

Land Use and Farmer Action

Land use is a topic we're going to be hearing more about in the years to come. Legislation and public opinion in the general areas of land use will affect the way we live, work, play and farm in Lancaster County.

Hopefully, land will be used in ways that benefit all the County's people, rather than just a few. And preserving farm land is the single most important element in preserving the character of the county. If the county is allowed to change from an agrarian to an urban area, its basic nature will change. A magnificent place to live, a magnificent way of life, will be transformed into something less.

Farmers are the one group who'll be affected most by land use actions. If they care about farming as a way of life and as a business, they'll have to add a new item to their already long list of things to do. That is keeping abreast of legislation and the activities of such groups as Save Solanco's Environment and LEAF (Lancaster Environmental Action Federation).

There are laws now on the books that may take farmers by surprise. The state of Pennsylvania, for example, has declared that all farms must have conservation plans by June 1, 1977, and that these plans must be implemented where necessary. It costs a lot of money to install diversion terraces, runoffs, silt ponds and other conservation practices.

It's true that the farmer is the main beneficiary of conservation practices on his farm. He keeps his soil, he keeps his crops, he keeps his profits. But in these days of rising costs, it's going to be difficult for farmers to dig into their pockets for the thousands of dollars that will be needed to install the conservation practices the law requires. Helping to pay for these practices is a legitimate aim of such governmental programs as the recently terminated Rural Environmental Assistance Program (REAP).

Farmers have always borne at least part of the expense of conservation practices installed under REAP. And that is as it should be. But the general public also

benefits from improved conservation. And it only makes sense that the general public should help to pay for improved conservation through government programs.

Congress is now trying to reinstate REAP. That effort can be strengthened if farmers raise their voices loudly enough, and we urge farmers to do so.

Another immediate concern for all Pennsylvania farmers is the voter referendum which will appear on the May primary ballot. This referendum will decide whether or not the Pennsylvania constitution can be amended to permit the taxation of land on the basis of its use rather than its speculative value. Farmers must inform themselves on this issue, and they must inform others as well. On Tuesday evening, there will be a meeting to explain the referendum to anyone who's interested. The meeting will be held in the Farm and Home Center, beginning at 7:30 p.m. It could be one of the most important meetings you'll ever attend.

LEAF is one of the organizations supporting a change in farmland taxation. Environmental groups and farmers have had their differences in the past and will continue to have differences in the future. Here in Lancaster County, though, environmentalists and farmers have developed a measure of rapport. A deepening of that rapport can only redound to the benefit of everyone in the county, and we hope farmers will become more involved with groups working for clean air, clean water, and attractive land uses.

The care of this county's air, land and water is a subject that's going to last long after the banner headlines on the pollution crisis have crumpled to yellow newsprint.

Constant vigilance will have to be exercised merely to preserve the remnants of Lancaster County's rural atmosphere. Because farmers and farming are such an important part of what this county has been and is, we hope that farmers will be among the leaders in influencing land use planning.

Overhauling REA

In the long run, control of inflation depends upon control of federal budget spending and deficits. In announcing the abolition of formal wage and price controls over most of the economy, the President recognized this fact. But Administration efforts to control the federal budget have wounded some of the sacred cows of bureaucracy, and one of them is the Agriculture Department's two percent Rural Electrification Administration loan program.

RFA was set up in the 1930s to speed the extension of electric service into sparsely settled rural areas where agricultural use of electricity was low. Today the picture is far different. In many cases, REA co-op service areas that were rural in nature 30 years ago have developed into suburban towns and residential districts. Agricultural use of electricity has vastly increased. Except for extremely rare isolated instances, the people of the U.S. now have central station electric service. In the light of these changed conditions, the new policy announced by the Department of

Agriculture will eliminate direct 2 percent loans to electric and telephone cooperatives. However, insured loans will be available at 5 percent interest to electric and telephone co-ops, and electric co-ops will also be able to secure guaranteed loans where private capital is available on advantageous terms.

Rural electric cooperative organizations predict disaster for rural electrification if the loan subsidy program is stopped. But surely, if there are any federal programs which could be modified in accordance with modern conditions, the one providing 2 percent money for rural electric systems should be among them, especially considering the fact that investor-owned utilities pay as much as four times as much or more to borrow the money they need to develop facilities to serve their customers. If there is to be any hope of establishing federal fiscal responsibility based on control of spending and reduction of deficits, there must be public support strong enough to overcome the opposition of those who feel a diminishing flow of the federal taxpayer dollars to which they have become accustomed.

