

On Making Field Days Pay

Field day season is here.

It can be a valuable time, IF you're willing to work at it.

Specialists at DeKalb AgResearch, Inc. offer the following pointers to help you gain maximum benefit from field days:

GO EARLY. There may be exhibits or displays that will be easier to see ahead of the crowd. You'll have a chance to talk to some of the speakers beforehand if you have some specific questions. There may be an opportunity to register to receive later information. If maps or condensed tour presentations are handed out, look through the material ahead of time.

If there is a wagon-train, try to sit near the middle — you'll see more and probably hear better. If it's a walking tour, situate yourself near the speaker at each stop.

TAKE NOTES and PICTURES. Don't try to take down everything that's said, but get the essentials. Ask for clarification or

more detail. Most speakers welcome questions because that's the way they know whether they're getting ideas across. If you carry a camera, snap pictures of charts, graphs, field signs, and plot contrasts that will help you recall a point that was made.

THINK, THINK, THINK. Keep asking yourself "What's the main point this man is making?" "Does this fit in with what I already know?" "How does this apply to my operation?" "What changes would this require at home?" "Will it pay?"

DON'T HURRY AWAY. Seek out the speakers that you want more information from. Visit with others present — farmers, university, company people, etc.

FOLLOW THROUGH. When you get home, check through handout material you received. Review your notes and pictures. Clean out the most valuable facts and ideas.

Work at field day attending and you'll find field days working for you.

Soil—Rediscovered Waste System

The soil is a key element in producing feed for livestock and food for people.

This is well understood and farmers have continually increased their knowledge of how to make the soil produce more.

But now scientists are increasingly looking at the soil as a major resource in disposing of our growing volumes of waste products. The soil has an amazing capacity for recycling many of the troublesome wastes from animals, humans and plants, scientists are discovering.

Actually, farmers have known this all along. Wastes from animals produced on farms have for centuries been disposed of on farm land, thereby eliminating the waste problem and at the same time enriching the soil for further production.

This process can be taken for granted, except that both the development of cities and greater concentrations of livestock on farms have multiplied the waste problem. There's more waste from farms and even greater new wastes from the metropolitan areas and the volume of these wastes in both directions have been multiplying at an alarming rate. The question is what to do with them at a cost people can afford.

After all the many alternatives are considered, it may be found that the original method, simply returning the waste to the soil, is still the best and most economical method.

A study at Penn State University called "The Living Filter" is now in its ninth year. Penn State reports that while it's still too early to tell how beneficial the system may be, the living filter has drawn thousands of visitors and inquiries from all 50 states and many foreign countries.

Basically, The Living Filter is a 75 acre research project involving spreading urban sewage on land at the rate of 50 to 100 inches a year, utilizing the waste matter in the sewage for plant growth, allowing the soil to filter the water clean, with the pure water seeping down to help replenish the underground water system.

If this type of system can be made economical, it is evident that there can be benefits from several directions. A troublesome waste product has been eliminated. Instead of polluting streams and rivers, the waste is constructively used on land to produce vegetation or crops. At the same time, underground water systems which have been suffering from overuse can get at least some benefits.

In the past two years, The Living Filter

research has included rejuvenation of strip mine spoil banks. The research shows that in unsprayed spoil areas, absolutely nothing grew, not even weeds. But in the sewage sprayed areas, a thick jungle of grasses and legumes sprang up and eight inch tree seedlings are now over five foot tall in two years.

While the results of the research are exciting for cities and mining areas, we think that the value of the research extends to farmers as well. For instance, it definitely supports the validity of the old practice of spreading waste products on land. It shows that the soil can handle wastes without contaminating the underground water system.

But the Penn State research, like research in general in the whole area of wastes and recycling, is in its infancy. Much more needs to be known about types and volumes of wastes that can be handled in this manner, and about how different types of soils react to waste.

R. M. Davis, state conservationist for the U. S. Soil Conservation Service in Pennsylvania, notes that there are over 1,000 different kinds of soil in Pennsylvania and that they vary widely in their ability to handle waste. While deep, well drained soils work best, he noted that soils under land with fractured limestone or gravel could contaminate the ground water. Shallow and wet soils should be avoided wherever possible because they are limited in their capacity to absorb wastes, he said.

He noted that a great deal of Pennsylvania's 14 millions tons of animal wastes annually and 700,000 tons of fruit and vegetable processing wastes annually are recycled in the soil.

A program to identify and evaluate soils in Pennsylvania is being carried out by Pennsylvania State University, U. S. Soil Conservation Service, and the State Soil and Water Commission. This study should help pinpoint soils which are capable of handling wastes.

But we think that farmers and farm organizations should continue to be alert to and opposed to laws and regulations which would substantially restrict use of land for spreading wastes.

Until projects such as The Living Filter can give much more conclusive answers on capability of soil to handle wastes, restrictions on use of soil for waste may be much more harmful than helpful in solving the waste problem.

