

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Agriculture: Cornerstone Of The Fair Industry

Agriculture is the cornerstone of the fair industry. It is the one main attraction that makes fairs different from other entertainment venues. All people have a little "country" in their souls and each of our fairs "play up" agriculture to the city folks who come to visit.

In 1790, at about the time the U.S. was founded, 90 percent of its citizens were "gainfully employed" in agriculture, according to estimates from the USDA. As of 2002, the USDA estimates only 1.9 percent of Americans are farmers.

With these shrinking numbers, agriculture is promoted in a slightly different light than it was years ago. Even though we have fewer people in the production of agriculture products, we are all still eating and still clothed better than ever.

Education is an important way to maintain the viability of Pennsylvania agriculture. Informing the consumer where their food and fiber comes from, and how it gets to them, is critical if Pennsylvania agriculture is to prosper.

Because rules, regulations, and laws are passed by the nonfarming majority, the farmer is governed by people not involved in and often not educated about the industry. This situation is irreversible. Never again will farmers be the major audience in society.

Anti-agriculture groups have amassed huge amounts of resources and their propaganda is effective and far-reaching. They are impacting farming by way of negative public opinion. The farmer is at the mercy of legislators, who, for the most part, are uninformed or misinformed. They often vote according to the current mood and opinions of their constituents. Thus, agriculture's future depends on educating the nonfarming public.

The fair industry is one of many venues that can play a role in educating the public about agriculture. Fairs throughout history have

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FARM CALENDAR

Saturday, May 24
 Sunday, May 25
 Monday, May 26
Memorial Day.
 Lancaster Farming office closed.
 Tuesday, May 27
 XIV Global Warming International Conference and Expo, Boston, Mass., thru May 29, (630) 910-1551.
 CWT Meetings, Holiday Inn,

Maine St., Concord, N.H., 7:30 p.m.; Best Western, Washington St., Watertown, N.Y., 7:30 p.m.; Bart Fire Hall, Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.
 Wednesday, May 28
 Lancaster County Pasture Walk, Garber Dairy Farm, Elizabethtown, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m., (717) 367-2141.
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FARM FORUM

Editor:
 Greetings from the secretary of agriculture.
 As a farmer, I understand the needs of agriculture and I am ex-

tremely excited about the opportunity to represent the agriculture community. As secretary, my goal is to ensure that Pennsylvania is a welcome environment for agriculture — all agriculture — both large and small, and traditional and nontraditional agriculture entities.

With more than \$4 billion in cash receipts last year and as our leading economic enterprise, agriculture is important to Pennsylvania. Gov. Rendell recognizes that a strong agricultural economy is important to a strong state economy. We all know that growing is something agriculture does well and as a result, agriculture and agribusiness will have an integral role in jump-starting the economy.

Economic development and
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How To Reach Us
 To address a letter to the editor:
 • By fax: (717) 733-6058
 • By regular mail:
 Editor, Lancaster Farming
 P.O. Box 609, 1 E. Main St.
 Ephrata, PA 17522
 • By e-mail:
 farming@lancasterfarming.com
 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.

Now Is The Time

By Leon Ressler
 Lancaster County Extension Director

To Practice Careful Biosecurity On Your Dairy Farm

The government of Canada confirmed on Tuesday that the brain tissue from an 8-year-old cow in Alberta, Canada has tested positive for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE, also called "Mad Cow Disease"). The Canadian government has emphasized that the meat from the animal did not enter the food or feed supply. The herd of origin is being destroyed after tissue samples are taken, even though BSE is not necessarily transmitted among cows in a herd.

The last confirmed case of BSE in Canada was in 1993, from a cow that had been imported from the U.K. There have been no cases in the U.S. ever confirmed, even with extensive testing.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced that, "The USDA is placing Canada under its BSE restriction guidelines and will not accept any ruminants or ruminant products from Canada pending further investigation."

Although this isolated incident

should not alarm local farmers, Lancaster County Dairy Agent Beth Grove reminds us we should always keep in mind good biosecurity practices on the farm.

The first step is to identify your risk areas. Where is your farm vulnerable? Viruses and bacteria can enter your livestock facility on animals including livestock, wild animals, pets, and insects. People, including visitors, employees, and yourself can carry pathogens onto your operation. Disease organisms can also be carried in livestock feed, water, bedding, and soil as well as in the air via dust and aerosols. Additionally equipment and vehicles can transport diseases on tires, floorboards, mud, and road dirt.

It is critical that you take several steps to prevent introduction of diseases. If you must purchase animals, buy from a "clean source" — test new cattle for mastitis, Johne's Disease, BVD, and Leukosis. Isolate new cattle and calves wherever possible and milk the new cows last for 3-4 weeks following purchase. Keep cattle haulers and their trucks away from livestock areas and bring bull calves or cull animals to the truck rather than having the hauler enter your barns. Post a sign asking visitors not to enter dairy barn without permission. Ask neighbors and visitors to wear clean boots in the barn. Limit access to sick and calving pens. Don't be embarrassed to ask folks to follow this routine.

