

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Young Farmer Observations

According to a Lehigh County young farmer by the name of Michael Fink, about a quarter of the farmers in this country are age 65 or older. Half of farm owners are that age or older.

The farm population, needless to say, isn't getting any younger. So how do you attract young farmers and preserve farming in this country?

Recently *Lancaster Farming* had a chance to hear what the young farmers and ranchers such as Fink had to say at the young farmer and rancher contests conducted during the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau annual convention in Hershey.

Fink, along with Matthew Balliet, a farmer in Drums, Luzerne County who grows about 550 acres of grain, believe in education.

They also believe, in Balliet's words, that the success of the farm lies off the farm. Balliet insists you have to allow the public to be Farm Bureau members and have a say.

"Votes count, numbers talk," said Balliet. "You have to reach the nonfarmers. Nobody is as close to ag (in the nonfarming sector) as (for example) the meat packer."

Fink believes that the farm community has to invite in the equine hobby industry, the canine industry, and other groups who depend heavily on ag inputs.

In the end, according to Balliet, the "farmer can't be confined to the cab in their tractor and remain within the four walls of their farm," he said. "They have to attend Farm Bureau events as a part of doing business."

Involve the young farmers early, get them to attend meetings as a business write-off, get the nonfarm public involved as investors and policymakers, and embrace technology, including computerized recordkeeping, according to young farmers who spoke during the contest.

The young farmers will one day be older and more experienced — and if successful, their ideas may help farming continue for generations.



Now Is The Time
By Leon Ressler
Lancaster County Extension Director

To Protect Your Cows' Udder Health

Beth Grove, extension dairy/environment agent in Lancaster, tells us with the arrival of chilly weather throughout our area, dairy farmers should be thinking about udder health, specifically chapped teats and teat problems.

Dramatic temperature changes and post-dipping in very low temperatures can easily lead to more chapped and frozen teats as well as teat-end lesions. Many studies have shown cows with chapped and damaged teat ends are more vulnerable to infection by Staph Aureus and other organisms. Frostbite is also a risk with very cold weather, particularly in sick cows or cows with udder edema.

For these reasons, many producers, especially those with freestall or loose housing barns, dislike post-dipping cows after milking for fear of frozen teats and additional problems. Farmers in tiestall barns often keep the cow herd in rather than allowing them outside for exercise and heat

detection. Before you lock the barn door and keep your cows inside all winter, try these cold-weather tips to prevent teat end damage during the winter months.

In the cold winter months, try pre-dipping instead of a water wash. Washing removes the natural oils from the teat, increasing the incidence of chapped teats in winter weather. Check teat-end conditions often, so that you can detect problems early. Don't stop post-dipping in very cold weather! This will give bacteria a fighting chance to colonize teat ends in the herd. After post-dipping, allow a 60 second "kill time," then blot the teat dry with a paper or cloth towel. (Try warming the teat dip before use to reduce drying time.)

Use a post-dip with 5-10 percent "skin conditioners" to reduce the incidence of chapping in windy cold weather. There are "winter" postdips available, some that are dry or powdered, and others that contain high amounts of emollient — these have shown varying amounts of success in on-farm trials. It is recommended that you always use products that have been proven to be effective in reducing new cases of mastitis — make certain they have been well tested! Carefully use salves, ointments, and creams during wet, freezing weather. Some research has shown that these products will actually increase bacterial growth at the teat end.

It is best to store teat dip in a heated room if possible during the winter months. In very cold conditions, some teat dips may "separate" and will not have as effective a bacterial kill if not remixed before use. Before refilling the dip cup, thoroughly mix contents of the storage container.

To Participate In The Manure Hauler Certification Training

Today's manure applicators are faced with many issues and public pressures. Penn State's Manure Hauler Certification Course has been

designed to educate applicators on the laws and issues that are faced by their industry and to help them to address the issues within their businesses and community. Participation can be useful in promoting business, operating in compliance, encouraging good neighbor relations, lessening environmental risks, and addressing public concerns.

The 2003 classroom session of the Pennsylvania Manure Hauler Certification Course will be offered Tuesday, Dec. 16, at the Dauphin County Agriculture and Resource Center in Dauphin.

This year's course will include the following topics: a Pennsylvania Department of Transportation presentation on laws that apply to applicators, an overview of Pennsylvania's Nutrient Management Act, environmental awareness, and safety and emergency response. Additional topics which will be covered include nitrogen and phosphorus issues, interpreting a nutrient management plan, nutrient balance sheets, odors and other nuisance issues, the importance of community image and manure storage management, and an industry update.

There will be an update on House Bill 1809: The Commercial Manure Hauler and Broker Certification Act, a discussion of spreader calibration, and a presentation on conservation practices and soil compaction.

In order to receive the Penn State certification, a hauler must attend both the December classroom session and a summer field day. You are asked to please preregister for the classroom session. The sign-in on Dec. 16 will be from 8:30 a.m.-9 a.m. A fee of \$10 will be collected at the door. Lunch will be provided. Course testing will be conducted from 4 p.m.-4:30 p.m. To register, contact Robb Meinen, Penn State University, at (814) 865-2987.

