

# Lancaster Farming

## OPINION

### Hanging Tough

More than 16 months of depressed dairy prices — prices to producers that have dropped through the floor while the price of a gallon of milk remains virtually unchanged at the checkout counter — have placed unbelievable hardship and strain on our dairy families, many of whom read our paper and depend on us for advice, for solutions.

Are these these desperate times seeking desperate measures?

At least for the past year, according to Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (PFB) estimates, the price received by dairy farmers has been below the cost of production.

Some striking (and maddening) facts were reported by Mike Evanish, manager of PFB Members' Service Corporation's Business Services. According to Evanish, though the dairy enterprise has been the "shining star" of Pennsylvania agriculture in the past few years, it was PFB's conclusion, after reviewing taxes (which is what Evanish does), that when a farm was profitable, "it was the result of government programs and crop insurance proceeds — *not commodity sales.*" (emphasis ours).

You can shake your heads in disgust, but the horror story continues from there. Nearly every other commodity produced in Pennsylvania, noted Evanish, is sold at a price below the cost of production.

Though many other concerns were at the forefront of a media meeting at Farm Bureau's Camp Hill offices late last week, including property tax reform, tort reform, ag education, homeland security, and other issues, the viability of ag remains at stake.

According to Evanish, because dairy is struggling, "infrastructure is more at risk than ever. It is well documented that once infrastructure is lost, it doesn't come back."

Evanish means the infrastructure that includes vets, loan officers, accountants, technical experts such as mechanics, agronomists, feed specialists, and suppliers, labor, and equally as important, neighbors who share the same concerns.

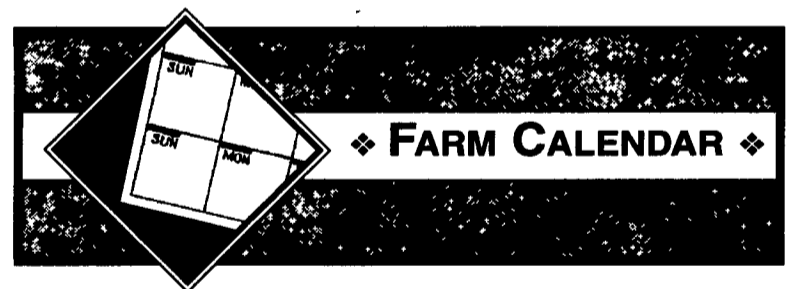
Evanish noted he grew up in Pittsburgh and watched the steel industry disappear. "So much has gone away, and you can't bring it back," he said. "We have to have a profitable farm business, not a farm business getting handouts."

Farm Bureau in the state is home to about 32,000 members, and big emphasis is attracting and keeping the young and beginning farmers. We have a story about the Young Farmer and Rancher programs elsewhere this issue. But if more farms continue to opt out of dairying, can the state survive on tree farms, raising vegetables, hatcheries, and looking for other viable niche markets? And how can those farms be passed to the next generation?

Can it survive the onslaught of illegal ordinances that prohibit agriculture?

If processors decide to merge, or producers would cooperative as

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### FARM CALENDAR

Saturday, May 3

Md. State 4-H Dairy Bowl Contest, University of Maryland, College Park campus, Animal Sciences Building, 8:30 a.m., (301) 403-4284.

Md. Sheep and Wool Festival, Howard County Fairgrounds, Maryland, thru May 4, (410) 531-3647.

Penn State Master Gardener of Lancaster County First Annual Plant Sale, Farm and Home Center auditorium, Lancaster, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Spring Draft Horse Clinic, Diamond Lane Farm, Roaring Spring, 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

SWCS Maryland Old Line Chapter 2003 Spring Tour, Allegany College Continuing Education Building, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Secret Arboretum's Plant Discovery Day, Wooster Campus, Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m., (330) 263-3776.

Perry County Farm Safety Just 4 Kids Day Camp, Ickesburg Fire Co., Ickesburg, 9 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Sunday, May 4

Monday, May 5

Tuesday, May 6

Sheep Shearing School, Delaware Valley College, Doylestown, thru May 7, (215) 345-3283.

Milk Quality/Stray Voltage Workshop, Steese's Restaurant, Grove City, thru May 7, (724) 748-4115.

Ag Plastic Combustion Forum, Penn State, University Park 9 a.m.-3 p.m., (814) 865-7685.

Wednesday, May 7

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## Now Is The Time By Leon Ressler

Lancaster County Extension Director

### To Vote In Primary Election May 20

Pennsylvania will conduct its primary election May 20. In the primary election candidates are selected within each party for the ballot for the fall general election. Because this year's election focuses on local and countywide races, some people refer this as an off-year election. This can lead you to believe that this year's election is less important than elections where state and national offices are on the ballot.

However, if you accept this logic, you are making a significant mistake. Offices on the ballot this year include county commissioner, school board director, and township supervisor, among others. Decisions made by those elected to these positions will have a significant impact on your family's life and your ability to operate your agricultural business.

