

BY CURT HARLER, EDITOR



Lancaster Farming says...

Let's get together on ag preservation

If one thing came out of Thursday evening's meeting on preserving farm land in Lancaster County it was the simple fact that no single program has all the answers to all of the problems.

But many observers at the packed meeting at the Farm and Home Center were happy the discussions did not turn into a debate between one plan and the others.

All panel members agreed that a tax saving plan could help farmers in an ag district. And a deed restriction could be the firming mortar in any of the other plans—or it could be instituted alone with success.

There was no 'mine is better than yours' argument between panel members.

Indeed, all seemed to be hunting for a sound and sane solution.

Amos Funk pointed out a problem that must be solved before any solution ever will be found.

"The land will not be preserved unless the farmers on the land want to preserve it," he told listeners.

While there is little doubt farmers really want to keep their land in agriculture, there is great resistance to any plan which would assure a given plot could never be used for anything else.

Through a strange jump in logic, a number of area landowners, suburbanites as well as farmers, seem to have concluded that farmland preservation is fine for the neighbor, but not really good for themselves. It's that 'holier than thou' attitude that is putting the brakes on moving any plan.

A few years ago, similar dissention within farmer ranks nearly cost farmers the Clean and Green program.

While all segments of the farm community agreed the program should be available for farmers, each faction had its own idea of what would be best.

The result was confusion among urban legislators who were willing to go along with Clean and Green but couldn't understand which way to go.

A similar crisis is developing with the ag land preservation program.

It was shocking to hear a supposedly knowledgeable figure like Lane Palmer, editor of Farm Journal, tell businessmen in Lancaster last month that there is plenty of farmland available in this country.

Either Palmer has spent too much time cooped up in his Philadelphia office or he's forgotten there are

prime ag areas outside of the mid-western corn-soybean Florida rotation belt.

We can't grow more farmland, but a hungry world population continues to grow.

Dave Landis' outline of the problems Warwick Township farmers face from development, sewers, and eminent domain drew sympathy from all members of the audience Thursday night.

And H H Haverstick's outline of the tax penalty slapped on farm sales was enough to turn anybody's stomach.

At present, the figure could go as high as \$335,000 on a \$600,000 farm sale. Push a pencil that \$600,000 figure probably isn't too far off the value of your own place.

That gives some of the reason why 48 percent of the farms sold at public sale East of the Susquehanna were sold to non-operators of those farms.

That gives some reason why many young people find it impossible to start farming.

That explains why developers can buy up prime farmland with little opposition from farmers who can't afford the asking price.

It also explains why we need to get together on a farmland preservation

plan.

John Ahlfeld, with the Lancaster County Planning Commission, outlined a number of steps being taken to get some action on a preservation plan.

In fact, nine Lancaster County townships today have an ag district plan. But piecemeal preservation can never work.

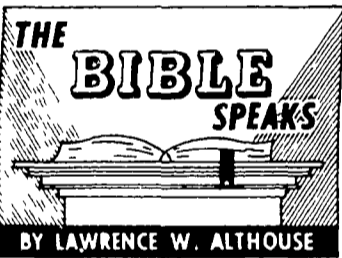
All of the panel members admitted their plan was not the bottom line. All welcomed comments, ideas, constructive criticism aimed at getting the County a good plan.

The alternative, as Haverstick said, is something put together by "not practical, but sincere people."

We, as farmers, can't afford that. LANCASTER FARMING welcomes you to share your ideas with a letter to the editor. Join the discussion. Tell how you feel about ag land preservation and the proposed programs.

"Voluntary action by farmers and others will be needed to save farmland," County Agent Max Smith told the group.

Help your neighbors and help yourself. We need to present a workable package to save our farms for the future. And we need to do it soon.



BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

SEEING THE LEOPARD

Lesson for December 9, 1979

Background Scriptures:

Colossians 2:1-15.

Devotional Reading:

Romans 5:1-11.

A circus came to town one

day — back in those days when circuses still came to town — and Johnny's father took him to see it. The little boy looked forward to the circus with eager expectation because his cousin in New York had seen the circus there and written to him about it, particularly about a big, spotted leopard.

At the circus, Johnny got the works: a whip, a pennant, a cowboy hat, popcorn, lemonade and cotton candy. He and his father had fine seats, right up near the ring. They saw everything that went on. After the show in the "big top," his father took him to the side shows and the

animal tent. As they left the circus, Johnny was so tired he could hardly walk. "Well," said his father, "you certainly had a big day, didn't you?" "Yes, Daddy," Johnny replied and then, with a pause he added, "but I didn't see the leopard!"

Something Is Missing

When they arrived home, his family was anxious to see how he had enjoyed it. "Did you see the elephants?" asked his mother. "Yes," Johnny replied, "but I didn't see the leopard."

