

BY CURT HARLER, EDITOR



Lancaster Farming says...

We need to update Act 442

Act 442, the open spaces act passed 12 years ago, is in need of some revision

There is no quarrel with the basic intent of the legislation which allows any county in Pennsylvania "to preserve, acquire and hold land for open space use"

But an updating of Act 442 is needed in light of recent efforts to provide incentive payments to farmers under a Voluntary Deed Restriction Program

Such action, although instigated in Lancaster County, would have state-wide impact, as required by law

A meeting on the subject is scheduled by the Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board for September 5 at 10 a m in the County Commissioner's room on the fifth floor of the new County Courthouse

A high-powered group will be on hand to discuss amendments to Act 442 which would lay a firm legal foundation for such a move Expected to be in attendance are

Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hallowell, representatives of Pennsylvania Farmers' Association, state Grange, Association of Township Supervisors, the League of Women Voters, and the state Intergovernmental Council

It shouldn't seem unreasonable to expect a good turnout of farmers, too, for the Friday morning meeting

The proposed amendments would cover several areas

First, the designation of ag districts would become a primary responsibility of the ag preserve board, with the right to do so falling to a county planning commission only if no such board exists in that county

A second change would allow a county the option to buy or not to buy a parcel of land At present Act 442 says counties "shall be required to acquire," a provision which could cost a lot of money if not changed

Under current law a hearing would have to be held on every parcel

brought into an ag district Another change would allow whole blocks of land to be accepted at a single hearing One immediate benefactor from this change could be the proposed Ephrata ag preserve with 5000 acres of land on many farms

Another change would sort out multi-county jurisdiction in big ag districts

But the meat of the proposal comes in additions to Section 5 of Act 442 Under the proposed changes, a county specifically is allowed to acquire land and designate it for agricultural use

A county ag preserve board would be given broad powers to advise the county which land should be designated for farming, and would be empowered to hire staff or consultants as necessary to implement procedures adopted by the county commissioners

The changes include a section which guarantees 'right to farm'

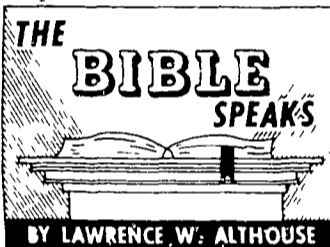
privileges for farmers within such an ag district

In a section which will corral groups like the state Highway Department and Public Utilities Commission, an amendment requires "it shall be the policy of all Commonwealth agencies to encourage the maintenance of viable farming in agricultural districts"

The revisions would also require such bureaucracies to modify procedures and regulations to ensure continued farming in an ag district

Such changes may be bad news for land speculators, eminent domain fans, and farmers planning to sell out to developers

But the farmer who wants to till his ground knowing his grandchildren will have the same opportunity should welcome the ideas proposed for revising Act 442 The state legislature should waste no time in passing the needed amendments



BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

TESTING GOD

Lesson for August 31, 1980

Background Scripture

Malachi

Devotional Reading:

Psalms 51:1-12

The one thing none of us

wants to do these days is to put God to the test. Even if he invites us to do so, we are not likely to accept the offer.

For one thing, we have been led to believe that one should not test God Didn't Jesus say to Satan, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God?" Doesn't it indicate a lack of faith to call upon God to prove himself? A test seems so arrogant, so irreverent

Yet we cannot escape the fact that there are passages in the Bible where God clearly invites people to do just that. This is what he is saying, for example, in

Malachi. "...thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts" (3:10).

Robbing God

We need to get the picture: through Malachi God has accused his people of robbing him "But you say, 'How are we robbing thee?'" and the answer: "In your tithes and offerings," (3:3:8). The people have been holding back in their obligations to the temple The reason is not just a miserly attitude, but a fear that, if they give too much, they will not have enough for their own needs

God knows this and he puts

the challenge to them clearly: "Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house; and thereby put me to the test. If I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing" (3:10).

