

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Who Pays?

We read in a farm publication recently about how a dairy farm family from Westfield is challenging the mandatory milk checkoff, which equates to about 15 cents per hundredweight.

The issue here, as in every question regarding checkoff: are the monies spent wisely? But more so, should the costs of promoting a product be assumed by those who simply produce a raw, rather than finished, product?

It's not easy to take a side in this issue. For the dairy farmer, some see little in the way of direct benefits for promotion, unless they bottle their own milk and sell it privately at a farm market or go door to door. So you can almost agree — what good does it do? Does it directly affect their bottom line? Do the milk moustache ads really work to move milk? Are people really picking up cheese with these "power of" promotions?

Then another, you can see the wisdom of the promotional efforts, which go a long way toward educating the public about the benefits of milk. But how can we gauge if this is effective? Are the "got milk?" and other campaigns really working?

In the newspaper industry, promotion is literally everything. Since time began, newspapers have had to do their own self-promotion, whether it has been the hawk, that ragtag kid yelling "read the latest!" to passing city street throngs during the first half of the last century, to promotional efforts that extend to radio, TV, and telemarketing. And the public has come to expect that — since many rely on alternative places to find their news anyway.

Why should the dairy industry be any different?

The issue here is: who pays for these efforts?

The burden needs distribution. It would be unrealistic to expect those who sell the milk to entirely assume the burden.

Yet you can see the point being made by the family from Westfield. They produce a raw product. For many milk producers, that product is going into cheese and butter markets. Why do they have to pay for a strictly fluid-milk promotion?

What about the retailers? For example: do leather car seat makers pay promotion on Detroit autos?

These questions need a stronger consideration in these tough economic times.

FARM CALENDAR

- Saturday, April 13
- N.W. Sheep and Wool Growers' meeting, Pittsfield, (724) 662-3141.
 - Central Pa. Orchid Society Show, Penn State Ag Arena, thru April 14, Saturday noon-8 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m.-5 p.m., (814) 237-4110.
 - John Deere Antique Tractor Pull at Ron Boyer Farm, Rt. 100 south of Hereford, (215) 679-6592.
 - Pa. Dutch Folk Culture Society: Eastertime on the Farm at

- Pennsylvania German Heritage Center, Kutztown University, noon-4:30 p.m.
- Maryland Cooperative Extension Field Day on Cover Crops for Vegetable Production, Late Season Fruit Production in High Tunnels and The Use of High Density Tunnels for Season Extension, Clarksville Research Farm, Ellicott City, Md., noon.
- Forest Management and Tree Farm tour, Kessler Tree Farm, (Turn to Page A26)

FARM FORUM

Editor.
 One more time, the New York and Pennsylvania legislators have shown their support for dairy farmers in their respective states. As the time was nearing for the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives conferees to meet and iron out the differences between the U.S. Senate and House farm bills, Congressman Don Sherwood (R-PA) circulated a letter to be sent to Rep. Larry Combest (R-Texas). Combest serves as the chairman of the Joint Conference. Sherwood's letter was urging the House members of the conference to support the dairy provisions within the Senate farm bill.
 Notably, the letter supported the \$16.94 per CWT floor price on Class I milk (fluid milk). The letter also supported the dairy

provisions concerning the other 36 states. So far, 91 members of the House have signed the letter. This is good.
 Pennsylvania has 21 congressman 18 have signed the letter plus Congressman Tim Holden, a conferee who has strongly supported the Senate's dairy provisions. This means 19 of 21 are on board — this is great! New York has 31 congressmen — 18 have signed the letter. This is good. In addition, Sen. Clinton, Sen. Schumer, and, as usual, Sen. Arlen Specter (one of nine Republican senators that supported the Senate version) supported the dairy provisions. Of course, Sen. Santorum was not with us.
 Between the House of Representatives and Senate, there are
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Now Is The Time

