Howard Johnson, Millington, Md.
- Study Circle on Forcing Perennials, Kutztown Produce Auction, 7 p.m.-9 p.m., (610) 378-1327.
- Grain Marketing, Howard Johnson, Millington, Md., 7:30 a.m.

- Friday, January 4
Pa. Holstein Southwest Sensation Sale Meeting, Ramada Inn, New Stanton, 11 a.m.
- Virginia North Carolina Shepherd's Symposium, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va., (540) 231-9159.
- Franklin County Dairy Day, Kauffman's Community Center, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m., (717) 263-9226.
- Saturday, January 5
Pennsylvania Farm Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, thru Jan. 10.
- Virginia Bred Commercial Ewe Lamb Sale, Virginia Tech, Dept. of Animal and Poultry Science, Blacksburg, Va., (540) 231-9159.
- Sunday, January 6
American Farm Bureau Federation Meeting, Reno, Nev., thru Jan. 9.

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❖ FARM FORUM ❖

Editor,
I like *Lancaster Farming*, but I never read anything about the evils of NAFTA and free trade. This is what is helping to ruin the farming business for many. How can our farmers compete with the foreign imports? And what about the many manufacturers who went out of business or moved their business production and assembly to a foreign country where labor is \$.50 to \$1.50 per hour and there is no OSHA? This is what we would need Congress to address and repeal. Spend some time on educating the people of the U.S. on this and urge them to ask Congress to repeal NAFTA and free trade.
Dave Haldeman
Douglassville

Editor:
As the Senate Farm Bill hangs in limbo, Pennsylvania Dairy Policy Development Committee of Family Farm Defenders (PDPDC of FFD) would like to thank Congressman Don Sherwood and Senator Arlen Specter for their continued support of price stabilizing legislation for dairy farmers. Sen. Rick Santorum, however, has come down squarely against any price stability for dairy farmers. His comments aired on Radio Pennsylvania Network on Dec. 4 clearly expressed his opposition to the original Senate Farm Bill dairy language. The proposed legislation authored by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) is sometimes referred to as The National Dairy Trust Fund. This legislation would set the class I mover at \$14.25 per

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Now Is The Time
By Leon Ressler
Lancaster County Extension Director

To Celebrate New Year With Your Family

The beginning of a New Year is a great time to stop and reflect on the blessings we have enjoyed in the past year. Some of us have had more trials than others in 2001 but we all have things for which to be thankful. Some have enjoyed health and well-being while others have experienced health problems. Some of us have experienced business success and some ventures have failed. However we live in a land where we have the opportunity to start over if we have experienced setbacks.

While you are reflecting on your past year's activities, evaluate with your family whether your business activities supported your family goals or made it hard to reach them. If the consensus is that changes are needed, begin to explore what alternatives are available that could better meet both your financial needs and your personal goals. If you have some ideas on new ventures you want to explore, seek some help in developing your plans.

The "Tilling the Soil of Opportuni-

ty" seminar is a great opportunity to learn about developing a business plan for starting a new business.

To Enroll In "Tilling The Soil Of Opportunity"

Tilling the Soil of Opportunity is a multisession program (12 weeks in length), providing farmers/agribusinesses or anyone working in food or the green industry with the skills to reinvent their enterprises.

Business planning, marketing research, and financial management skills are a few of the concrete tools taught by certified extension educators and local business experts. Using proven adult learning techniques and a curriculum tailored to the unique needs of Pennsylvania agriculture, participants will evaluate their business ideas and complete business plans for a banker's review.

The program is designed to help a broad range of small- to mid-sized farmers, food processors, distributors, retailers, food professionals, and others working in the agriculture sector. Owners and managers of new and existing businesses are encouraged to participate. If you have a business dream or goal that you would like to make happen, this program can help make those visions a reality.

If you're thinking about beginning a business and searching innovative ideas about how to start an enterprise, this program will assist you in getting to your goal. You will learn how to organize and develop a professional business plan to make that business dream come true.

The program is offered in three locations once a week from January through April. The program is offered on Tuesday evenings in Lancaster County at the Garden Spot High School in New Holland. It is also offered on Monday evenings for Lebanon and Dauphin counties at the Milton Hershey School in Hershey. It is offered in Adams County at the Adams County Agriculture Center in Gettysburg on Tuesday mornings.

For more information and to register, call Ed Herrmann at the Lebanon County Extension Office (717)

270-4391. If you wish to register, call promptly, since classes start the first full week of January.

In the meantime, start off the New Year by supporting the livestock and horticultural industries by enjoying a hearty meal of pork, sauerkraut, and mashed potatoes!

To Operate Skid-Steer Loaders Safely

Skid-steer loaders put workers at risk of rollover and runover incidents. If you operate or work near skid-steer loaders, take these steps to protect yourself.