Their problems, therefore, is not one of greed, but of a lack of faith and trust in God If they trusted God to supply their needs, they would not hesitate to pay their tithes for they would know that God would not fail to provide for them

Is that not still a factor in

financing God's work? We are limited in our generosity by our fear of not having enough for ourselves and that fear is the direct result of failing to trust God and accept his own promises that he will provide for us Many churches today, in a time call for an expanded mission and witness, rather than a reduced one, are finding, not only that they cannot expand their programs, but must continue to cut back and pare down their present program. We ascribe this situation to the predicted "hard times" that are just around the corner, but it is

not the times that are deficient, but our faith.

Testing God

So, no matter how hard it is for us to digest it, there are times when God challenges us to test him - not to prove his love, but our faith! We go through the motions of asking, but he knows we don't really believe that he will answer and provide for us. Thus, his invitation to test is a challenge to start acting as if we believed and trusted in him. Unless we put our own faith to the test, the windows of heaven will remain closed.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Max Smith, Lancaster County Agricultural Agent
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TO BECOME INVOLVED

More restrictions for agriculture seem to be developing by the dozen I fear that too many of these are the result of city folks moving to the country in the past decade or more These folks want the opportunity of living in the country but do not realize the important of food production I'd strongly urge that all farmers take a firm stand in these instances

and "fight for your rights" Some of the recently publicized regulations in certain townships are definitely against future agriculture and food production

I find it hard to believe that good-thinking public officials will continue to support such restrictions I'd urge all farmers to take an active part in making these restrictions, and at the moment, be very forceful in changing any regulations that will hamper efficient agriculture in the future.

TO FERTILIZE ALFALFA

The fall of the year, the after the removal of the last

cutting, is a good time to top-dress existing alfalfa stands The application of a phosphorus-potash fertilizer in the fall will strengthen the alfalfa roots and result in higher yields next summer Nitrogen should not be needed on establishment alfalfa stands Some growers will top-dress with fertilizer in the fall and again after the removal of the first cutting in the spring

This should result in maximum yields with a healthy stand When alfalfa plants are well fed and treated for insect injury, they should be able to stand

management and weather adversities Alfalfa plants are heavy feeders or both phosphorus and potash Unless these elements are replaced each year, the plants will suffer and the yield will be disappointing

TO BEWARE OF SILO GAS

This is not a new suggestion but continues to be very timely and very important. Silage making timely and very important Silage making time is at hand when many tons of corn will go into our silos This is one of the best methods of harvesting the corn crop in order to get the maximum feed nutrients With our huge

tower silos the danger of poisonous gases becomes more important. All farmers are urged to discuss this hazard with their employees and all members of the family. These gases can develop from one day to 14 days after the silo is filled Most of these gases have a chlorine-laundry bleach odor and irritate the eyes and respiratory system Some are yellow and some are colorless Don't take any chances-warn all members of the family of this danger Never enter a partly filled silo without running the blower. These gases are heavier than air and will come down the silo chute and into the barn. Don't be careless around recently filled silos.

TO ADD INSULATION

The higher cost of fuel will continue to be a problem for many of us. I'm aware of some folks changing from one type to fuel to another because of the lower current costs, this might give some relief for a time but costs of other fuels will no doubt go up with greater demand This idea of liberal in-

sulation will reduce the need of all types of fuel.

Now that we are here in the period between hot weather and cold weather, it might be a good time to evaluate your insulation needs In most cases extra insulation will be cheaper than continued high fuel consumption. Many of our buildings were constructed before the energy crunch; therefore, additional insulation is definitely needed. Before cold weather arrives it might be a good economy move to check your insulation conditions in order to reduce all types of fuel consumption.

Farm Calendar

Today, August 30
 Second Pa Deer Assn Meeting, 9 a.m., Keller Conference Center, Penn State
 Juniata County Fair, continues through September 6, Port Royal
 Southeast District Dairy Show

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RURAL ROUTE



By Tom Armstrong