By Leon Ressler
 Lancaster County Extension Director

To Begin Scouting For Alfalfa Weevil
 Alfalfa plants have broken winter dormancy and the new shoots are growing. Alfalfa weevil eggs that were in the stem of last year's growth will begin to hatch in early to mid-April. These eggs may result in an early population of the pest, but under most conditions they are insignificant and only represent about 10 percent of the total alfalfa weevil population.
 Alfalfa plants will typically outgrow this injury. The population of economic significance results from eggs laid in the spring by overwintering adults. These adults move into hay fields containing alfalfa as soon as the plants begin to grow and lay their eggs in the stems of plants.
 The weevil eggs hatch between mid-April and early May. Larvae hatching from these eggs reach maturity in approximately three weeks, normally from late May to early June. Injury symptoms are usually most evident during mid- to late-May. Once the larvae pupate, they are done feeding for the year and scouting efforts can cease.
 For this reason, scouting for this pest only needs to occur during the first growth period (first cutting) of alfalfa. However, in fields where high numbers of weevil are present at cutting, the stubble should be checked to assure that regrowth is not being prevented by larvae feeding on the new shoots.
 Begin scouting the warmest fields on your operation with a southern exposure and those with a soil type that is susceptible to drought. Begin scouting all fields once evidence of alfalfa weevil injury is observed in the warmest fields

or when 300 degree days (base threshold of development equals 48 degrees Fahrenheit) have accumulated since Jan. 1. This will typically occur between May 1 and May 15 in most years and at most locations in the state.
 To sample a field, carry a bucket (a 2- or 3-gallon size plastic bucket will do fine) and walk through the field in either a "W" or "zig-zag" pattern. Randomly remove an entire stem from 30 locations at approximately equal intervals, in order to obtain a good representative sample of the field. When collecting an alfalfa stem sample, carefully cup your hand around the top of the stem before removing it. This will prevent any larvae from dropping off that may have been on the stem. Now, remove the stem at ground level and place it top first into the bucket. Repeat this procedure as you follow your pattern across the field.
 After you have collected 30 stems in the bucket, separate them into 3 to 4 small bundles and beat each bundle 10 or 15 times against the inside of the bucket to dislodge the larvae from the stems. We are primarily interested in the large larvae (green in color and 1/4 inch long), since the big ones do the most feeding. In most cases only the large larvae are easily dislodged from the plant. Smaller larvae tend to hide in leaflet collars and are difficult to dislodge. Count all the larvae in the bucket, including the small cream-colored ones. Record this number on your field data sheet.
 Next, measure 10 of the stems to get an average height of the plants (in inches) in the field. Record the average height of the plants on your data sheet. Also, observe the stems and record the percentage with buds. The number of flower buds present will help you decide whether to spray or harvest the field if weevil larvae numbers are near the economic threshold and the field is near the harvesting stage of development. If the field is in full bud when the economic threshold is reached, early cutting is usually the best pest management alternative.
 More detailed information on economic thresholds can be found on the Penn State Entomology Website at (<http://www.cas.psu.edu/docs/CASDEPT/IPM/FldCrop/table17.htm>) or in the Field Crop IPM Training and Reference Manual or the publication "A Pest Management Program for Alfalfa in Pennsylvania." Check with your local cooperative extension office for a copy of the publications.
To Apply For Drought Assistance
 A lack of moisture over an extended period of time has caused producers in Lancaster County to suffer from the effects of severe drought conditions. Farms experiencing severe drought conditions may be eligible for cost-

