



Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture



Use “The Scene” to introduce *Young Teen Bible school Lesson 1*.

They are a little late for this year’s Grammys. But when 30 British farmers teamed together to record a song at a British studio last Thursday, they were not thinking of winning an award. Instead, they were trying to express their feelings about their true love—raising hogs.

Their song is a parody of the 1968 Tammy Wynette country music classic, “Stand By Your Man.” The recording of “Stand By Your Ham,” is posted on the web site of Britain’s National Pig Association (NPA): <http://www.pigsareworthit.com/standbyourham.html>

What “Stand By Your Ham” lacks in musicianship, it more than makes up with teamwork and passion for their porkers. The tune tells of the financial crisis being faced by those who raise hogs in Britain. Steep increases in feed prices and competition from pig farmers in other European countries has caused the pig industry in that country to lose an estimated six pounds (about \$12 in U.S. currency) every second.

While they are concerned about their own finances, farmers argue that the issue is also the humane treatment of hogs. British animal welfare standards are among the highest in the world. It has been said that 70% of the pork imported from other countries would be illegal to produce in the England. In the song the farmers sing, “Cause we take good care of our pigs. We are so proud of them. To us they’re more than pork and ham.”

A recent NPA survey showed that 95% of pig farmers are considering stopping production if the price they receive does not improve. This could lead to a shortage of pig meat in the long term and potentially steep rises in the retail price of pork, sausages, bacon, and ham.

“It’s a lighthearted way of drawing attention to a very serious issue,” asserts Yorkshire pig farmer Richard Longthorp. Barney Kay, NPA general manager and the man behind “Stand By Your Ham,” said: “It is a slightly tongue in cheek way of raising awareness of a serious issue. Put simply, farmers need to receive more for their pigs or many face the prospect of going out of business. All they are asking for is a fair price.”

As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above news story to read. After all teens have had the opportunity to read the article, discuss it in this way:

What is your reaction to the above article? Did it make you laugh? Did it make you think? Why? Why do you think it is important to British pig farmers that hogs are treated humanely? How much truth do you think is in the lyric, “Cause we take good care of our pigs. We are so proud of them”?

The name of the NPA website expresses their feelings about hogs: www.thepigsareworthit.com/ The farmers are proud of their work and of the pigs they raise. Tell about a time when you have been proud of something you have created or accomplished. How would it make you feel if others treated it as unimportant?

Pig farmers in Britain care that the pigs that are raised to be slaughtered for ham and bacon be treated humanely while they are alive. Most people would agree that animal life should not be treated cruelly. Ironically, not all people feel the same way about much more important lives—the lives of unborn children. Let’s look at why God considers unborn human life so valuable.