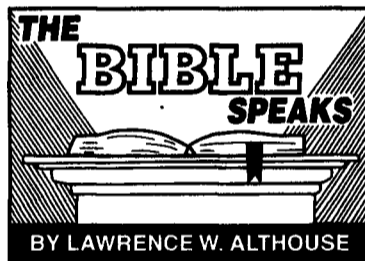
Always work with the seat belt fastened and the restraint bar in place. Load, unload, and turn on level ground when possible. Travel and turn with the bucket in the lowest position possible and do not travel across slopes. Travel straight up or down a slope with the heavy end of the machine pointed uphill. Keep bystanders away from the work area and never disable safety devices.

In order to enter and exit from the loader safely, follow these guidelines. Enter the loader only when the bucket is flat on the ground or when the lift-arm supports are in place. When entering the loader, face the seat and keep a three-point contact with handholds and steps. Never use foot or hand controls for steps or handholds. Before leaving the operator's seat, lower the bucket flat to the ground, set the parking brake, and turn off the engine.

It is important to maintain the machine in a safe operating condition. Keep the foot controls free of mud, ice, snow, and debris. Regularly inspect and maintain the interlocked controls, safety belts, restraint bars, side screens, and Rollover Protection Structures (ROPS). Never modify or bypass safety devices and, if you must perform service under a raised bucket, use the lift-arm supports.

To order a complete copy of the NIOSH Alert on skid-steer loaders, visit their Webpage at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh> or call (800) 356-4674.

Quote of The Week:
"Plan your work for today and everyday, then work your plan."
— Norman Vincent Peale



WHO IS THE SERVANT?

Background Scripture:
Isaiah 43:1-79.
Devotional Reading:
Isaiah 42:1-9.

The words "servant" and "servants" occur 877 times in the RSV Bible, indicating "one who is at the disposal or service of another," either in bondage, employment, or even voluntarily. Some times, however, significant persons are referred to as "the servant of the Lord" and God speaks of "my servant Israel." When we come to Isaiah, there are 24 references to "servant" and often it is not crystal clear to whom the prophet is referring.

Early on it appears that the servant is the nation of Israel. But, in time, Isaiah seems to speak, not of the whole nation, but of the remnant that remains faithful and responsive to the Lord, the Israel within Israel. In Isaiah 43, we begin to suspect that sometime he is referring to the remnant Israel and sometimes to a specific person.

Some 500 years later, Jesus identified himself with this servant. So, we've solved the problem of "Who is the servant?" No, not entirely — but we will return to that question later.

Isaiah 42 begins boldly: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen in whom my soul delights." The servant here is neither a slave nor an employee, but one whom God has called to a vocation, for a mission. God is the initiator and also the one who empowers the servant: "I have put my spirit upon him." God never gives anyone a mission without providing the proper equipment.

Bring Forth Justice

The servant's mission: "... he will bring forth justice to the nations." Notice: the mission is not to spread their religion nor to send armies to bring all nations under Israelite rule. The word translated here as "justice," *mishpat*, is difficult to define but, from the 8th century BC prophets onward, it is obvious that the concept includes honesty, fairness, and concern for the powerless.

Often, when the word "justice" is used, people think of the punishment of the guilty. Yes, that is part of justice, but if punishment is the focus, then justice is simply "vengeance dressed up in Sunday clothes."

Numerius, a former Roman governor, was charged with embezzlement. But he denied the charge and, although greatly suspected, could not be convicted. Exasperated, the judge, Delfidius, cried out, "Can anyone, most mighty Caesar, ever be found guilty if it be enough to deny the charge?" To which Julian replied: "Can anyone be proved innocent if it be enough to have accused him?"

I believe our judicial system is probably the best in the world, yet it still falls far short of Biblical justice. If a poor man and a rich man are accused of the same crime, the latter's chances of getting off are almost infinitely better than those of the former. When did you last find a millionaire

on death row? The Minneapolis Tribune reports that when a certain Texas judge instructed a jury to return a verdict of "guilty" in a car theft case, the jury foreman dutifully replied: "We find the innocent man that stole the car guilty!"

Spiritual Power

Our Constitution speaks of justice before it mentions liberty and the Declaration of Independence proclaims: "all men are created equal." That does not mean equality in endowment or moral worth, but equality before the law. Many of the Hebrew prophets sum up the mission of Israel as correcting the injustices visited upon the poor and weak.

So the aim of the mission is to "bring forth justice," but there is a method that is also part of the mission: "He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice" (42:2,3). The servant therefore will not enforce it with a sword, but with the light of example.

"I have given you as... a light to the nations..." (v. 7). He will exercise his power in a quiet and unassuming manner. It is natural that we associate this "servant" with Jesus Christ. That was his style and method.

Who is the servant? First Israel, then the remnant, then Jesus Christ — and now us!

Lancaster Farming
An Award-Winning Farm Newspaper

- Keystone Awards 1993, 1995
- PACD Media Award 1996
- Recognized for photo excellence throughout the years by the Northeast Farm Communicators
- PennAg Industries 1992
- Berks Ag-Business Council 2000

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