Feed and care for the youngest animals before handling older animals. Limit heifer and calf access to cow facilities and feed to prevent the spread of Johne's Disease. Don't allow heifers to "clean up" cow feed; minimize feed contamination by rodents, animals, etc.; keep livestock feed stored in a clean, dry place; and keep dogs and cats away from feed bunks and water troughs.

Finally, if you haven't already done so, develop a plan for your farm. Work with your veterinarian, nutritionist, extension agent, etc., to develop a plan to reduce the chances of spreading or importing new infections. Talk to

your family and employees about biosecurity. This is too important an issue to take lightly!

To Scout For Asparagus Aphids

Asparagus aphids are powdery pale green to fluorescent green in color and only 1/16th of an inch in length. They have six legs, two prominent antennae, and a pair of tailpipe-like appendages on their abdomen. When disturbed they scurry away and hide in cracks in the soil or under trash. Damage from this pest has been reported in Pennsylvania and in New Jersey this year.

The asparagus aphid is native to Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean area. The first infestation in North America was noticed in New York in 1969. Since that time, the aphid has been reported in New Jersey, Delaware, Rhode Island, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, and Washington. Asparagus is the only known food plant of this aphid.

Asparagus aphids feed on cladophylls (modified leaves) and under bracts. They extract sap through their needle-like mouth parts. Heavily infested seedlings may form rosettes or shrivel and die. Similar infestations on older plants may cause severe dwarfing. While most of the time the feeding is done on the fern stage of asparagus, this aphid can feed on the spears and cause a twisted, bent appearance. The affected spears can turn pale yellow green and grow slowly.

In most years, predators, parasites, and diseases have kept this aphid from becoming a serious pest in most areas. However, it has been reported that the aphid population is worse following a dry year in the previous season.

If you have a problem, the aphids can be controlled with 1 quart per acre of Malathion 57EC. If you choose to spray, remember there is a 12-hour re-entry interval and a one-day-to-harvest limitation.

Quote Of The Week:
 "Vision is the art of seeing things invisible."
 — Jonathan Swift

THE BIBLE SPEAKS

BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

ARE YOU ABLE?

Background Scripture:
 Mark 10:32-52.
Devotional Reading:
 John 20:24-31.
 Lots of people come to God in order to use him. Early in our lives we may come to God so that we can pass an exam or make the team. Later, it may be an attempt to meet a crisis or find release from an "impossible situation."

Some people come because they are seeking to be healed of something that has baffled or resisted their physicians or for help in coping with a family member, friend, or foe. Or it may represent an attempt to extricate ourselves from something we've gotten ourselves into.

There's nothing wrong in coming to God that way. Lots of people in the Bible started that way. But, although it is a suitable entry level, it is not where we are intended to stay. God wants to help us in our trials and tribulations, but he also wants to use us to accomplish his will and purpose in the world.

In Mark 8:32-33, we see that, when Jesus foretells the passion that awaits

him, Peter fails to understand him and he earns Jesus' rebuke: "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men." Peter misunderstood the essence of who Jesus is and what he will do. Then, in Mark 10:33-34, Jesus again proclaims the passion awaiting him in Jerusalem and, once again, the disciples — or at least two of them, James and John — misunderstand.

Whatever We Ask

We cannot help but wonder at the audacity of the request by James and John: "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you" (Mk. 10:35). If, for nothing else, we need to give them an "A" for sheer honesty. Many of us feel that way but know better than to verbalize it. The sincerity, if immaturity, of their request indicates that they really don't understand what following Jesus is all about. It is not so much that they are asking something from Jesus, but the manner in which they ask it, as if Jesus was indebted to them, as if they were Sinbad the Sailor releasing a genie from a bottle. . . .

Perhaps even Jesus is a bit stunned and he responds: "What do you want me to do for you?" Their reply is even more shocking: "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." They assumed that, when they got to Jerusalem, that Jesus would be acclaimed the Messiah king and begin his reign. Since the seats directly to the right and left of the throne were always places of highest royal authority, they were seeking places of privilege in a coming earthly kingdom. They still didn't have a clue as to who and what Jesus is. . . .

Jesus knows this: "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or

to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" (10:38). The "cup" and "baptism" here are symbolic of the passion that lies before him. When they reply, "We are able," we may assume that they are sincere — but wrong, just as often we are wrong when we make similar pledges. Theirs are words of optimism, not faith. Optimism may result from underestimating the threat or challenge that faces us. Faith sees clearly the danger, but looks beyond it to trust in God's presence and help.

The Nerve!

When they heard this exchange between Jesus, James and John, they are furious with them. Could it be that their anger resulted from their own expectations of prominence or precedence in the Messianic Kingdom?

I think so, because the next words of Jesus see directed at all the disciples, not just James and John: "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But is shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all" (10:42-44).

Once again we find Jesus not as a repairman who comes to make little repairs and adjustments in our lives, but a revolutionary who comes to turn us and the world upside down. How different that is from the tame and unobtrusive faith lived out by most of us — including me.

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