County commissioners have many responsibilities, including local funding and direction of the county agricultural preservation program, local funding for agricultural agencies, and management of county growth. Local township official's decisions impact zoning and numerous regulations that can impact your business. School board directors operate your local school district and their decisions impact the quality and cost of education in your community. At each of these levels of local government, decisions are made which directly affect the tax structure as well as tax rate.

While this is a very busy time of the year, you can't afford to ignore this important election. If you don't have time to research all of the candidates on your ballot, ask someone you trust who has studied the issues to give you an update. Reading a voter's guide from a respected organization you are familiar with is another way to get a lot of information with a minimal time investment. Don't let the off year label on this year's election fool you. This is important!

### To Seek Alternatives

#### To CCA-Treated Lumber

On March 17, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) granted the voluntary cancellation and use termination requests affecting virtually all residential uses of chromated copper arsenate (CCA)-treated wood. Under this action, affected CCA products cannot be used after Dec. 30, 2003 to treat lumber intended for use in most residential settings. This transition affects virtually all residential uses of wood treated with CCA, including play structures, decks, picnic tables, landscaping timbers, residential fencing, patios, and walkways/boardwalks.

This action was proposed in Feb-

ruary 2002 by the registrants of CCA-pesticide products used to treat wood. Phase-out of the residential uses will reduce the potential exposure risks to arsenic, a known human carcinogen, thereby protecting human health, especially children's health and the environment.

The current action follows up on the February 2002 publication of a notice of receipt of voluntary cancellation/use termination requests, which also provided an opportunity for public comments to be submitted to EPA. A notice of the cancellation order will be published in the Federal Register, and that document will include the agency's response to comments. Consumers may continue to buy and use the treated CCA wood for as long as it is available.

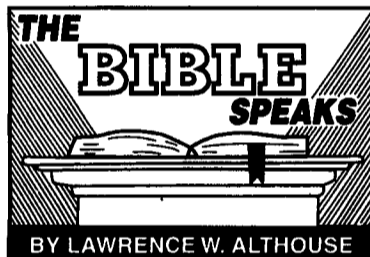
The transition to using the new generation treatment products is well under way. The agency is deferring any action on two uses involved in the termination requests; therefore, wood used in permanent wood foundations and fence posts for agricultural uses may continue to be treated with CCA at this time.

EPA is working with the registrant community and other stakeholders to ensure that safer, comparable alternatives will be available. EPA is continuing its work on an ongoing comprehensive reevaluation of CCA-treated wood that has been under way as part of the agency's effort to reevaluate older pesticides to ensure that they meet current health and safety standards. More information on CCA treated wood is available at <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/chemicals/1file.htm>.

#### Quote Of The Week:

"Treat the Earth well. It was not given to you by your parents. It was loaned to you by your children."

— Kenyan Proverb



## HIDING JESUS

### Background Scripture:

Mark 7:24-37.

### Devotional Reading:

Luke 7:1-10.

When I was a pastor in suburban Harrisburg, there was an old table in the basement on which was situated the church's mimeograph machine. Weekly I labored at it to produce the church's worship bulletin. The table was a mess, covered with layers and layers of mimeograph ink and dirt. I was all for replacing it with a sturdy metal table.

However, one day one of my parishioners, Lemuel Hoover, asked to see the table before I disposed of it. After looking at it a few minutes, he asked to take it to his workshop. Weeks later he brought it back, one of the most beautiful pieces of furniture I have ever seen. All those years, I and other pastors had labored at that table and had not known of the beautiful treasure that was hidden beneath the dirt and grime.

Something like that often happens to the gospel. This treasure often becomes covered with layers of theology, ritual, church politics, and civil religion, so that we miss the original truth, beauty, and power of it. That is why both Christians and churches need fre-

quent spiritual renovations, revivals, and renewal in order to find anew the priceless treasure within. Otherwise, like my table, the gospel may look grim and worthless.

### He Won't Stay Hidden!

The miracle, however, is that, despite our conscious and unconscious efforts to hide Jesus, he cannot remain hidden. Mark tells us that Jesus and his disciples entered the region of Tyre and Sidon. "And he entered a house, and would not have anyone know it; yet he could not be hid" (Mark 7:24). Later on, when he is traveling from Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, he heals a man who was handicapped both by deafness and a speech impediment. After the healing, Jesus "charged them to tell no one; but the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it" (7:36).

We seem to have two forces in play here. One the one hand, it is a human trait to knowingly or unknowingly hide Jesus under the trappings of our own humanity. On the other, there is in the long run something inherent in Jesus that will not permit us to get away with hiding him or keeping him a secret. We may obscure him for a while, but we cannot keep him hidden.

Jesus and his disciples went into the regions of Tyre and Sidon to temporarily get away from the crowds. Now known throughout Galilee, Jesus might expect that in this land of non-Jews he could catch his breath in anonymity. But then a Syrophenician woman comes to him, begging for him to cast out a demon from her daughter. Why did this Greek woman come to Jesus? Because, Mark says that she had "heard of him" — his reputation had preceded him from Galilee.

### Jesus Beyond The Layers

## Lancaster Farming

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- Keystone Awards 1993, 1995
- PACD Media Award 1996
- Recognized for photo excellence throughout the years by the Northeast Farm Communicators
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