share assistance under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP). This disaster program is administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency, which provides cost-share assistance if the damage is so severe that water available for livestock or orchards and vineyards has been reduced below normal to the extent that neither can survive without additional water.
 A producer qualifying for ECP assistance may receive cost-share not to exceed 64 percent of the cost of installing eligible temporary measures. Cost-sharing for permanent measures is based on 50 percent of the total eligible cost. Cost-share assistance is limited to \$200,000 per person per natural disaster. Approved practices and measures may include:
 • Installing pipelines or other facilities for livestock water or existing irrigation systems for orchards and vineyards.
 • Constructing and deepening wells for livestock water.
 • Developing springs or seeps for livestock water.
 Producers who have experienced severe drought conditions requiring outside assistance to provide supplemental emergency livestock water may contact the Lancaster County FSA Office. Request for assistance will be accepted at the Lancaster County FSA from April 15, 2002 through June 13, 2002.
 Normally, to be eligible for cost share, practices shall not be started until a request has first been filed at the FSA office and an onsite inspection of the problem area has been made by the county committee or its representative. A special exception will be considered for those who already implemented these practices, but an approval is not guaranteed. Post implementation requests must be made by April 30, 2002.
 At this time, funding has not yet been received from Washington, D.C.; therefore, approvals are contingent upon the availability of this funding request. For more information, contact the Lancaster County Farm Service Agency at the Farm and Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Rd., Lancaster, PA 17601 or call (717) 397-6235.
 Producers in other counties should check with their local Farm Service Agency office to learn if assistance will be available in their county.
Quote Of The Week:
"I return to farming with an ardour which I scarcely knew in my youth, and which has got the better entirely of my love of study. Instead of writing ten or twelve letters a day, which I have been in the habit of doing as a thing of course, I put off answering my letters now, farmer-like, till a rainy day and then find it sometimes postponed by other necessary occupations."
 — Thomas Jefferson in a letter to John Adams dated April 25, 1794

THE BIBLE SPEAKS

BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

BEAUTIFUL FEET

Background Scripture: Romans 10:1-17.
 Devotional Reading: Romans 11:1-6.
 "Beautiful Feet" — it sounds like one of those ads you see in magazines or hear on television: *Beautiful feet in just 30 days! — \$29.95 — and if you act promptly, we'll also guarantee you beautiful hands!*
 The "beautiful feet" to which I am referring, however, is a quotation from Romans 10:15b, "As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!'" Paul's "As is written" is a reference to Isaiah 52:7 — "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace, who brings good tidings of good, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'"
 But why "beautiful feet"?
 The prophet is using feet as a metaphor. As he beholds the messenger coming with the good news, he concentrates upon the speedy feet which bring the messenger before the people. He could just as easily have said, "How

beautiful is the one who brings good tidings! How blessed is the messenger for his message."
How Can We Preach?
 Paul has been pondering why the Jews have not responded to the good news of Jesus Christ. Rhetorically, he asks, "But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent?" It is then that Paul remembers the passage from Isaiah about bearing the good news that "Your God reigns."
 Our concern today is not just that many of the Jews rejected following Jesus, but that so many people today still reject him and his way. For some it is a matter of not ever having really heard of him. Oh yes, they know the name, Jesus Christ, but they don't have a clue as to what he is all about. Many of these have "not heard" because there has been no messenger to bring the good news. We send missionaries to far corners here and abroad and program evangelism, but Paul's rhetorical questions are still very timely: "And how can men preach unless they are sent?"
 Be assured, this is not an advertisement to find more clergy. I suspect that with some possible exceptions, there are enough clergy to preach in the churches of our land.
 Where we are sadly lacking is in finding, training, and sending Christians in the pew to be messengers in the world outside the church. Unfortunately, somewhere early in the life of the Church we settled for the notion that the clergy do the preaching and the people do the listening. Not so. While we are not all called to preach, we are all called to be messengers of the gospel.

What You Are

Many Christians would be very uncomfortable if one of the demands of church membership would be to preach a sermon from time to time. But there is more to being a messenger of good news than preaching a sermon.
 Somewhere I read this statement: "What you are speaks so loudly that I can't hear what you are saying!" Often what we are is a much more effective way of telling the good news of Jesus than what we say.
 Paul says, "... if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved" (10:9,10).
 When I see him equating confessing "with your lips" with being "saved," I become uneasy, for I have known too many people who found it easy to confess Jesus with their lips, while not following him in their lives. But some of the commentators I consulted indicate that Paul's equal emphasis upon believing "in your heart" means that the words confessed come from the heart and are not mere ideas indolently entertained and expressed.
 So, whether you are a messenger with your words, your life, or both, it is a matter of sharing with others why making Jesus Lord of your life has been good news for you.
 Not only, then, will your feet be beautiful, but your whole being.

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