

# Lancaster Farming

## OPINION

### Time Of The Horse

This issue we launch a brand-new section for Lancaster Farming: *Boarder & Trainer*.

The idea for *Lancaster Farming's Boarder & Trainer* came to us about two years ago, when we recognized a need for a publication for the businesses that support the horse industry. They include the hay growers and marketers, the tackmakers, the feed and horse management supply companies, and the nutritionists and veterinary services. In other words, while many horse publications go straight on into the industry, reporting only events by breed associations, we decided to look into the management and training aspects of the exhibit and competition segments of the horse industry.

This comes at a time when the Farm Show Complex has completed construction of its new Equine Center. The marvelous center measures 145 by 290 feet and has a seating capacity of 1,800. The center includes an equine barn to stable 140 horses. The barn is connected to a fabulous exhibit facility, which already has shown vast improvements.

The new hall is available for the stabling of horses in addition to serving as a staging area. The facility should be able to accommodate up to 2,000 horses when coupled with the existing Farm Show space. It is designed to be flexible enough to host state, regional, national, and international competitions.

The total renovations tower close to \$90 million as of this writing. "With all this new construction combined with our current facilities, we will be dominant," said Sam Hays, state secretary of agriculture.

The horse industry remains viable, and *Lancaster Farming*, through *Boarder & Trainer*, wants to play a major role in advocating and promoting the industry in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast.

### FARM CALENDAR

Saturday, October 12

- York County Beekeepers' Annual Banquet, Olde Country Buffet, 6 p.m., (717) 225-3076.
- Farm and Natural Lands Trust Annual Punkin Chunkin and Fall Festival, York Expo Center, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., (717) 843-4411.
- Pumpkin Roundup and Harvest Festival and 4-H Achievement Night, Montrose, 7:30 p.m.
- Grass-Raised Livestock Workshop in New York State, Alfred University Campus, Alfred, N.Y., 9 a.m.-3 p.m., (716) 699-2377, ext. 125 or (800) 897-9189.
- Shirk Retirement drop-in, Farm and Home Center, 1 p.m.-3 p.m.
- Montgomery County 4-H Centennial Celebration, 4-H Center, Rt. 113, 3 p.m., (610) 489-4315.
- Harvest Festival, Reading Terminal Market, 12th and Arch Streets, Philadelphia, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 4-H Achievement Night, Susquehanna County Office Building, 7:30 p.m.

Pumpkin Roundup, Harvest Festival on the Green in Montrose, 10 a.m.

Sunday, October 13

American Dairy Goat Association National Convention, Clarion Hotel and Convention Center, Hagerstown, Md., thru Oct. 19.

Monday, October 14

- Poultry Management and Health Seminar, Kreider's Restaurant, Manheim, noon.
- Wood Structure and Identification Course, thru Oct. 15, (814) 863-0422.
- N.W. Pa. Woodland Association meeting, Spartansburg Elementary School, 7 p.m., (814) 868-1097.
- Warren County Extension annual meeting, North Warren State Hospital Chapel, 7 p.m., (814) 563-9388.
- Specialty Food Development Workshop at New York Culinary, 50

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### FARM FORUM

Editor:

It might appear from some recent media coverage that reducing homeschool regulations in Pennsylvania may not be a good idea. Before we can draw such a conclusion, however, we must first consider the facts as well as the advantages and disadvantages.

Homeschooling may or may not be for everyone, but for those parents who have made the decision to take on the responsibility of educating their own children, most have personal motives or convictions, which they believe is the best interest of their own children.

What is important right now is the proposed state legislation (HB2560 pending in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives),

a bill that will reduce paperwork and time for homeschooling parents ... a bill that will reduce time and paperwork for school districts and in turn, your tax dollars.

Is this really a good idea?

The facts are clear and cannot be denied.

