

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Delivered From Disaster

These days, it seems that Somerset County is the center of the world. First there was Flight 93 that crashed on Sept. 11 last year. Then there was the Quecreek coal mining accident at the end of July where, thank the powers-that-be, all nine miners were rescued. What a story!

We read on page 1 this issue about Lori and Bill Arnold and their round-the-clock efforts to ensure a physical and even moral victory — as well as a much-needed morale victory for the entire country — in the rescue success.

The Arnolds operate a dairy. But their work exemplifies a lot bigger story of the need for volunteers and cooperation.

It also touched home.

The reason I am editor of *Lancaster Farming* could very well be attributed to a mining accident.

My father was a coal miner in Schuylkill County for about a decade. One day, there was a mining cave-in, and miners were killed.

My father, spooked by the whole thing, decided he didn't want to die in a mine. So he escaped the industry, enlisted in the Army-Air Force during World War II, entered college on the G.I. bill, graduated from Penn State . . . and, in the 1950s, moved his family to Lancaster County.

Later on, he bought land from a farmer in Lancaster, purchased a house, and began a life far removed from mining.

That's why my family is here. A mining accident!

How many people's lives will be affected the same way? Who will move out and get away from the dangerous job of coal mining? Who will stay? In what drastic, far-reaching ways will the families of the Somerset County coal miners be affected? What impacts could this entire event have on agriculture?

It certainly makes you wonder.



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

To Continue To Conserve Water And Develop Emergency Water Supply Options

While recent rainfall has brought some short-term relief, drought conditions continue to worsen. In Lancaster, rainfall for August was 2.5 inches, one inch below normal. This brings the rainfall deficit for the last 365 days to 14.3 inches. Since January of 2000 we are 36 inches below normal rainfall. Obviously it will take a lot of wet weather to begin to replenish our water table.

Surface flows are way below normal as well. On Sept. 3, flow in the Conestoga River at Lancaster was 66 cubic feet per second (cfs), which is only 27 percent of the normal flow for this time of the year of 244 cfs. The Susquehanna at Safe Harbor had a flow rate of 3,500 cfs on Sept. 3, compared to a normal flow rate of 12,300 cfs.

The long-term accumulation of rainfall deficits is continuing to put pressure on our groundwater supplies. Well drillers are swamped with work and have a waiting list that can

run two weeks or more. If you are dependent on a single well for your water supply, it would be a good idea to develop a backup system in case your only well goes dry.

One plan could be to get on the well driller's list and drill a backup so you don't have to wait if that occurs. If you do want to drill, I would recommend consulting a hydrogeologist first to help you choose locations to drill. Another backup plan would be to install a storage tank so you could utilize trucked-in water for a short-term solution, if needed.

To Participate In Horse Owners' Survey

Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences will conduct an economic impact study of the Pennsylvania equine industry beginning fall 2002. The study will provide knowledge of the current scope and nature of Pennsylvania's equine community, enhancing government and citizen understanding.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, through the State Horse and Harness Racing commissions, has contracted with the department of dairy and animal science to conduct the survey. It will assess the composition and nature of Pennsylvania's equine industry, including its direct and indirect impact on the state's economy through sales, employment, taxes, and other indicators.

Contributions to the quality of life of equine owners and participants in equine activities also will be assessed. Data from Pennsylvania's last study of the economic impact of horses in the state was collected in 1990. It showed that the equine industry generated \$4 billion in annual economic activity, was responsible for 22,000 jobs, and provided local and state governments with more than \$66 million a year in tax revenue.

"The Pennsylvania Quarter Horse Association, Pennsylvania Equine Council, and the Pennsylvania Horse and Harness Racing commissions have committed to support this very important survey by providing addresses," said Ann Swinker, extension horse specialist, who is directing the survey. "It is key that the list we

develop be representative of the entire industry.

