



Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

Stewardship, a question of conscience, caring?

Although it may come as a surprise to most farmers, next week is a special one for those folks who till the soil. Starting tomorrow, Soil Stewardship Week begins — a celebration of the preservation and perpetuation of one of our nation's most valuable resources.

Conservation of the land is not a new idea in the world of agriculture. Conscientious farmers have been practicing it for years.

What's disturbing is how some of today's big, 'modern' farmers who have the latest machinery, read all the important periodicals from Wall Street Journal to Lancaster Farming, and attend every workshop offered by Extension, have failed to get the message.

Along any country road in any county, there are examples of good stewards and examples of the other kind — farmers who have opened up fields from boundary to boundary and planted acre upon acre of corn with no thought to erosion control.

Admittedly, there are some areas where this type of farming is O.K. — fields with practically no slope. But, these types of fields are usually inundated with water and are better left for bullfrogs and marsh birds.

Planning for conservation and erosion control takes time and most times some capital. It means farming fields across the slope so water doesn't rush down rows planted up and down over hills.

Realizing conservation farming isn't always easily applied, the federal government has provided incentives and technical assistance since the great Dust Bowl of the 1930s. Soil Conservation

Service staff and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service personnel provide engineering and financial help, respectively.

Despite the fact these two federal agencies have invested billions of dollars in conservation since their beginnings over 50 years ago, there still exists a tremendous erosion problem in this nation.

Each year, more than 6.4 billion tons of soil erode from the nation's farm, urban, and other nonfederal land reports Norman A. Berg, Chief of the USDA Soil Conservation Service.

"In many areas, the rate of erosion seriously threatens long-term agricultural productivity," he said. "We have unacceptable erosion rates on more than 140 million acres of cropland.

"Erosion rates exceed acceptable levels on more than 295 million acres of cropland, pastureland, forest land, and rangeland. Scientists consider erosion tolerable when eroded topsoil can be replenished through natural processes.

"More than 6.4 million tons of soil is lost from wind and water erosion each year, and more than 5 billion tons erode from agricultural land," Berg added. "In Pennsylvania, 51 million tons erode from cropland annually, while 19 million tons erode wash from streambanks, gullies, construction sites, roads and roadsides

"Sediment, the greatest single water pollutant by volume, is an end product of soil erosion," he concluded.

Although some farmers would like to just ignore their erosion problems (those gullies get filled back in each spring after plowing), there are conservation groups and



agencies that are keeping an eagle-eye on ag activities.

In a news release sent out May 4 by the National Wildlife Federation entitled — "New Health Threat, Chemical Contaminants in Drinking Water: 'Environmental Horror Story of the '80s?'" Eckhardt C. Beck, a former Environmental Protection Agency official, explained: "Industrial discharges, agricultural and urban runoff and accidental spills combine to make many of our rivers and streams a lethal soup of organic chemicals"

NWF calls for total enforcement of the Clean Water Act of 1972 which says toxic discharges into the nation's waters must be eliminated or greatly reduced by July 1, 1984. They urge consumers and other environmental groups to band together to fight for water that is free of contaminants.

Still think nobody notices that topsoil washed into the road ditch by the thunder gusher last night? What about that murky water seeping across the barnyard lot and into the 'insignificant, little stream? Can't understand that herbicide trail in the wheat field next to last year's corn? Why is the best ground always at the bottom of the hill?

Let's face it, 1984 is only three years away and there's so much to be done. It's time farmers shoulder the yoke of stewardship instead of using it as a crutch to be picked up only when lame excuses for farming without conservation leave them sticking in the mud.

THE BIBLE SPEAKS
BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE
ONE OFFERING ONLY
May 24, 1981

Background Scripture: Hebrews 8 through 9.
Devotional Reading: Ephesians 1:15-23.

One of the prevailing religious ideas in antiquity was that of sacrifice. In order for the gods or god to be appeased, his worshippers had to give him some gift. Invariably, the gift was always more efficacious if it was something valuable which the worshipper would not normally want to give up.

This concept was important in Judaism and the primary purpose of the temple in Jerusalem was to serve as the place where sacrifice could be made to God. Sacrifice was given in exchange for help from the God, salvation from danger, healing from disease, and forgiveness of sin. The worshipper alone was not sufficient; he needed to bring an offering to God. Throughout his lifetime, the worshipper would make many offerings, because it was believed that no single offering could ever satisfy God for more than the moment.

But When Christ Appeared

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews addresses himself to this very concept when he speaks of Christ as the great High Priest. For with Christ, the old sacrificial system was no longer to continue. Things could not go on as they had

before — "But when Christ appeared as a high priest..." (9:11). The Holy Place would no longer be a "place". The blood of sacrifice would no longer be that of sacrificial animals. The sacrifice, in fact, would forever be Christ himself. No longer would the worshipper look for an animal of sacrifice that was pure and unblemished, for Christ "offered himself, without blemish to God," to purify us from our sins.

