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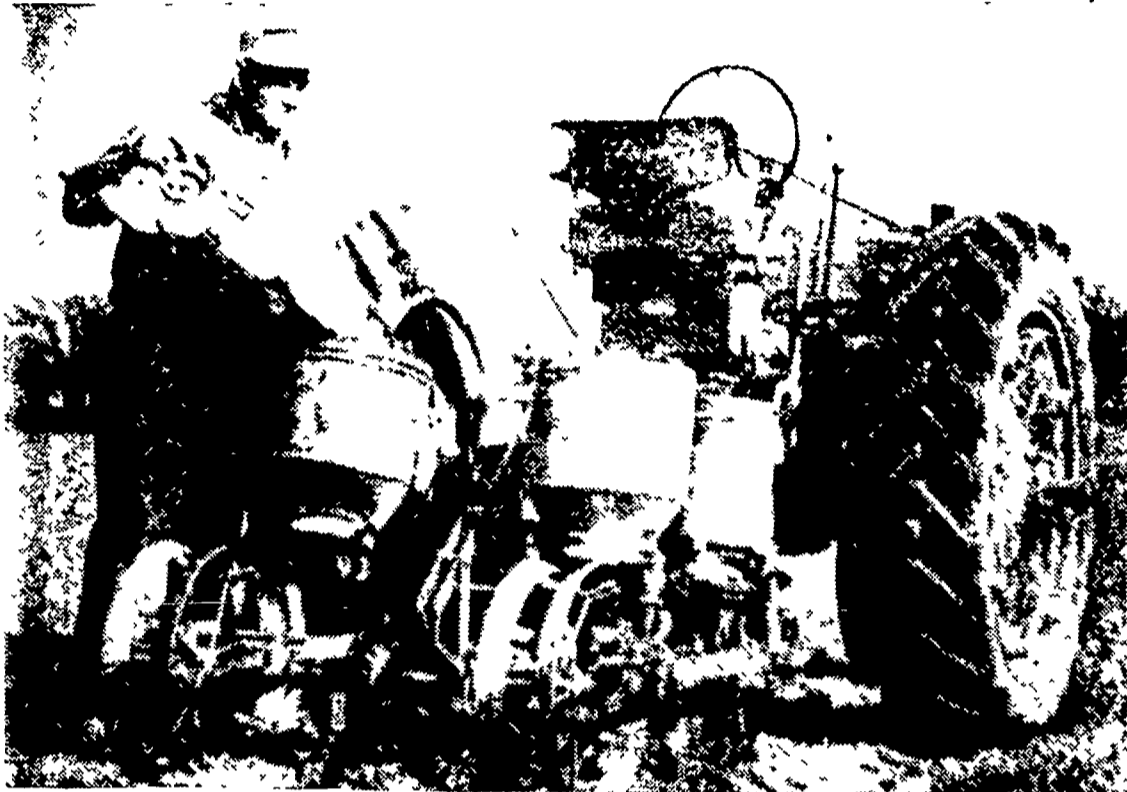
Ratter

Lancaster Farming

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Ben Shank, one of many neighbors who took time off from his own spring planting to help a neighbor in distress, stops to replenish the fertilizer supply.



Working the neighbor's field

Neighbors Save Day for Farmer

When Elias R. Groff of Holtwood RD2 won the door prize at the Lancaster Livestock Feeder Auction Friday, May 1, it was the first strong hint of things to come.

What possible use could a healthy 31-year old farmer have with a cane? Since then, the answer has hit Elias hard.

"Little did I think I'd ever use that cane for myself, instead of for pushing cows around," Groff told Lancaster Farming.

He made the remark Friday, May 8, from his bed. The cane was on the stand nearby, within easy reach.

Even then, Elias already had used the cane a lot and since then he's had even more use for it. And the cane is going to have a lot more use in the next several weeks. Elias has rheumatic fever. It literally knocked him off his feet within three days after he won the cane as a door prize.

