

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Editor's note for all Guest Editorials: Please keep in mind that the opinions of the writers don't necessarily agree with the editor's. For the benefit of our diverse readership, we strive to provide a balance of opinion in Lancaster Farming.

A Fair Perspective

Guest Editorial By
President Abraham Lincoln

Editor's Note: It's fair season. The following text is a complete reprint from the 1956 Fair Dealer, relating the text of a Speech President Abraham Lincoln gave in 1859 to the Wisconsin State Agriculture Society in Milwaukee, Wis.

Fairs of agriculture are useful in more ways than one. They bring us together, and thereby make us better acquainted and better friends than we otherwise would be. From the first appearance of man upon the earth down to very recent times, the words "stranger" and "enemy" were quite or almost synonymous.

Long after civilized nations had defined robbery and murder as high crimes, and had fixed severe punishments to them, when practiced among and upon their own people respectively, it was deemed no offense but even meritorious to rob and murder and enslave strangers, whether as nations or as individuals. Even yet, this has not totally disappeared.

The man of the highest moral cultivation, in spite of all which abstract principal can do, likes him whom he does know much better than him whom he does not know. To correct the evils, great and small which springs from want of sympathy and from positive enmity among strangers, as nations or as individuals, is one of the highest functions of civilization.

To this end our agricultural fairs contribute in no small degree. They render more pleasant, and stronger, and more durable the bond

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FARM CALENDAR

Saturday, July 5
Md. Guernsey, Milking Short-horn Field Days, Buzzard's Luck Auction, (301) 898-8881.
Bark Peelers' Convention, Pa. Lumber Museum, Rt. 6 between Galeton and Coudersport, thru July 6, (814) 435-2652.
New Jersey Holstein Summer Picnic, Norz Hill Farm Grove, River Road, near Flemington, N.J., noon, (908) 369-8586.

Vermont Agricultural Museum Field Days, thru July 6, (802) 728-5274.

Sunday, July 6
Derry Twp. Ag Fair, Westmoreland County, thru July 12, (724) 694-2175.

Conservation Leadership School for Ages 15-18, thru July 12, (814) 865-8301.

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FARM FORUM

Editor:

Farmers and ranchers did not fare well in the House Appropriations Committee's FY-04 agriculture appropriations bill. Com-

pared to last year, the bill cuts \$870 million in discretionary spending and \$6 million in mandatory spending for key agriculture programs such as conservation, renewable energy, agriculture credit, and research.

In addition, it includes language to prohibit the secretary of agriculture from continuing writing rules for mandatory country-of-origin labeling for beef, pork, lamb, or fish. It is simply unacceptable that an attack on country-of-origin meat labeling would be attempted at a time of heightened concerns from America's consumers and trading partners about the origin of our meat.

Following the recent "mad cow" case in Canada, our number one and number three beef

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Now Is The Time

By Leon Ressler
* Lancaster County Extension Director

To Appreciate The Advantages Of Living In The Northeastern United States

I just returned from a trip with my family visiting the national parks in several northwestern states. My son mentioned that he learned to appreciate how good we have it in Pennsylvania on this trip.

First he noted that gasoline prices are lower at home than in any of the states we visited. Second, Pennsylvania is green! Most of the Northwest is arid, where water access and availability is a real challenge. While too much rainfall has tended to cause problems this year in agriculture, a visit to an arid area puts things in perspective. My son also noted that while we "live in the country," we still have easy access to the conveniences of urban areas.

I would add we also have relatively easy access to the population centers, which are huge markets for our agricultural products. So while we can get frustrated at times with the challenges we all face, sometimes travel to another area helps us appreciate the good things we have.

To Control Summer Mastitis

With the higher temperatures that are finally here, summer mastitis flare-

ups will usually increase. Lancaster County Dairy Agent Beth Grove points out that increased infections are often caused by increased bacteria numbers — higher temperatures allow environmental bacteria to multiply rapidly. Cows are highly susceptible to infection if their teats come in contact with high numbers of bacteria, particularly when they are under heat stress. Summer flies can cause extra problems with infection, as will cattle seeking wet, shady spots, ponds, and slow-moving streams.

There are a number of management steps that can be taken to help control summer mastitis. There is very little we can do to control temperatures, but bacteria need food and moisture in addition to heat to thrive. This is why it is important in the summer to scrape often and remove manure (bacteria food) from cow holding areas. Since milk is also a food source, teat dipping is important to kill bacteria at the teat end. Keeping cows well-bedded and stalls clean and dry is also vital to summer mastitis control.

Keep cattle out of shady, wet spots, ponds, and areas of wet bedding. Not only will this reduce environmental infections, but can prevent diseases such as Lepto from gaining a foothold in the herd. Provide plenty of fresh water for cows during the summer months.

In addition to spreading infection, flies will cause cows to bunch up and increase heat stress. Since flies can spread certain types of mastitis from cow to cow, use fly control to limit udder exposure. Be careful to use an approved product for lactating cows in the milking herd.

If cows spend extended time on pasture, consider a portable shade. If you do not already have tunnel or natural ventilation, contemplate one of these systems to reduce heat stress for the herd. For more information on ventilation and heat stress abatement, contact your local extension agent for guidelines.

To Understand New Federal CAFO Rules

New Federal Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) rules were put into effect in April of this year. These new rules were the result of a long process.

