

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Our Northern Readers

The State of New York Department of Agriculture and Markets wrote in a letter to friends, dated Sept. 5 last year, about how viable New York agriculture has become over the past decade and its growth to come in the next 10 years.

For years, just like that quote from Sam Clemens (Mark Twain) about stories of his demise being greatly exaggerated, so, too, New York continues to prosper despite the stories you often hear about distance to markets, unsuitable growing conditions, etc.

In fact, ag is a \$3.4 billion industry in the state, ranking in the top 10 nationally in commodities. New York ranks third in the nation in milk production and corn silage production, according to Nathan L. Rudgers, commissioner.

The state ranks six in the nation for fruits and vegetables.

"I am proud to say that we have some of the most progressive, hard-working producers in the country — producers who are focused on leading our food and agricultural industry into an era of long-term profitability," Rudgers wrote.

A state survey recently noted that the vast majority of dairy farms in New York are planning not to simply maintain their operations over the next 10 years, but to grow them.

During a recent farmers meeting, state representatives handed out brochures for some of the most notable, fertile regions in New York, including Lewis County, Jefferson County, Oneida County, and St. Lawrence County.

One thing we found surprising: did you know that more than 50 percent of the consumer wealth and population of the U.S. and Canada from New York is within a day's drive? The state is home to Cornell and other excellent colleges and universities that provide a lot of information you read about farming in your family farm newspaper.

Gov. George E. Pataki and Commissioner Rudgers should be commended for a plan and a method to re-inform the mythmakers about living — and making a viable farm life — in New York.

Our readers stretch from North Carolina north to Canada. So we welcome views about regions other than our traditional (but much beloved) southeast Pennsylvania in our paper.

FARM CALENDAR

Saturday, February 1

Lawrence County Sheep and Wool Meeting, Liberty Grange, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., (814) 865-4700.
Meat Goat Producers' Conference, Genetti Lodge and Conference Center, Hazleton, 8:45 a.m.-3:15 p.m., (570) 454-2494.

Sunday, February 2

Annual Conference, Association of Applied Urban-Ag Interface

and the Future of Agriculture, Embassy Suites Hotel, San Luis Obispo, Calif., thru Feb. 4, (707) 265-9349.

Shade Tree Symposium, Lancaster Host Resort, thru Feb. 4.

Monday, February 3

North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference and

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FARM FORUM

Editor

I found Dr. Ken Bailey's comments on dairy trade issues in the Jan. 11, 2003 issue of the Lancaster Farming to be quite interesting. I would like to comment on a

few of the points that he made.

First, Bailey is correct that Milk Protein Concentrate (MPC) imports comprise a relatively small percentage of total dairy imports. However, I think that the big issue here has been the flagrant misuse of MPC. It seems that a few cheese makers were not satisfied with shortchanging dairy farmers legally, so resorted to illegal use of MPC to enhance the bottom line. No one using it has yet gone through the process to get Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) status for MPC from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Secondly, Bailey is correct that imports are not evil. However, when they are used to devalue domestic products, siphon money

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Now Is The Time
By Leon Ressler
Lancaster County Extension Director

To Prune The Shrubs In Your Yard

Most gardeners generally consider this the time of year to enjoy gardening through the stack of seed and nursery catalogs that seem to arrive daily. Snowflakes blowing by the window definitely do not put one in the mood for much outdoor work.

However, Tim Elkner, Lancaster County horticultural agent, reminds us there is some plant "maintenance" that should be done during this time of year that will help keep your shrubs in top shape later in the growing season. We almost always have a brief warm spell sometime during the winter and you should be ready to use the more "temperate" weather to start the gardening year.

Elkner points out late winter is the traditional time to prune the shrubs in your yard. The absence of leaves makes the framework or branching structure of these plants easier to see. It also will make damaged or diseased shoots and branches easier to spot.

Start by removing any crossing and rubbing shoots. Then remove the diseased and damaged branches as

well. Finally, cut out any other branches that need to be removed to improve the form of the plant.

It would be helpful to consult a good book on pruning before you start this process if you do not have much experience in this area. Different types of shrubs require different amounts and methods of pruning and a good book will let you know what is best for the plants in your yard.

Remember to prune spring-flowering shrubs after they bloom in the spring or else you might be removing many of the flowers. You should always remove damaged or diseased branches whenever you see them, even if the plant flowers early. There is no reason to give the disease a greater chance to spread throughout your shrub!

You can also do some light pruning on your spring-flowering shrubs if you want to force some flowers for an early spring inside your home. But save the major pruning cuts until just after flowering.

Summer-flowering shrubs should be pruned now. These plants form their flowers on new growth, so you will not be removing potential flowers when you cut out branches now. Some evergreens can be pruned now but others should not, especially those that flower in the spring such as rhododendron. Again, consult a good reference book regarding the proper time to prune your evergreens.

Pruning evergreens can also be a little tricky if you remove too much wood. On some types of shrubs, they will not be able to start new shoots on the remaining wood and you may be left with a "hole" in part of the plant. This is another good reason to consult a reference on pruning!

Another task you should complete now is an annual "inspection" of all of the plants in your yard. Some insect infestations that you may not have noticed last year may be easily visible now. Choose a sunny, warm winter day to closely examine your shrubs for pests and enjoy a little time outdoors.

