

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

BSE In News

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) is once again in the news, but this time is not discovered in Canada, but here in the U.S.

Lancaster Farming learned Tuesday evening that USDA diagnosed a presumptive positive case of BSE in an adult Holstein cow in the state of Washington.

Why is BSE in this country?

Why, when feeding animal ruminant products is illegal in both the U.S. and Canada, we still have these BSE cases popping up?

BSE should have been eradicated a long time ago. Why do we still see it?

The USDA needs improved enforcement of the anti-animal ruminant legislation. An old saying still applies: **DON'T MAKE ANY NEW LAWS UNLESS YOU CAN ENFORCE THEM.**

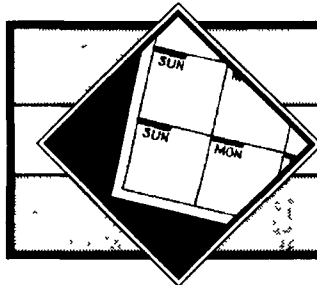
And they should enforce them well. The fines, if necessary, should be excessive and jail time severe for feeding blood meal, bone meal, and those types of products.

Better yet, why doesn't USDA go on the attack regarding BSE actively seek out the agent, rather than having it come to them? Why not make BSE elimination *THE* mandate?

BSE is a public health problem. We need to have a secure food system.

Not only that, with BSE in the U.S., what will become of the stellar year for beef prices, of more than \$100 CWT? The feeder cattle market could be in jeopardy if USDA doesn't act decisively.

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❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

Saturday, December 20

Monday, December 22

Adventures in Agriculture Planning Meeting, Northampton County Extension, Greystone Building, 6:30 p.m., (610) 746-1970.

Thursday, December 25

Merry Christmas! Lancaster Farming office closed.

2004

Thursday, January 1

Happy New Year! Lancaster Farming office closed.

Friday, January 2

Lancaster Youth Dairy Day (ages 8-18), Lancaster Farm and

Home Center, Lancaster, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., (717) 394-6851.

Saturday, January 3

AFBF (Farm Bureau) Convention, Hawaii, thru Jan. 17.

Sunday, January 4

Ice Cream Short Course, Nittany Lion Inn, University Park, thru Jan. 10, (814) 863-2959.

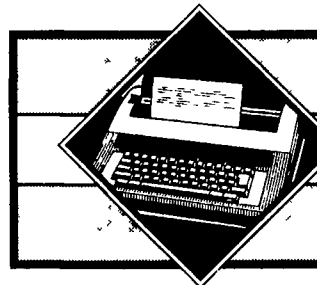
Monday, January 5

Maryland Dairy Meeting, Chestertown Fire Hall, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m., (410) 778-1661.

Tuesday, January 6

National Potato Council Conven-

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❖ FARM FORUM ❖

Editor:

Farm families of Pennsylvania thank and applaud the General Assembly for passing legislation (House Bill 1222) on Dec. 18 that will discourage townships from adopting illegal farm ordinances.

How To Reach Us

To address a letter to the editor:

• By fax, (717) 733-6058

• By regular mail.

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• 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.

The problem is that a few local officials have been legislating beyond their authority by adopting regulations that exceed existing state laws.

During the nearly three-year discussion of the problem by lawmakers and the public, the misrepresentation by a few groups of both the issue and the remedy has been disappointing.

Here are the facts. The legislation enables courts to require townships to pay a farmer's legal costs after challenging an illegal ordinance if the officials knowingly or recklessly violated state law when adopting it. Similarly, a farmer can be required to pay the township's legal fees if a lawsuit is found to be frivolous. What can be more fair and reasonable? Claims that the legislation removes or changes any

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Now Is The Time

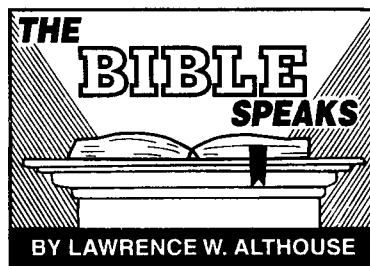
By Leon Ressler
Lancaster County Extension Director

To Celebrate The New Year With Your Family

The beginning of a New Year is a great time to stop and remember the blessing we have enjoyed in the past year. With the heavy demands of our work and busy family schedules, time for reflection is in short supply in our society.

This makes it all the more important to simply choose to set time aside to evaluate where we are and where we want to be. Each New Year's day we are given a reminder of how fast our life is moving. In my household, we are reminded by the fact that our first born will soon be graduating from college, representing a major transition in his and our lives. Life is short, so do your best to make the most of each opportunity with family, friends, and your community.

While you are reflecting on your past year's activities, evaluate with your family whether your business activities supported your family goals or made it hard to reach them. If the consensus is that changes are needed, begin to explore what alternatives are available that could better meet both



BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

OUT OF THE MANGER

Background Scripture:

Luke 2:40-52.

Devotional Reading:

John 5:19-24.

You may be surprised to learn that the birth of Jesus was not celebrated in Christianity until at least 400 years after his birth, and then only in scattered locations.

The establishment of Easter preceded that of Christmas by several hundred years. Today, Christmas is by far the more popular Christian observance, although Easter remains the most important. The name "Christmas," a contraction of Christ's Mass, did not appear until the 12th century.