NOW IS THE TIME . . .

**Max Smith
County Agr. Agent
Telephone 394-6851**



To Stretch Hay Supplies

Many livestock producers and dairymen are short on hay this spring. Purchases need to be kept to a minimum because of high prices. Larger amounts of grain and silage could be the answer on some farms. The early graying of winter grain and the fertilizing of a part of the permanent pasture area could give earlier graying. In many cases, daily gain or milk production will not be decreased because of the feeding of less hay.

To Control Parasites

Many animals are infested with body lice and with ringworm. Both of these reduce the vigor of the animal and result in lower gain or milk production. We urge owners to inspect their animals and treat at once if lice are found. Ringworm is bad in some herds. Captan fungicide is suggested as a spray or dip to eliminate the problem. Production costs are high enough without permitting the animals to be weakened with these parasites.

To Improve Farm Planning

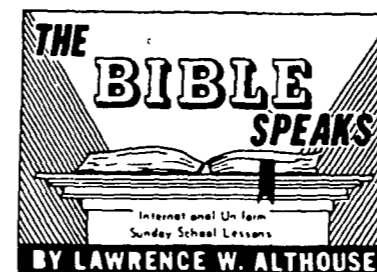
Each year the need for good farm planning seems more

important. As the farm products increase in value, and all of the inputs increase at a faster rate, it is essential that all practices and transactions be well planned. In most cases, the difference between success and failure largely depends upon how well the job was planned. The challenge is to learn what should be done and then buckle down and do it when it should be done. The purchase of seeds and other supplies should be done months ahead of the time of need. Then pray that the weather conditions will permit the job to be done as planned.

To Be Hard on Stray Animals

With the various diseases of livestock and poultry present in this part of the country, it becomes more difficult to accept stray animals on the farm. Wild birds are also in the group. Every effort should be made to keep them out of buildings, out of feeders, and away from all animals. A sympathetic heart in these instances could cost the owner thousands of dollars.

**TRY A CLASSIFIED AD
PHONE 626-2191 or 394-3047**



THE ACCOUNTING

Lesson for March 11, 1973

Background Scripture: Genesis 1:27-30, 4:19; Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 17:30, 31; Romans 14:10-12
Devotional Reading: Deuteronomy 11:10, 12, 26, 28

One day this past week I sat in the cafeteria of a local high school, talking with a young teacher whose class I had just addressed. She was depressed because she felt that no matter where she looked there was human suffering and misery. At last, she gave voice to that ancient question, "Why does God allow us to make such a mess of things?"



Rev. Althouse

I tried to explain that evil is often the price we pay for our human, God-given freedom. God is often like a parent if a mother or father see their child doing the right thing, they get a greater pleasure and satisfaction if the child really had the opportunity to choose to do so. If the parent realizes that the son or daughter did the right thing because there was no opportunity to do something else, there is little satisfaction.

Free to choose

So it is with God: he gives us the freedom to choose good or evil because it is in our right choices that he is most gratified as our Creator. God wants us to do the right thing, but he does not compel us to do so. I tried to

communicate to the school teacher that, although that freedom may be frightening at times, it is also part of the glory of being human. I am glad to be free to make my choices, even though it puts far more responsibility upon me.

The Christian understanding of the nature of man has always been founded upon the understanding that man is free to choose between good and evil. We are placed in this world with tremendous privileges: created "in the image of God," blessed by God, intended to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the world and subdue it and have dominion over the earth. As God describes man's rich heritage in Genesis 1, the world is man's to enjoy as a great blessing.

Obligated to answer

Yet there is another side to man's situation: not only is he blessed, but he is to be a blessing to others. He is placed upon the earth, not only that he might enjoy his dominion, but also that he shall employ that dominion as a good steward for God. To be set in dominion over this earth is not only a privilege, but also a responsibility. (That's the way it is in God's creation for every privilege there seems to be a matching responsibility.) Much is given to us, but much is also expected from us.

Thus, there will come a day when a man will be examined by God to determine how well he has fulfilled his responsibilities. This judgement will be rendered to all men. As Paul puts it: "For we shall all stand before the judgement seat of God" (Romans 14:10). Each of us shall have to be judged on the basis of what we have done with what we have received. It is an accounting: no one is spared.

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