"What about the man on the flying trapeeze?" asked his uncle. "Great, uncle,"

retored Johnny, "but I didn't see the leopard." "Well, what did you think of the clowns?" his sister wanted to know. "Yeah, I liked them," said Johnny, struggling with his patience, "BUT I STILL DIDN'T SEE THE LEOPARD!"

Some people go through life very much like little Johnny: they see many wonderful things, they have many fine experiences, they do many interesting things, and yet there is one thing above all else which they want, but, like Johnny, they never quite find it. And then, when life has finally

come to its end, they realize that they still haven't "seen the leopard!"

This certainly can be true of our spiritual lives. We may go through all the right motions — church membership, regular attendance, financial support, serve on boards and committees, and still find that there is an emptiness about our religion that is not a reflection upon religion but upon the way we practice it. We may get much satisfaction from our religious style of living, yet still feel that something vital is missing.

All The Fullness

In his letter to the

Colossians, Paul assures us of two things. First of all, the full revelation of God is to be found in Jesus Christ. There is nothing of God missing in the person of the Christ. And secondly, when we live in union with Jesus Christ, we will experience the fullness of life with nothing lacking. "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness of life in him..." (2:9,10) Without that relationship with Christ, life may seem incomplete, unfulfilled — like failing to "see the leopard." But with him, we will experience life in all its fullness.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Max Smith, Lancaster County Agricultural Agent
Phone 394-6851

TO CHECK BATTERIES... Cold weather has arrived and more to come.

Car and truck batteries need attention at all times of the year but need to be in top condition to meet cold weather demands. When we get a very cold snap most garages are busy helping folks get their cars and trucks started. This means that batteries are not in good

condition. They should be kept filled with water at all times. The battery terminals may get corroded and not permit the electric charge to go through. Remove the cables and clean the battery terminals. I'm aware of several instances where the battery would not turn over

the motor; the inserting of a screw driver down between the battery terminal and the cable made it possible to get the motor started. Be sure your battery is in top condition for cold weather.

TO USE HAY RACKS... The feeling of hay and silage from the ground,

or from the floor in a building, is to be discouraged. Internal parasites are often a very severe problem on farms where livestock have been raised for a number of years. When livestock have to eat from the floor they may pick up additional worm eggs and become heavily infested with stomach worms. The use of hay racks for feeding

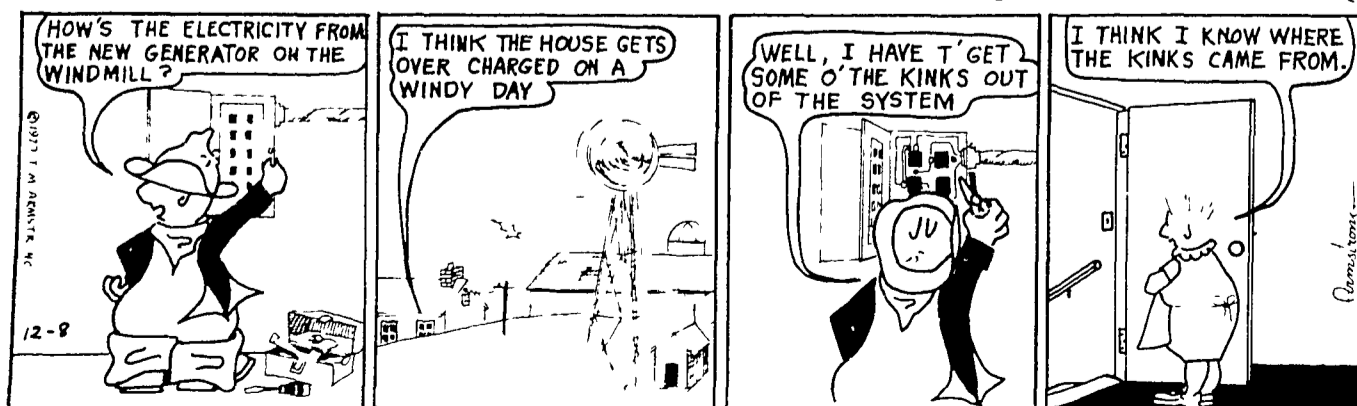
both grain, silage, and hay is strongly suggested. These racks will keep most of the leaves and materials from getting on the floor. Plans are available at Extension Offices.

TO SORT TOBACCO LEAVES... This year's tobacco crop is about ready to be stripped and baled. The

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RURAL ROUTE

By Tom Armstrong



Farm Calendar

Today, December 8
Chianina Sale at Lauxmont Farms, York County, beginning at 1 p.m.
Rocoma Farm Sale on Route 23, east of Lancaster
Lehigh County 4-H Livestock Club awards banquet 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday, December 11
Dover Young Farmers

meeting at the Dover High School beginning at 7:30 p.m. Elwood Diehl, a PFA accountant is the featured speaker
Adams County Pork Producers meeting at the Adams Co. Extension office, 7:30 p.m.
Price Management Seminar
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