Fact: in states where home education is highly regulated (such as Pennsylvania, Utah and Arizona) when compared with those states which are not (such as Texas, New Jersey and Illinois), the average test scores for home-educated students are, in all states, consistently higher than traditionally schooled students. Still further evidence shows a high rate of acceptance of home-

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## Now Is The Time

### By Leon Ressler

Lancaster County Extension Director

#### To Know How To Recognize West Nile Encephalitis In Horses

Jay Smoker, Lancaster County West Nile virus coordinator with Penn State Extension, reported that more cases of West Nile Encephalitis have been confirmed in horses the past few weeks in Pennsylvania. Nearly half of these cases are in Lancaster County.

One reason so many cases are in Lancaster is the fact that there is a larger-than-average horse population here. Many in our community depend on horses both for farm work and driving. Also, surveillance shows the virus to have a strong presence in the area this season. The number of dead birds and mosquito samples that tested positive is an indication of the threat to the humans and horses. Most horses and humans become infected in the late summer and early fall at the peak of the mosquito season.

Horses can only become infected from the bite of an infected mosquito. The incubation period, the time between exposure to the virus and appearance of the first signs of disease, is 3 to 15 days. There is no cure for West Nile encephalitis, but the symptoms can be treated. Where symp-

toms are recognized early and treated, many horses appear to have a better chance of recovering. The recovery rate nationally is 50 percent. Locally the success rate appears to be higher. As horse owners learn to recognize early symptoms, they can respond before the disease severely weakens the animal.

The virus can affect the central nervous system and cause encephalitis, affecting the brain. Clinical signs may include one or more of the following: loss of appetite and depression, fever, weakness of hind limbs, paralysis of hind limbs, impaired vision, ataxia, head pressing, head tilt, aimless wandering, convulsions, inability to swallow, circling, hyper excitability, or coma. Local veterinarians report that muzzle twitching and muscle weakness and loss of coordination (ataxia) are among the first noticeable signs.

It is important not to presume that horses with clinical signs of encephalitis have West Nile encephalitis. A definitive diagnosis requires ruling out other important diseases with similar neurological signs. This can only be done by examining blood from an infected horse. Determining the actual number of horses exposed to the virus is difficult. This is because some horses exposed to the West Nile virus may not show any clinical signs or perhaps may exhibit only vague signs of the disease.

#### To Vaccinate Your Horses

A vaccine to prevent West Nile encephalitis in horses is available. The manufacturer reports 94 percent effectiveness one year after the vaccination. This is still under review by the FDA. The first dose is given in the muscle followed by a booster 3-6 weeks later. The manufacturer recommends that a booster be given annually, preferably one month before mosquitoes are active.

The cost of the vaccination (series of two doses) administered by a veterinarian may vary from \$60 to \$100, depending on the costs of the farm visits and the vaccine. The vaccine for Eastern and Western encephalitis should not be confused with the vaccine for West Nile encephalitis. None of these provides any cross protection for the other. They are different.

Initially it was thought that mainly

selves as Christians. Of what could God possibly disapprove?

#### Great Houses

Jeremiah spells it out for them and us: "Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice, who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing and does not give him his wages" (22:13). He has nothing to say about their public piety or their respectability, but he does focus upon their prosperity, which is the result not of their worthiness, but of ruthless greed.

God's woe will fall upon all those who say, "I will build myself a great house, with spacious upper rooms, and cut out windows for it, paneling it with cedar, and painting it with vermilion" (v. 14).

Their sin is not that they build great houses, but that they do so by cheating the workers who build it. Because these workers have no prosperity and no power, they are exploited by those who have both money and power. Do we not live in such a materialistic society today? Ruthless, arrogant greed — not just a few errant executives — lies behind the Enron and similar debacles. God must wince when he hears the affluent pass this off as just unfortunate "collateral damage."

If you eat fast food, the price you pay for it will likely be subsidized by the cheap labor of those who do not earn enough to make ends meet. That is our real immigration problem today. Instead of focusing on those who enter our country illegally, we need to turn our attention to those who employ them at wages which no one else would accept.

