



# Lancaster Farming

## OPINION

### Why We Must Grow The Pennsylvania Dairy Industry

N. Alan Bair  
Director Of Dairy Industry Relations  
Penn State

"We need to grow the Pennsylvania and northeast dairy industry if we are to survive" is the message industry leaders across the region are clearly communicating.

Logically, this raises many legitimate questions in the minds of everyone involved in the industry. I challenge every producer, processor, service, and supply representative, banker, educator, regulator and consumer to understand the logic behind the need for growth, and to develop and live a personal plan that supports keeping the dairy industry strong in the Northeast.

Total milk production in the U.S. is responding to a growing demand. Growth in the dairy industry is clearly west of our Pennsylvania and Northeast milk supply and large consumer population. We have processing capacity for an additional two billion more pounds of milk in the Northeast. Our challenge is to be part of the national growth and reverse our regional trend of declining production.

Even a casual glance at the numbers shows that the dairy industry in Pennsylvania and the Northeast has not been keeping up with demand or with the rest of the national industry. Pennsylvania milk production through March is below last year with 19,000 fewer cows. This is a continuing trend. Our production per cow continues to grow, but at a pace slower than other leading dairy states.

The bottom line on growth is that if Pennsylvania does not grow, we stand the obvious possibility of losing our processing capacity in the region and, therefore, losing our valuable markets. Investors in processing plants will invest in growth areas and not in areas of declining production. Additionally, if Pennsylvania continues to decline in cow numbers, dairy farms and total production, we will quickly lose the important infrastructure that supports production. Many Pennsylvania producers clearly understand the loss of production infrastructure because they already have fewer choices and drive more miles for service, supplies, and markets.

To encourage continued investment in our dairy processing structure in the Northeast, we must show positive signs that we will continue to be a major source of milk. We are working from a current position of strength and have great opportunities in the future if we act now. This is a win-win situation for all segments of the industry from producer to consumer, but it will take effort and commitment from everyone.

How we individually respond to this opportunity is up to each individual and company. It is very important that the industry work together in a supportive atmosphere. Currently we have a large percentage of relatively small farms and a few larger farms — a profile that I expect will slowly change over time.

The truth is that we need all our farms, small and large, to maintain a strong industry. Growth of a farm comes in many forms but all must be driven by profit. There is no question that our region of the country can compete very favorably in production profitability.

Probably the greatest challenge to our industry in Pennsylvania is attitude. Those are harsh words, but if you find yourself beginning to boil after reading this far, I ask you to check your attitude. Are you positive about the dairy industry and your future in it? We all need to be supportive of each other in positive ways. Attitudes are contagious, so be sure you are spreading a positive one.

If we want our next generation to be part of this industry, then we need to be positive. Encourage and support your neighbor — their success is crucial to your success.

The need is evident, the consequences obvious, the opportunities great, and the time is now. If you do not see the need for growth of this important industry, then challenge the opinion. Ask the questions, start a dialog on your own, and get some answers. Push, lead or, at the very least, get out of the way, because we must all work together to get our industry in this state and region moving down the fast track of profitability and long-term sustainability.



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

#### To Evaluate Corn Fields Damaged By Late Frosts

The week of May 20, Pennsylvania experienced several consecutive days of record low temperatures with many parts of the state having several mornings with frost. Experiencing frost in late May is rare to begin with and having multiple frosts this late is truly historic. The frost resulted in damage to corn in central Pennsylvania and some other regions of the state.

Gregory Roth, associate professor of agronomy in Penn State's crop and soil sciences department, said farmers should know the factors affecting frost damage. Roth explains that good planting conditions and warm weather in late April resulted in rapid emergence and development for many of the earliest planted fields. Some fields had corn with two to three fully developed leaves.

"When the frost hit, many of these early-planted fields were hit," Roth said. "Corn fields that were full of

growing small plants last week now appear to be very sick. Producers are wondering how this will affect their crop and if they need to replant.