Our experiences is that farmers who have recognizable waste problems are generally anxious to solve them. But they generally can't find any acceptable alternative to what they are now doing.

It should be noted that the research is increasingly showing that where wastes and fertilizers are running off the land to contaminate water systems, the problem is often a conservation problem instead of a waste problem. This is true because eroding soil carries wastes with it. If soil erosion is stopped, waste runoff is also usually stopped, reports state.

Until more precise knowledge is available on how much waste can be put on particular ground and the techniques that are necessary to make it successful, farmers should not be restricted on waste recycling.

NOW IS THE TIME . .

By Max Smith
Lancaster County Agent



To Renovate Strawberry Plants

Growers who are planning to retain their strawberry beds for another season should do some thinning and fertilizing. In most cases the plants are too thick and will not bear well next year unless thinned. The use of a cultivator or hand hoe will take out about half of the plants and leave an open space between the rows. The tops of remaining plants may be mowed off above the crowns. Follow with a complete fertilizer and then weekly irrigation, if rains are insufficient. All of this should be done by early August in order to permit time for new runner plants.

To Cook Garbage Fed To Swine

We are informed of the danger of another highly contagious and usually fatal disease of swine getting into the United States; it is known as African Swine Fever and has been diagnosed in Cuba. The symptoms resemble severe hog cholera and there are not any successful treatments for curing the disease. Local swine producers are urged to maintain closed herds and cook all garbage fed to hogs.

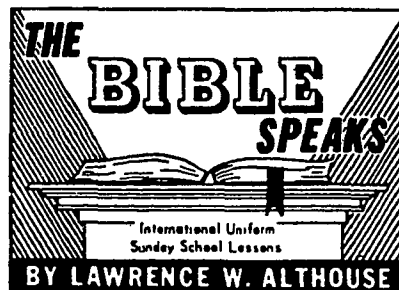
To Learn Of Land Values

It may not always be the best decision to accept that first seemingly good offer for farm land; land use competition is increasing in most rural areas for industrial, business, and

residential purposes in addition to farming. A prospective buyer may intend to buy the land for farming purposes and then change his mind when prices for other uses are higher. Farmers who haven't checked real estate values recently should consult with a qualified real estate expert before making a land deal. Land values are changing. A closing thought — good agricultural land should stay in agricultural production.

Livestock

The hot weather management of livestock is very important for efficient production and performance. Livestock housed in open buildings or out in pastures with plenty of shade and water will do a pretty good job of keeping comfortable. However those that are housed in tight barns or in fattening pens may need some special attention. Cross ventilation is very important; electric fans that will draw the air through the barn or push air out over the livestock will help with the animals' comfort. Hogs will suffer most from extreme high temperatures and high humidity; in addition to the movement of air, a mist or fogging spray is very helpful. This spray of water is being used successfully in many hog operations. Special management in hot weather is very much in order.



MAKE A HOUSE A HOME

Lesson for July 25, 1971

Background Scripture: Genesis 1:26-31, 2:18-25, Song of Solomon 2:8-14, Malachi 2:15, 16, Mark 10:2-12
Devotional Reading: Genesis 24:52-67



Rev. Althouse's perspective

We often use these two terms, "house" and "home," as if they meant the same thing. Of course they do not. You may buy a house, but you can only build a home and that with which you "build" it is not wood, stone, or brick.

The British writer, Gilbert K. Chesterton, once said that he would sometime like to enter his home in a totally different manner than usual. He spoke of setting a ladder by his house and entering like a burglar in the night through an upper window. He was simply saying that sometimes we are so close to our homes that we could well profit by seeing them from a new and different perspective. We become so accustomed to the daily routines and procedures, so oblivious to

the unique qualities of those who share it with us, that our appreciation becomes jaded and stale.

Often we must see our homes through the eyes of someone who has no home, no family, no companionship, no opportunity for this kind of intimate fellowship. Too often we measure our homes and families against some unrealistic ideal that leads us to be dissatisfied because they are not perfect. If only we realized what we do have in our family fellowship, how much more grateful and appreciative we might be.

Help and companionship

Sometime we need also to see the family in the perspective of what God intended it to be. The concept of the family finds its origin, not in sociological convenience (as some have maintained), but in God's observation that "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). Mankind has been fashioned by God in such a way that families are necessary to meet the need of companionship. Men were not created to live alone.

Furthermore, families are necessary because men need others to help them. "I will make him a helper fit for him" (2:18b). Children need parents (even less-than-perfect parents); parents need children (even less-than-perfect children); the family is God's gift to men to fulfill these needs.

Not every one is blessed with a natural home. There are people without mates, couples without children, children without parents, brothers and sisters. If our houses are truly to become homes, we must learn to push wider our family circles so that everyone has a family of some kind.

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