As Christians, we need to understand that both Christmas and Easter are part of a single life and cannot be fully understood and appreciated when separated. It is hardly a secret that some of us would like to focus solely on the birth of Jesus and keep him in the manger. That is partly because we know that the story of Jesus the adult is one of acceptance and rejection, acclaim and bitter opposition, loyalty and

your financial needs and your personal goals. If you have some ideas on new ventures you want to explore, seek some help in developing your plans.

There are two major trends in agriculture. One group of producers will be successful by seeking to be the low-cost producer of a particular commodity and produce it at a large scale. Another opportunity exists for those who seek to specialize in niche markets, where they will try to gain higher margins for a more specialized product. To be successful in that arena, one needs to understand marketing and how this is different from producing a commodity. See the article below for some thoughts on marketing.

In the meantime, start off the New Year by supporting the livestock and horticultural industries by enjoying a hearty meal of pork, sauerkraut, and mashed potatoes!

To Understand What Customers Want

James G. Beierlein, professor of agricultural economics at Penn State, tells us that until recently in agriculture, the demand for food seemed endless. Most people were thankful to find enough to eat. Because of this, marketing in agriculture focused on moving the most products through the system as efficiently as possible.

Customer needs did not really matter since people were just glad to get something. About the middle of the 20th century, supply caught and passed demand for most items in U.S. agriculture.

When this happened, what it took to be successful changed. Now customers had choices and did not have to settle for what they could find. Americans developed sophisticated tastes for exotic foods (ethnic foods), became more health conscious (cholesterol, fat, and so on), and used food to help express their social concerns (dolphin-safe tuna fish).

Producers also learned that customers were not in love with the products they buy but with the satisfaction received from the products they buy. If the food products are not prepared for sale in a way that helps them gain this satisfaction, they buy something else.

treachery — and Jesus died the death of what society would hold to be that of a defeated, discredited man.

Christmas, however, is not just a story that got off to a good start and then went bad. As Allan Hauck puts it, "In the total perspective, Calvary and Bethlehem complement each other. Calvary represents the fulfillment and the final goal of the Incarnation. The Cross is the reason for the Incarnation and the Cross would not have been possible without the Incarnation."

Out Of The Manger

Also, many of us would like to keep Christ in his manger because we have observed that, for some, the birth of a baby may be the highest moment in life.

Birth is a time of exultation and high hopes, many of which are never realized, and some of which are dashed in disappointment. In the minds of some, the trouble with kittens, puppies, and little babies is that they quickly grow up into cats, dogs, and human beings! Or, as one woman put it, "I love babies, but not children, especially when they grow into teen-agers."

None of us, however, can repeal the life cycle; much as we might like to, we cannot keep our babies from becoming children and growing up into adults. That is the way God designed us and Jesus was no exception. And, although we hold Jesus to be the Son of God, we must not rob his childhood and youth of his humanity. Jesus was not spared the trials and tribulations of childhood and adolescence because the light of God was shining deep within him.

He was not a god, nor even an adult human being, hiding in the body of a child and teen-ager. Before the New Testament was closed, there

The beef industry has seen a rise in beef consumption recently. This increase comes in part from packaging beef in ready-to-eat forms that require just a quick warm-up in a microwave oven. Studies have shown that customers want meals that take less than 30 minutes from start to serve. No matter how great the meal is, if it is not in the right form to meet the customers' needs, it does not sell.

Beierlein points out the marketing secret to better success is to focus on customer satisfaction, not on making a better product. This difference is important. Many businesses have failed because they focused on making a better product rather than remembering they are satisfying customer needs.

The proper marketing goal of every firm is to meet the needs of its customers more efficiently, effectively, and completely than its competitors. The level of their profit is directly related to how well they do this.

The profitable satisfaction of customer needs should be the driving force behind everything a business does. This approach will succeed when every part of the business accepts this notion. The biggest challenge is to accept this reorientation of the way your business looks at itself. The business should exist because it plays a role in the profitable satisfaction of its customers' needs. Everybody on your farm works in customer service. Your customers can buy from many sources — be sure you give them many reasons to buy from you by offering the right products, at the right price, and at the right time. If you don't, your competitors will.

Quote Of The Week:

"There is no institution more vital to our nation's survival than the American family. Here the seeds of personal character are planted, the roots of public virtue first nourished. Through love and instruction, discipline, guidance and example, we learn from our mothers and fathers the values that will shape our private lives and our public citizenship."

— Ronald Reagan

were many other competing writings circulating among the churches, including some apocryphal gospels glorifying Jesus with accounts of supernatural powers exercised by him even as a child. Fortunately, these gospels did not make the cut into canon. They would have distorted the humanity of Jesus — therefore his relevancy to us — for the sake of presenting Jesus as God in children's clothing, an interpretation renounced as heresy.

Listening And Asking

Johann Heinrich Hofmann's popular painting, "The Finding of Christ in the Temple," is a distortion of Luke's account, for it depicts the youthful Jesus standing erect in the midst of the elders gesturing as though he were teaching the teachers.

But in Luke 2:40-52 we see a more balanced depiction. Luke tells us that, when his family returned to Jerusalem seeking him, they found him "sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions" (2:46,47.)

Yes, the elders "were amazed at his understanding and his answers," and Mary was stunned by his response to her and Joseph, but the picture Luke paints for us is that of an open-minded youth, respectful of the teachers in the temple courtyard, and yet enough of an adolescent to confound his parents. It was as a real child and youth that "Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man" (2:52).

Lancaster Farming

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—by—

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Lancaster Farming

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