"The severity of the damage varied depending on the location and the size of the corn. Generally drier, tilled fields or low-lying fields are most at risk, but even the absence of those factors did not save some fields from damage. In some locations, where the temperature was below 28 degrees for more than several hours, plants may have experienced a lethal dose of frost damage and the young plants may not recover. For instance, low temperatures of 27 and 29 were reported for Huntingdon and Altoona, respectively, on the morning of May 20, with lower temperatures likely in outlying areas."

Roth said the key to assessing the effects of the frost damage is to be patient and wait for several days to see if the plants are showing signs of recovery. Usually after two to three days of 70-degree temperatures, new growth will be initiated and be visible in the plant's whorl (the base of the plant where the leaves originate). Under cool conditions, it may take a few more days to see recovery.

"Frost damage most often results in the death of above-ground plant parts," he explained. "Frost-damaged leaves will blacken and turn straw-colored in a few days. The growing point of the plant is located deep inside the whorl and is below the soil surface until the plant has about five fully emerged leaves. Usually small corn will recover quickly from frost damage and in two weeks will show little sign of injury. In this episode, because of the severity and multiple frost events, I am concerned that the frost injury may be more severe than usual."

If all the plants don't recover, Roth said, producers should assess the population of plants and decide whether the fields need to be replanted. Guidelines for replanting can be

found in the corn production section of the Penn State Agronomy Guide, which can be found on the Web at <http://agguide.agronomy.psu.edu/CM/Sec4toc.html>. The replant charts indicate that for many fields the yield potential of a field with a population of 16,000-18,000 planted on April 25 is about the same as a full stand planted in late May. So even in fields that have been thinned by frost, replanting may not be beneficial.

The 2002 edition of the Agronomy Guide is available for \$9. For ordering information, call the College of Agricultural Sciences Publications Distribution Center at (814) 865-6713. To order using VISA or MasterCard, call toll-free, (877) 345-0691.

#### To Monitor Frost Damage In Wheat

Capitol region agronomy agent Mark Goodson reported freezing can cause severe damage to wheat during the early stages of heading, especially before pollination. The type of injury varies with exposure time, but floret sterility could result or the heads could be trapped in the boot. Heads may be distorted as they attempt to emerge as the stems elongate.

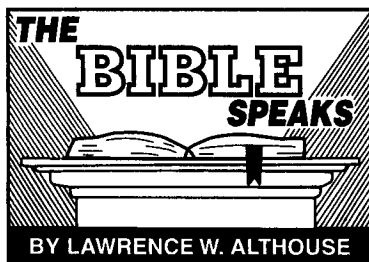
Newly emerged heads are quite vulnerable to freezing injury when the temperatures drop to 30 degrees Fahrenheit or below. Signs of freezing injury can be seen within a few days after freezing. Injury can occur to the entire head or only a portion of the head.

Most frequently the head tip is injured. Damaged florets will turn white and the tissues will shrivel. Yield loss will be minimal if only the top florets of the head are injured. Otherwise, if entire heads are affected, the loss may be proportional to the number of heads killed.

#### Quote Of The Week:

"One man with courage makes a majority."

— Andrew Jackson



**THE BIBLE SPEAKS**  
BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

### OF BURDENS AND BLESSINGS

Background Scripture:  
Psalms 1; 19.  
Devotional Reading:  
Psalms 19:1-6.

For the next nine weeks we will be dealing with the Book of Psalms. Next to some of the sayings of Jesus, the Psalms are the most frequently remembered and quoted scriptures for Christians. The reason, of course, is that so many of them speak to us in our own life situations.

While we are studying some of these psalms, let us remember that this book is an anthology of hymns and prayers or liturgies that were composed between the 10th and second or third centuries B.C. It is often referred to as the "hymnbook" of the Bible. These songs and poems were probably intended to accompany acts of worship in the temple.

Though the psalms may seem quite similar, there are eight different types: Enthronement Hymn (celebrating the Lord's kingship), Songs of Zion (devotion to the Holy City), Laments (seeking deliverance), Songs of Trust, Thanksgivings, Sacred History (recounting God's dealing with

the nation), Royal Psalms (for a coronation or royal wedding), and Wisdom Songs (meditations on life and the ways of God).

