

BY CURT HARLER, EDITOR



Lancaster Farming says...

Weed out weed law problems

Among the many bureaucratic curiosities in Harrisburg is the current method for declaring war on problem weeds.

Heaven knows Pennsylvania has its share of weeds: there's Canadian thistle, multiflora rose, Johnsongrass, and a whole flock of others.

Farmers pay a tidy sum each year to control those and other problem weeds. But in order to get financial help and legal aid in eradicating a given weed, it has to be declared noxious.

Therein lies the rub. It literally takes an act of congress (the state congress, that is) to have a weed declared noxious.

The classic definition of a weed is simply 'a plant growing where it isn't wanted.' But that definition doesn't go into who doesn't want the plant where it is.

That brings us back to Harrisburg

where the legislature periodically has to decide what's a noxious weed and what isn't.

To relieve the lawmakers of that burden a noxious weed bill was introduced in the House earlier this year. It would have provided for a panel, probably under the Secretary of Agriculture, to study weed problems and declare certain deserving weeds noxious. That bill is all but dead.

What we are going to end up with, in the short run, is HB 2640, something less than half a loaf.

HB 2640 would declare Johnsongrass a noxious weed, a deserved title for such a pest. Our neighbors in Maryland have been attempting to eradicate Johnsongrass for years and make no secret of blaming Pennsylvania for reinfesting their state with Johnsongrass.

HB 2640 deals only with John-

songrass. Not multiflora rose. Not other problem species. No noxious weed panel. Why not?

The straightforward answer is that the Pennsylvania Game Commission blew agriculture right out of the ballpark on the noxious weed game.

The Game Commission, for years the champion of planting multiflora rose around farms and woodlots, objected to losing its favorite game cover.

Up in arms with its legions of city-based hunters, the powerful Commission made sure congressmen knew how it feels about any law which would allow multiflora rose to be declared a noxious weed.

Thus died any chance of having multiflora rose declared noxious this year. Killed in the process was the idea of a panel to act on other weed problems as they arise.

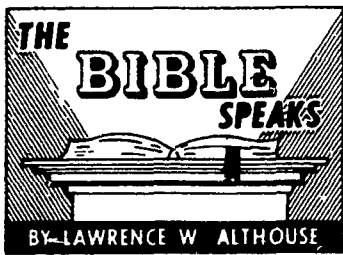
Multiflora rose aside, it seems

plain stupid to have to go through the entire lengthy, expensive lawmaking process to have weeds declared noxious. Problem weeds hardly deserve the dignity of having individual laws enacted each time one needs to be declared noxious.

The time and expense of writing individual laws is wasteful, especially when the Agriculture Department should be able to handle the job simply, swiftly, and knowledgeably.

Give the Game Commission token representation on an Ag Department Noxious Weed Board, the same way the Game folks now have farmers on their board. Provide the standard hearing period and other required terms for the Weed Board.

Let's make it easier for the state to help farmers rid themselves of problem weeds rather than wrapping the whole process up in a bindweed of legal problems.



TIED-DOWN & FREED-UP

September 7, 1980

Background Scripture: Genesis 6 through 9.
Devotional Reading: Psalm 8.

Ours is a day when "hanging loose" is becoming

a national norm. The term "commitment" seems old-fashioned and obsolete. People today do not want to commit themselves to future plans. "Hanging loose" to them means the opportunity to decide at the very last minute.

Last year I was president of a Dallas-area organization that put on monthly programs. I found that, while all the members of that organization wanted to be guaranteed a quality speaker each month, relatively few would give any commitments to make those programs successful. They wanted the organization to guarantee

them something, but they resisted giving any guarantees in return. THIS I WILL DO

This is no less true in personal relationships. Lots of people today want the benefits of human relationships without being bound by commitments. A woman told me recently, speaking of her relationship with a man, "We make no promises to each other; there are no strings to tie us to each other." She was boasting, but I felt for both of them a sympathy neither of them were seeking, for, no matter how satisfying their relationship might be to them, they are missing out on one of the vital aspects of

human relationships: commitment.

It is significant that one of the key terms in the Judaic-Christian tradition is the word "Covenant". Look on the New Testament flyleaf of your Bible and you will probably find it to read: "The New Covenant... Commonly Called... The New Testament of Our Lord And Saviour, Jesus Christ." The reason for this terminology is that the Bible is regarded as the living record of God's covenant with his people. Much of the uniqueness of the Judaic-Christian tradition is the element of covenant: a God who makes agreements with

his people — and keeps them.

We see this very early in the narrative of the Old Testament. After the Great Flood, God "said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you... never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth'" (Genesis 9:8-11). It is a promise given to "every living creature" and "for all generations". God is binding himself to an everlasting promise upon which all future relationships between the Divine and humanity will be built.

FREE TO COMMIT

Actually, we need to make commitments, to bind ourselves to our best intentions. Without covenants, we do not discipline ourselves to live by the highest we know. We become imprisoned by our vices, weaknesses and natural inclinations to do less than our best. Actually, commitments, instead of taking our independence from us, make us free to pursue the ideals and goals we set for ourselves. Ironically, it is only when we willingly tie ourselves down that we are truly freed-up to fulfill who and what we were created to be.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Max Smith Lancaster County Agricultural Agent
Phone 394 6851

when the crops have been hurt by the lack of moisture.