Gardening is a year-round hobby. While some times of the year are

busier than others, there is almost always something to do in your yard. So spend some time outdoors with your shrubs this month both you and your plant are sure to benefit from the experience!

To Attend The Mid-Atlantic Fruit And Vegetable Convention

If you produce fruit or vegetables, you don't want to miss the great educational opportunity at the Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention Feb. 4-6 at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center.

This tristate event features numerous presentations on a variety of topics as well as a huge trade show with many commercial exhibitors.

Topics cover many aspects of production, including season extension with high and low tunnels, labor issues, wholesale marketing, direct marketing, and irrigation. Tree fruit sessions include deer control, control of pear diseases, calcium deficiency, soil renovation in orchards, reducing spray drift, and using the Global Positioning System (GPS) in your orchard. Greenhouse sessions include raising greenhouse tomatoes, integrated pest management (IPM) programs for greenhouses, ornamental varieties for greenhouses, and the importance of water quality.

This year there are several wine grape sessions with topics including vineyard nutrition and grapevine tissue analysis, grape root borer, management of fruit and foliar diseases throughout the season, and canopy management for yield and quality.

Potato sessions will address management strategies for late blight and other diseases, influencing chipping quality in the field, and the challenge of marketing specialty potatoes. Other sessions focus on sweet corn, small fruit production, cut flower production, and organic production. Walk-in registrations are accepted, so you can still attend even if you have not registered.

Quote Of The Week:

"Every problem has in it the seeds of its own solution. If you don't have any problems, you don't get any seeds."

— Norman Vincent Peale

THE BIBLE SPEAKS
BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

A MINISTRY OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Background Scripture:

Acts 4:32-37; 9:26,27; 11:19-30; 15:36-40.

Devotional Reading:

Hebrews 10:19-25.

As a brand-new minister in a suburb of Harrisburg, I had a very exalted, if immature, vision of my mission. Within one year I would convert all of Paxtonia, within two years, all of Lower Paxton Township and by the end of three years, all of Lower Dauphin County. It didn't work out that way, for, after five years, when I left for another church, I was still working on Paxtonia.

Many Christians may think unrealistically about Christian discipleship. We would all like to be a St. Francis of Assisi or a Toyohiko Kagawa. There is nothing wrong with that aspiration if we don't let it interfere with seemingly less spectacular opportunities.

Witnessing to the Good News is not something for the special few, but all of us. Barnabas, who grasped every opportunity to live his discipleship, is a shining example for all of us. He is mentioned only briefly in

six of the chapters of Acts (also I Cor. 9:6; Gal. 2:1,9,13; and Col. 4:10). But, if we look closely, we will see that his discipleship, though not so dramatic, was very vital.

Called To Minister

Acts 4:36 tells us that his given name is Joseph, a member of the Hebrew tribe of Levi. Levites served various functions in the temple, roles secondary to that of the priests. Barnabas was from the island of Cyprus and apparently of some means, for he "sold a field which belonged to him, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet" (4:37). So he is the kind of Christian who not only hears what should be done, but does it. Without people like Barnabas the church would not have endured and spread.

Barnabas, meaning "son of encouragement," is the surname given him by the apostles. His gift to the early church was the encouragement he gave his fellow followers of Christ through both his words and his actions. Many who helped me most throughout my life were those, beginning with my parents, who encouraged me in my endeavors. Who needs encouragement? Just about everybody. There are opportunities every day.

In Acts 11, the apostles, hearing of many conversions in Antioch, sent Barnabas to that city to report to them what was happening there. Barnabas was so encouraged by the many converts that he decided to stay on in Antioch for a while to establish a congregation there. Acts tells us "he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (11:24). But Barnabas decided he would need help and went to Tarsus to enlist the aid of a new and untried disciple named Saul (Paul).

I doubt that any other Christian leaders would have taken a chance on Paul, who was better known for his persecution of Christians than he was for his conversion on the Damascus Road.

Playing Second Fiddle

Note that, in the beginning, it was "Barnabas and Saul" (11:30), but by the time we get to 13:43, it has become "Paul and Barnabas." For the sake of the gospel, Barnabas, seeing Paul's great abilities, was apparently willing to let Paul assume the leadership. But, as they are planning their third missionary journey, they disagreed over including John Mark in their party. Paul did not want him along because the young disciple had apparently left their group during the previous journey. But Barnabas wanted to give Mark another chance, so they went their separate ways.

That, however, is not the end of the story. It appears that Barnabas was right in giving Mark another chance because, approximately 10 years later, he was again working with Paul (Col. 4:10; Philemon 24). According to tradition, he founded the church in the great Jewish-Greek city of Alexandria, Egypt, where he also died and was buried.

Unlike Paul and Peter, there are not many churches named after Barnabas. But I think there should be, because most of us are closer to his level of discipleship than we are to that of Peter and Paul. Maybe we ought to start a Society of St. Barnabas to spread the Good News with a vital ministry of encouragement!

How To Reach Us

To address a letter to the editor:

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- By regular mail: Editor, Lancaster Farming P.O. Box 609, 1 E. Main St. Ephrata, PA 17522
- By e-mail: farming@lancnews.infi.net

Please note: Include your full name, return address, and phone number on the letter. Lancaster Farming reserves the right to edit the letter to fit and is not responsible for returning unsolicited mail.

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