The federal Clean Water Act of 1972 established a comprehensive program to protect water quality through a permit program for "point" sources of water pollution. The USEPA created

two rules in the 1970s that affected animal agriculture. One of these created The National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program, which defined farms needing a discharge permit as CAFOs. The second rule created the Effluent Limitations Guidelines (ELGs), which set technology and performance requirements for CAFOs.

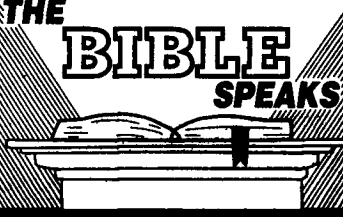
States were charged with implementing NPDES permitting. While 45 states, including Pennsylvania, took responsibility for this program, the progress in implementation was criticized as slow and ineffective in protecting water quality from the pollution contributions of a changing animal agricultural sector. Nationally, permitting was found to be inequitable in terms of regional and state differences and the animal species included in the program. A Natural Resources Defense Council lawsuit was filed against USEPA for failing to adequately implement the law. It led to a court order requiring the agency to revise and update the federal CAFO rules by December 2002.

To help farmers understand how these changes will impact them, Penn State Cooperative Extension has developed a new publication entitled "New Federal CAFO Rules: Which Pennsylvania Livestock And Poultry Operations Will Be Affected?" The free 7-page guide will help farmers and citizens understand which livestock and poultry operations are likely to be affected by new water quality regulations from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The guide explains why EPA revised the federal CAFO rules, highlights the major changes to the rules, outlines the process for incorporating the new rules into the current state CAFO program, and provides guidance to Pennsylvania producers to help them determine if they will need a permit and how they may be affected. It also includes a list of educational resources.

For those with Internet access, the publication is available on the Penn State Nutrient and Water Policy Website at <http://agenvpolicy.aers.psu.edu>. For hard copies of the publication, call the Publications Distribution Center, (814) 865-6713, or send written request to the Publications Distribution Center, The Pennsylvania State University, 112 Agricultural Administration Building, University Park, PA 16802.

Quote Of The Week:
"Well begun is half done."
— Aristotle



THE BIBLE SPEAKS

BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

A GOOD WORK

Background Scripture:
Nehemiah 1 through 2.
Devotional Reading:
Isaiah 26:1-9.

Wouldn't it wonderful is your local newspaper would carry just one page entitled "Good News"? It would serve as a kind of antidote for all the bad news that fills our printed media. Another idea would be to try to strike some balance on the front page between good news and bad news. But, of course, bad news sells papers — good news doesn't. Even television productions like "Sixty Minutes" are written on the evidence that reports of bad deeds will always bring in more viewers than stories on good works.

Yet, if you look for them, you can find quite a bit of news about good works, even though they may be buried beneath the obituaries.

Aldersgate, the Sunday school class we attend at First United Methodist Church in Dallas, Texas, is composed of senior citizens who spend much of their available energy and time doing good, if often unrecognized, works of compassion and caring. This includes a fine band that plays "gigs" for all kinds of occasions, donating their fees to some of the good works to which the

class contributes. These people are involved in good works both inside and outside the church.

Yet, as many good works as we can find, we live in a world that needs more and more of them. That means that these opportunities to help lift and heal other people are never exhausted. If you haven't found any, either you are a hermit living in the wilderness or you just are not opening your eyes and ears.

The Good Work Begins

The Book of Nehemiah is the story of a people who are challenged to do a good work and, under the right leadership, they rose up to meet it. The story opens in Susa of Elam, the winter capital of the kings of Persia. The month is Chisleb, comparable to our November-December.

Some of the Jews carried off into exile by the Babylonians are living there and one of them, Nehemiah, is a palace servant of Artaxerxes. His is a very responsible, trusted position, cupbearer to the king, which means that he sampled every cup of wine that the king drank. Nehemiah was trusted to protect him from poisoning.

Some Jews from Jerusalem came to Susa, perhaps to ask for help. Nehemiah hears their tale of woe: those not carried into captivity are merely surviving in a Jerusalem vulnerable to contempt and attack. The good work begins, as it usually does, with Nehemiah not only listening to their plight but caring about it even though he and his fellow exiles lived in comparative security and prosperity a far distance from Jerusalem. This is transcendent caring, reaching beyond one's own situation and interests. He listened to their plight and the seeds of the good work were planted.

Nehemiah's next reaction was to enter into a period of prayer and fasting so that he might be open and responsive to God. Fasting is not much

practiced today, but it is a fine discipline, for it helps us to get rid of that which has the power to be an impediment between ourselves and God. In fact, beyond fasting, we need to regularly recognize and get rid of that which keeps us from being in communion with God.

Plain Talk

Whenever we are moved by compassion to seek God's counsel, we usually end up doing what Nehemiah did: he faced the king and told him plainly what was needed. That is where many of us bail out — we find it difficult to confront people so that we may communicate with them about the good work that needs to be done. Nehemiah didn't beat around the bush — he told it as it was.

Nehemiah decided to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the city's walls, but it was a project too big for just one man. So, he takes the facts to the Jews in captivity. He tells them of the situation in Jerusalem, the scorn and dangers from its neighbors. He also tells them of the king's encouragement and the assurance given by God. Too often we may try to enlist people for good works without sharing with them all the facts.

Nehemiah does not rebuild the walls of Jerusalem by himself, but he is the one who challenges and inspires the people to do so. So we come to the final step in beginning the good work: "And they said, 'Let us rise up and build.' So they strengthened their hands for the good work." They committed themselves.

That's how he did it. How will you do the good work that lies so close at hand?

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