We have an immigration problem because there are those whose product is subsidized by the cheap wages of powerless immigrants. God's judgment surely rests heavily upon

older horses were the most susceptible to West Nile. But this year young horses, 3 and 4 year olds, were confirmed with the disease. Younger horses, however, are more likely to recover. It should be noted that mules could also get West Nile.

The owner should consider the cost of prevention and how it might compare with the cost of treating an infected horse. Treatment costs may vary from \$100 to \$400, not to mention the possibility of losing the horse. Sometimes multiple visits from the veterinarian are needed to treat horses infected with West Nile. This will depend on the severity of the disease.

Smoker encourages farmers to eliminate standing water around the farm. The water trough is a potential breeding habitat when not kept clean. Drainage areas around farm buildings may also pose problems. Any area of stagnant water with decaying organic matter can turn into a mosquito producer. Since mosquitoes only fly 1/4 to 1/2 mile from where they hatch, removing items like old tires and buckets also will help reduce numbers.

Many cases of West Nile in horses appear to be near streams, swamps, or wooded areas. While it is not possible to eliminate all mosquitoes in nature, reducing the exposure is important. Keep your horse stabled during dawn and dusk hours, the time when mosquitoes are most active. Apply insect repellants that contain permethrins.

Local veterinarians report that cases are still showing up this week. The cooler weather will reduce the rate of infection as the mosquito numbers die down. But the threat is not past until there is a hard frost or good freeze. Some mosquitoes will move toward barns, storm drains, even animal burrows to over-winter. Others will lay eggs that remain dormant until spring warmth and rains come again.

An information sheet for West Nile Encephalitis in Horses is available from your local extension office or online at [www.pested.psu.edu/spWestNile.html](http://www.pested.psu.edu/spWestNile.html).

Quote of The Week:

"Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted."

— Albert Einstein

us today because we have permitted material things to become our god, profit our savior, and the market our holy spirit.

#### A Minimal Wage

Yesterday I got into a conversation with the manager of a local shop. He lamented the "terrible state of retail business today." Most retail establishments today, he said, hire young and inexperienced people because they can pay them a minimal wage. But when they become experienced, they are "let go" because employers don't want to pay for experienced, dedicated people. That was his experience in the past, but he is happy his present employers do not operate that way. But so many do.

"It seems a pity," says Reginald Reynolds, "that people who talk blandly of the advantages of 'cheap labor' ... cannot be induced to experience, even for a single day, what it means to be a 'cheap' human being — a cheap life, in fact." As long as we regard and treat the poor and powerless as the unfortunate but expected results of collateral economic damage, Jeremiah's words will be just as applicable to us and our society.

Prof. Joerg Rieger writes, "As people of my generation in Germany have asked our parents and our grandparents about their relation to the deaths of six million Jewish people, future generations will ask us about the deaths of nearly 12 million children each year, and even well-meaning theologians will not be spared." And what about well-meaning Christians?

## THE BIBLE SPEAKS

BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

### WELL-MEANING CHRISTIANS

Background Scripture: Jeremiah 22.  
Devotional Reading: Ephesians 5:8-17.

It is hard for us to imagine why the people of Judah did not respond affirmatively to Jeremiah's prophecies. His message seems so clear-cut: your ways are contrary to the will of God and you must either repent and change your ways or suffer dire consequences. So, why did they reject both him and his prophecies?

They couldn't conceive that God was all that displeased with them and their society. They were prosperous — surely that was a sign of their respectability? They were attendant to the rituals of their religion, observed the holy days, and made the requisite sacrifices. So why should they believe that God was greatly displeased with them?

They found it just as hard to believe God's judgment on them as you and I would find it hard to believe that God's judgment is falling upon us and society. We are prosperous, live respectable lives, belong to and support churches, and identify our-

## 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  
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