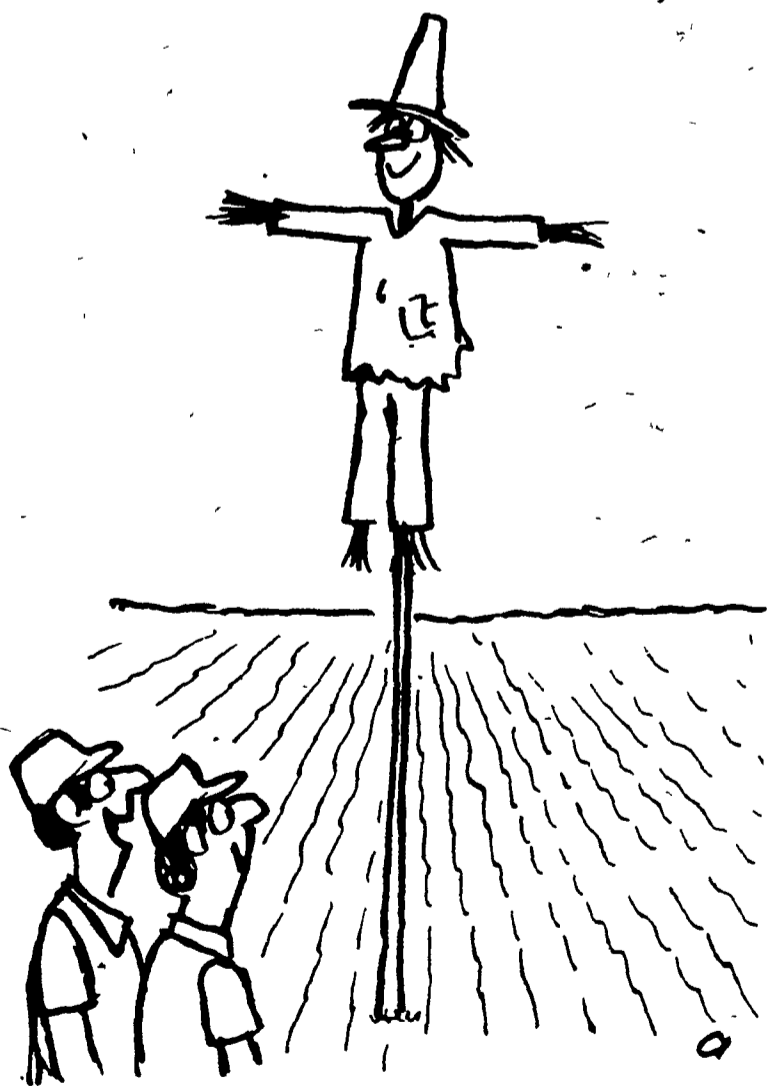
Today the sacrificial system has little appeal or interest. It is utterly foreign to us and the little we know about is simply a by-product of our understanding of the religious scene in which Jesus practiced his ministry. Consequently, the writer of Hebrews with his concern to interpret the meaning of Christ to a people steeped in the sacrificial system seems to have nothing to say to us.

As It Is Appointed

Yet, no matter how foreign the sacrificial system may appear to us, many of us are nevertheless affected by a sacrificial type of religious psychology. Even though we realize how crude was the motivation behind the ancient system, in our own way we may still attempt to bargain and trade with God. Without verbalizing it as a sacrificial motivation, we live as though some kinds of self-denial earn us merit with God, favor, forgiveness, or special help. For many people on a Sunday morning the offering is not an opportunity to praise God, but something akin to "an apple a day" that "keeps the doctor away."

For us, then, as well as for the first century Christian church, the writer of Hebrews says: "And just as it is appointed for men to die once...so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many" is the sufficient offering for all our encounters with God.

HAY HAWS



Sure I practice soil stewardship, but I found it gives my corn more incentive to grow taller.

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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To Control Poultry House Pests
The build-up of fly populations is becoming a serious problem in many poultry houses. One reason is the resistance that flies are showing to many of the materials now being used.

We must accept the responsibility that flies should be controlled at the source. One of the keys for control, is to use different materials at specified intervals to break the cycles. Keep in mind the life cycle of the fly is about 13 days, so as you are depopulating the adults, eggs are continuing to hatch until the cycle is broken.

If you have large fly populations in the bird area, you may need to use bait to reduce the adult numbers. Residual wall sprays are effective. Some newer materials such as Ectiban and Atroban, are showing results when applied to the wall surface and posts in the pit area. Rabon and Vapona are also giving control in some cases.

Lesser mealworm and Hide beetles are a problem in many houses. The larvae stage of these beetles will burrow into wood, styrofoam or other solid material causing weakened structures and reduced insulation value. Rabon,

applied to the pit walls and posts, is effective.

Be sure to follow the directions on the label and do not spray the birds or contaminate the feed or water.

To Be Alert For Gypsy Moth
All indications point to a heavy build-up of Gypsy Moth in many areas this year. The small gypsy moth worms have started to appear and will be eating foliage on all types of trees. We suggest the homeowners get prepared to protect their favorite trees because they will defoliate them

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