But while his new ailment, which his doctor advised would keep him bed-ridden for at least six weeks, was a dominant fact of life for Elias as he talked on May 8, he wanted the world to

know about something else — the generosity of his friends and neighbors.

A bed-ridden farmer in early May is a tragic figure because that's planting time. And Groff had barely started planting when the rheumatic pain hit him so hard he could barely stand.

But his neighbors had been coming and going all day that Friday, May 8. Elias and his wife, Marian, had counted it up.

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Lueck Cocks Ear for Music Of State's Singingest Insect

If you hear the sound of music when you're out in the fields in the next few days, you may not just be day dreaming or need a hearing aid.

Pennsylvania's largest singing insect is due to emerge from the ground in force.

Arnold Lueck, associate county agricultural agent, predicts the insect may be at the peak of activity sometime next week.

Lueck, who remembers the last time the insect was at the height of its glory in 1953, is looking forward to the occurrence. He plans to spend some time driving around to observe and listen to the insect.

The insect? It's the periodical cicada. Make that 17 year locust for most of us who might not recognize the periodical cicada name tag.

According to Lueck, we're now right on the verge of an outbreak of "brood X" (10) of the 17 year locust.

Lueck explains that various broods of the locust emerge at various years, all at 17 year intervals. But brood X which is slated to emerge in within the next few days is the largest of the broods.

He notes that there's an annual cicada also, which is seen in smaller numbers in late summer. This annual variety mustn't be confused with the 17 year locust, he advises.

What's it mean for the local farmer?

For most farmers, not much, according to Lueck. He notes that Lancaster County will not be as heavily infested as many areas of the state to the north and west. That's because the locust operates mostly in wooded areas and particularly loves oak trees.

Lueck, however, expects very significant numbers of the locusts in the wooded areas of Lancaster County, which are located primarily in the northern part of the county and to a lesser extent in the southern portion of the county.

"Damage could be expected to orchard and ornamental trees located near a wooded area," Lueck said.

He explained that locust in jury as "caused by the slitting of young wood in the process of egg laying."

He added, "The only damage would be to small twigs and branches weakened by egg laying punctures and breaking off of the branches. We expect the egg laying in early June."

Tree owners can expect very little egg laying on evergreens, but the locusts particularly like oaks. Should a farmer need to control the insect, Lueck recommends Sevin, a wettable chemical powder which can be applied every two to three days.

Except for possible tree damage, little or no damage is expected to farmers by the locusts. "Adults do not feed on any farm crops," Lueck said.

He noted that the insects spend 17-years maturing in order to spend four to six as adults. Almost all of this time is spent in the ground. After the eggs hatch in the tree branches, the larvae fall and burrow into the ground.

The first evidence of the insects will be the appearance of their skins on tree trunks. The insects crawl out of their skins. They also leave holes in the ground from which they emerge, usually during the night.

Under ideal conditions, huge populations of the insect can occur in an area. In some areas

in 1953, the locusts were so thick it was impossible to walk without crushing hundreds of them, Lueck recalled.

If these large populations should occur in your woods, Mr. Farmer, you might do us a favor and let Lueck know.

He has kept his calendar mostly free for the next two weeks in anticipation of this unusual event and a little help could save him a lot of time driving around with one ear cocked out his car window listening for the music of the 17 year locust.



It's not too late to see the Lancaster County 4-H Clubs' three act comedy, "Headin' for a Weddin'." Curtain time is 8 p.m. tonight (Saturday) at Conestoga

Valley High School. The cast, shown recently in rehearsal, includes, from left, Darlene Neff, Jesse Balmer, Joanne Rohrer and Ray Brubaker.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, May 16

- Youth Ministries of the Mennonite Central Committee, Akron headquarters, open to public
- 6:30 p.m. — Farm Women Society 17, mother-daughter banquet, Rhoads Spanish Tavern, Quarryville.
- 8:00 p.m. — Lancaster County 4-H play, Conestoga Valley High School
- Sunday, May 17
- 7:00 p.m. — Fulton Grange Co-

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