Quote Of The Week:
"The value of an idea lies in using it."

— Thomas Edison

❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

Saturday, December 6

Stallion Season, Sporting Art Auction, Gala Cocktail Party and Dinner, Candyland Farm, 1343 Bohemia Road, Middletown, Del., 6 p.m., (302) 378-7192.

Managing Woodlands for Recreation Purposes, Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee, Vt., 9 a.m.-5 p.m., (802) 656-0037.

Meat Goat Producers Health Conference, Tioga County Fairgrounds, Whitneyville, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., (570) 724-9120.

Maryland State Grange Leader Conference, Bush Creek Church of the Brethren, Monrovia, Md., 10 a.m.

Sunday, December 7

(Turn to Page A40)

❖ FARM FORUM ❖

Editor:

Rather than worry about its effect on weather, farmers should worry about new laws passed in the name of preventing global warming.

It is widely thought that the worst thing about "global warming" for farmers is the effect it will have on their crops. After all, environmental advocacy groups constantly predict floods, droughts, blistering hot summers, more violent weather, and other kinds of mayhem.

But concerns over weather are greatly overblown. Scientists still cannot tell if warming is natural or caused by the human presence, and there is growing agreement that whatever warming may take place will probably be modest, occur mostly at night and during the winter, and in higher latitudes (that is, Canada and Siberia).

Scientists also agree that global warming would be accompanied by more precipitation and higher levels of carbon dioxide in the air,

(Turn to Page A39)

BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

IS THIS PRAYER VALID?

Background Scripture:

1 Samuel 1:9-18.

Devotional Reading:

1 Samuel 1 through 2:10; Luke 1:46-55.

Robert J. McCracken tells of an extraordinary prayer that was found among the papers of John Ward, a member of the English parliament and owner of considerable real estate: "Oh Lord, Thou knowest I have mine estates in the City of London, and likewise that I have recently purchased an estate in fee simple in the County of Essex. I beseech Thee to preserve the two counties of Middlesex and Essex from fire and earthquake, and as I have a mortgage in Hertfordshire, I beg of Thee likewise to have an eye of compassion on that county; for the rest of the counties, Thou mayest deal with them as Thou art pleased."

That prayer may not be too different from the spirit in which some of us pray, although probably none of us quite so boldly. For some, the impulse to pray finds its source in a deep desire to preserve "me and mine." So this prayer may help us

understand better what is going on in the story of Hannah. Her prayer originates, not so much in a theological or doctrinal presupposition, but from a deep and painful personal need.

It is difficult for us in our day to understand the depth of her anxiety. Today, we are concerned with birth and population control. In her times the concern was with childlessness. If a man was to survive his own death (and I use the term "man" purposefully), he must have sons to perpetuate both family line and Israel. A barren married woman was regarded as an embarrassment and marked with God's disfavor.

Deeply Distressed

Hannah was one of Elkanah's two wives. She was chiefly distinguished from Peninah, the other wife, as the wife who "had no children." Elkanah loved Hannah, but there was a stigma attached to this relationship. It was bad enough to be childless, but Peninah made things worse by taunting Hannah with her childlessness.

"She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord, and wept bitterly" (1:10). So we can see that it was a deep personal tragedy that brought Hannah to pray as she did.

Her petition, of course, is not a model for prayer. Its motivation is entirely selfish. Its manner is that of a crude bargain: "O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy maidservant . . . but will give to thy maidservant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head" (1:11). (The vow not to shave or cut his hair is a traditional sign of one dedicated to God's service.)

Yet for all the crudeness of her motives and manner, we have to ad-

mire her for her trust. Eli, the priest of the sanctuary, noting that she made not a sound, but did move her lips, concluded that she was drunk. Yet it was not alcohol, but ecstasy that had her in its grip. Hers was not a model prayer, but it was a fervent one and that may count for a lot with God.

Blundering Beginnings

If the providence of God were under the human administration, Hannah would probably have been penalized for the audacity and form of her prayer. But as scholar John Schroeder has written, "Humanity has a right to appeal to God out of its trouble," even when the motivation is selfish and the theology is incorrect.

From these blundering spiritual beginnings there is the possibility of a blossoming long-term spiritual maturity in which we can learn to pray beyond "me and mine."

We can see this in the "Song of Hannah," for in this ecstatic utterance Hannah reaches far beyond the narrow self-concern of childlessness. She utters unknown and unrecognized words that unbidden welled up within her from a source beyond herself, just as centuries later, the mother of Jesus, would ecstatically proclaim the prophetic words we know as The Magnificat: "My soul magnifies the Lord . . ." (Lk 1:46-55).

God does not refuse or scorn inept prayers and, if the prayer persists with undaunting expectation, the one who prays is likely to grow beyond the narrow self.

How To Reach Us

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- By regular mail
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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.

Lancaster Farming

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