Also, there is more danger of silo gases when ensiling corn that has been drouthy and then got a good soaking rain. Livestock producers should keep this potential situation in mind, if the dry weather has stunted their crops. Corn that has normal growth and development, even though we have had some dry weather, is not as dangerous as stunted corn due to very dry conditions.

TO PREPARE FARM PONDS

If you have made the investment in a farm pond, one of the reasons should be to be used in case of fire.

However, too many farm ponds are located in a place where the fire truck cannot get close enough in wet weather. Most engines must get within 25 feet of the water in order to pump the water to the fire.

We suggest that pond owners have an all-weather lane to the side of the pond. This may not be important in the summer months when the ground is dry and solid. However, in the early spring the fire truck may not be able to reach the water. I have known of a fire truck getting stuck between the main road and the pond, and the barn burned to the ground. Be sure the water in

your farm pond can be used by your local fire company in case of fire. Consult with your fire chief for details.

TO KEEP DOGS AT HOME

Stray dogs are very unpopular in most farming communities. In fact, they are in danger of being shot when off your property and unattended. The big reason for this is that dogs and cats may carry infection from one farm to another. Also, in sheep country stray dogs have been known to attack and kill sheep. Many sheep producers will not tolerate stray dogs.

In many parts of the country, where we have dense farms and large

livestock or poultry operations, every precaution is taken against the spreading of diseases. Stray dogs and cats are a threat to healthy herds and flocks. Owners should keep this in mind and keep their dogs at home. Unfortunately, it is difficult to control cats, rodents, and wild birds; however, they also, should be kept out of buildings as much as possible.

TO INSTALL DRAIN TILE

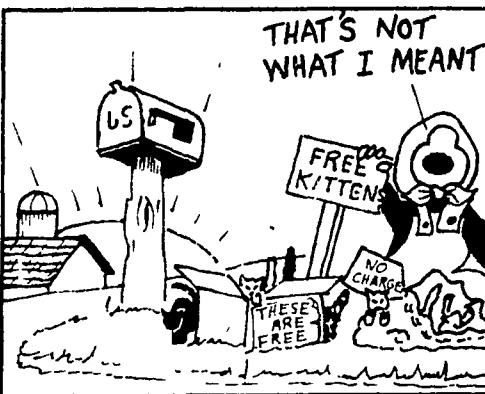
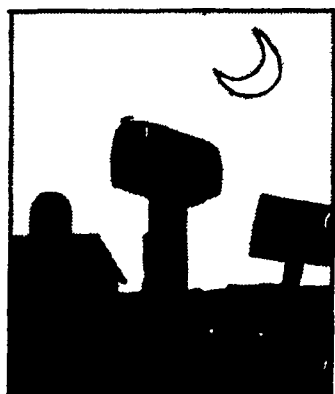
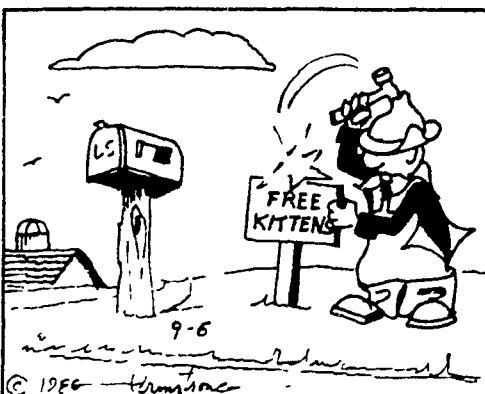
Farmers who have wet spots in their fields might use the early fall months as a good time to install drain tile or drain-pipe. These areas should be more workable

now than in the spring. When the tile is put in place now, winter grains can be seeded on the area with little loss of crop production. I realize that in some areas of the state, the weather has been so dry that wet spots have disappeared. On the other hand, many farms will have one or more wet spots in crop land that gives trouble in the majority of crop seasons. These can be corrected with these drainage systems. In most cases the cost of draining wet spots in crop land is a good investment. Under current production costs, every acre should be managed to produce maximum yields.

TO BEWARE OF NITRATES

If there are drouth-stricken crops on your farm, you had better manage them carefully when being fed to livestock. Our nutrition specialist at Penn State, Dick Adams, informs us there is danger of excess nitrate in corn and other crops after periods of dry weather. The most dangerous time is 3 to 5 days following a soaking rain

RURAL ROUTE



By Tom Armstrong

Farm Calendar

Today, Sept. 6
District 4-H Horse Show, Lancaster Riding Club.
Woodburners Expo, Kutztown Fairgrounds, continues through Sunday.

Sunday, Sept. 7
Eastern Division Pa. Jr. Polled Hereford Assoc. Summer Show, 3:30 p.m., York Fairgrounds.

Monday, Sept. 8
National Barrow Show

Contest, Ulm, MN.
Green Township Community Fair, Commodore, continues through Sept. 13.

York Fair opens.
Poultry Serviceman's Meeting, Holiday Inn North, Rt. 501, Lancaster 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Sept. 9
Greenfield Township Fair, Claysburg, Continues (Turn to Page A32)