"We will be asking every equine association with membership in the state and individual horse owners to provide their addresses so they are represented in this study," she said. "The addresses will be held in confidence and used only for the distribution of questionnaires. After the study is completed, all records will be destroyed. We want to assure everyone that this will be horse people measuring horse people."

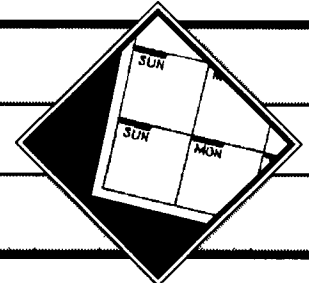
Swinker pointed out that the survey needs a high return rate to develop valid results. "We will be undertaking a public relations campaign to ask that those who receive a questionnaire take the time to complete and return it," she explained. "A postage-paid envelope will accompany the questionnaire. Returned questionnaires will be coded and information entered into a computer database for analysis. A descriptive report of the findings will be prepared and published."

Swinker encourages all horse owners and equine organizations to participate in the study. Equine groups interested in contributing their mailing lists or individual horse owners wanting to participate in the study should contact Ann Swinker, The Pennsylvania State University, 324 Henning Building, University Park, PA 16802. For more information, call Swinker at (814) 865-7810 or e-mail her at aswinker@psu.edu.

"We prefer the lists be sent on disk, but will gladly take them in any form," she said. "The Pennsylvania Horse and Harness Racing commissions are to be commended for their efforts to have the state agriculture funds awarded to conduct this much-needed equine population study for Pennsylvania."

The findings of the study will be available to user groups, free of charge, both in print and in electronic format. The project report is slated to be completed and available in the spring of 2003.


Quote Of The Week:
"A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way."
— John C. Maxwell



FARM CALENDAR

Saturday, September 7
Central Susquehanna Valley Sheep and Goat Field Day, Paradise Valley Organic farm, Limestoneville, 1 p.m.-4 p.m.
"Enhancing Wildlife Habitat on Private Property" Workshop, Dauphin County Agriculture and Natural Resources Center, 8 a.m., (717) 921-8803.
Bradford County Youth Field Days, Mt. Pisgah State Park, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Fall Garden Wrap-up, Master Gardeners of Westmoreland

County, Donohoe Center, Greensburg, 9 a.m.
Advanced Topics in Raising Goats, Mifflinburg.
Sunday, September 8
Monday, September 9
National Barrow Show, Mower County Fairgrounds, Austin, Minn., thru Sept. 11, (765) 463-3594.
Green Township Community Fair, thru Sept. 14.
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FARM FORUM

Editor:
On Aug. 29 at his town meeting in Towanda, Pennsylvania Sen. Arlen Specter announced that he would take the inequities facing all dairy farmers to the U.S. Senate floor.

During the senator's presentation to the crowd, I reminded the senator of his speech to the U.S. Senate following former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman and Specter's visit to Keystone College a few years ago. After I reviewed current milk prices (comparable to 1979) and the problems with an excessive amount of dairy products being imported into the U.S., Sen. Specter paced the floor and announced he would go to the

Senate floor with the dairy farmers problems. Specter said he was annoyed to see consumers (like himself) pay more for milk while dairy farmers are continually receiving less.

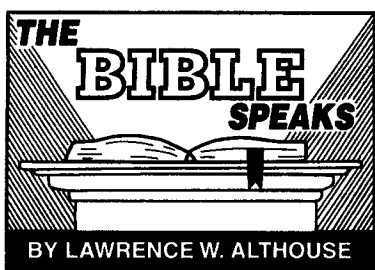
Specter told the crowd he favored a reasonable floor price under the dairy farmers prices based on the dairy farmer's production costs. The senator further told the crowds both in Towanda and Wellsboro that the excessive amounts of dairy products being imported must be addressed. He also agreed there should be an investigation concerning the dairy farmers' continuing inequities.

Let's hope that Senator Specter's remarks to the U.S. Senate will inspire other senators to support him. All dairy farmers should immediately contact their elected officials and have them support Sen. Specter's efforts.