#### To Perish Or Prosper

At the time that the book was assembled, Psalm 1, a wisdom psalm, was probably selected to serve as an introduction, preface, or prologue to the whole collection. The message reflects typical Old Testament teaching: the righteous prosper and the wicked perish. Immediately, some of us protest: What about Job? What about Jesus? What about most of the Apostles?

The psalmists would, I think, readily admit that there have been, are, and will be exceptions. For some of the righteous, the prospering came and comes in a more ultimate form. So living in a righteous manner does not guarantee a life of untrammelled good fortune. But taking into consideration large numbers of people, those who live in a righteous manner will tend to be "blessed," as Psalm 1 indicates.

A number of polls and studies support this concept, indicating that people who attend worship with some regularity are happier, healthier, and more productive. They have also determined that couples who pray together generally have happier and more fulfilling marriages.

When we were children, some of us grumbled, probably silently, that our parents made us go to church whether we wanted to or not. Some of us may even have vowed that, when we would become parents, we would not force our children into this family pattern. Of course, many do not, but often I am surprised and amused to find parents requiring of their children what they themselves as children resisted.

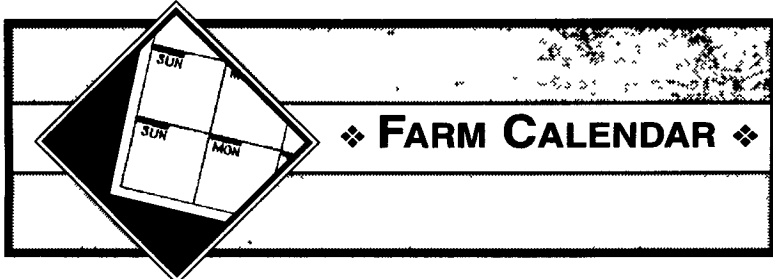
#### In The Long Run

Why? Because, no matter how we may have reacted as children or youth, as adults we often realize that life needs a spiritual base. That does not mean that you and your family are guaranteed to escape all tribulations, but that in the long run your lives will be significantly blessed by the life of which the psalmist is writing. Sometimes that spiritual life is all that may keep you going when life seems to fall down around you.

The psalmist says "Blessed is the man..." and it means "O how happy the one who walks not in the counsel of the wicked... but his delight is in the law of the Lord..." (1:2). We may think of the law of the Lord, the will of God, and the teachings of Jesus as a burden that is wearisome to carry. That is human nature, too, but the benefits of the righteous life are not in pleasing a cranky God, but in experiencing the blessedness that comes from a life lived for Him.

The reward is in the doing or not doing of these things. In Psalm 19:7,8 we are told that the law of the Lord revives the soul, makes wise the simple, rejoices the heart, and enlightens the eyes. Living by the will of God is a joy, not a burden. Live this way and, no matter what comes, our lives will still be blessed.

If I told you that on your bookshelf behind some volumes there is a fortune of gold awaiting you, I think you'd probably take a look just to be sure. But something worth more than even the most precious gold is waiting to bless, not burden your life.



**FARM CALENDAR**

Saturday, June 1

Open Youth Schooling Show, Backtrackers 4-H Horse and Pony Club, Northampton 4-H Center, Nazareth, (610) 837-7294.

3rd annual Mt. Top Boer Goat

Show and Sale, Garrett County Fairgrounds, Maryland, show noon, sale 6:30 p.m.

Forestry Workshop, Cranberry, Venango County, Tom and

(Turn to Page A32)



**FARM FORUM**

#### Editor:

I read with interest your editorial of May 4, regarding banks and beginning farmers.

I completely agree with your suggestion that bankers need to do as much as they possibly can to provide service and support to the entire field

of agriculture, including young farmers. At MidAtlantic Farm Credit, we work very hard to provide financial services to all of agriculture, from small beginning farmers to large agribusinesses.

(Turn to Page A34)

**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

**Lancaster Farming**  
Established 1955  
Published Every Saturday  
Ephrata Review Building  
1 E. Main St.  
Ephrata, PA 17522  
—by—  
**Lancaster Farming, Inc.**  
A Steinman Enterprise  
William J. Burgess General Manager  
Andy Andrews, Editor  
Copyright 2002 by Lancaster Farming