Remember there are nearly 12 billion pounds of milk coming into the U.S. per year in the form of manufactured products. Remember these imports are clogging up our markets and forcing prices to our dairy farmers down to the 1979 level. It's evident to me there are dairy farmers across the U.S. talking about various methods to consider in an attempt to correct the inequities facing dairy farmers.

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THE BIBLE SPEAKS
BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

'THE SHEEP' AND 'THE GOATS'

Background Scripture:
2 Chronicles 33:1-20; 2 Kings 21.
Devotional Reading:
2 Chronicles 6:36-42.

Our state is engrossed in an election contest for the office of governor. It is the most expensive campaign in Texas history, and it is also one of the most demoralizing. To me, it appears that both candidates seem devoted to the dehumanization of their opponent. One might truly wonder whether voting for either of them is justified.

Unfortunately, our political life is hobbled by a "sheep" and "goats" mentality. We are the "sheep," the "good guys" and our opponents are the "goats," the "bad guys." We assume that the "bad guy" can never do anything "good" and the "good guy" can never do anything "bad." We see nothing wrong with our candidate and nothing good about his opponent.

The "sheep" are real Americans and patriotic and the "goats" are not. It is tragic that, after more than two centuries of democracy, we are no further evolved than that.

We also have a "sheep" and

"goats" problem when we consider the reign of Manasseh, King of Judah from 687 to 642 B.C. Manasseh was the son of King Hezekiah, the moderate reformer of Judah, and Queen Hepzibah and the biblical account of his reign, 55 years, the longest in Judah, is recorded in 2 Chron. 3:1-20 and 2 Ki. 21:1-18. (That reminds me of the teacher who said that, not only was little Johnny the worst kid in her class, "but he has such perfect attendance!")

Remembered As 'Evil'

Manasseh, however, was not "a chip off the old block" and he is remembered as one of the most evil kings of Judah. Both sources stamp him as a "bad guy." "He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the abominable practices of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel" (2 Chron. 33:2; 2 Ki. 21:2).

It is ironic that one of the best kings of Judah is followed by one of the worst. Simply put, he undid all of the reforms which Hezekiah, his father, had instituted. More specifically, "... he rebuilt the high places which his father Hezekiah had broken down and made altars to Baals, and made Asherahs, and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served them" (2 Chron. 33:4; 2 Ki. 21:3-5).

The "high places" were Canaanite shrines on hilltops and the Baals and Asherah were pagan gods. 2 Kings 21:6, 16 lists three additional charges: "And he burned his son as an offering, and practiced soothsaying and augury," and "Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood. . ."

Why did he choose such an evil course? Perhaps, as with so many sons, he was driven to demonstrate that he was his own man and no longer under his father's thumb. Per-

haps he did these things because they were popular with his subjects. The priests of the high places were probably supportive of the re-establishment of their shrines. Furthermore, we know that Assyria dominated the known world then and Manasseh probably held on to his throne at the sufferance of the Assyrians. The Assyrianization of Judah's religious life may have been an attempt to maintain Assyria's favor.

Good Intentions

Manasseh may have been impelled by what he regarded as good reasons to overthrow his father's reforms. Even "bad guys" often think they are justified by good intentions. But his reign would be judged by the results and these were so devastating that even "good" King Josiah, who succeeded Manasseh's son, would be only partially successful in reforming the nation.

For all their agreement, 2 Chronicles and 2 Kings give two differing accounts of Manasseh, the former telling us that he was carried away into captivity by the Assyrians, and then repented, returning to Jerusalem and attempting to remove the pagan cults. 2 Kings 21 says nothing of any of this, depicting him as a thoroughly evil. But 2 Chronicles sees him as a "bad guy" who wasn't totally "bad."

Who was the real Manasseh? We will never know, but I would like to believe that 2 Chronicles is the more accurate one, for it reminds us that God will grant mercy to us if we are repentant. None of us are intended to be "goats."

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