



# Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

## Ag Progress?

Once again hordes of farmers and other folks will be pouring into Penn State's Research Farm for the annual event known as Ag Progress Days.

Packed into three days will be events and exhibits designed to inform farmers about the latest in agricultural research and technology.

What's the newest innovations in conserving soil and water, tilling, planting, and harvesting hay and corn? What technological advances have been made in the realm of farm machinery to make life a little easier for the hard-working farmer?

All these questions and more will be answered as Pennsylvania farmers and their families reap the benefits of years of research and experimentation done at Pennsylvania's land grant university for the sake of ag's progress.

Yes, there is no question but that agriculture has "come a long way" from the days of the hand plow and the cyclone seeder. Farmers today can feed more people using fewer man hours and less acreage than their forefathers — and most people take for granted that this will continue to improve.

But the fact is, farmers are running out. They're running out of land, out of financial assets, and out of will power to go on with their hard life when

they can't turn a profit — even with all the research that has gone into modern agriculture. The nation is running out of young people who can either afford to or desire to become farmers — and what will be the benefit of all the research if there are no farmers left?

Yes, there's been progress in agriculture. Just recently we've learned how calves can be produced by artificially fertilizing eggs in a test tube. The fertilized egg can be placed in a donor cow or even frozen. And scientists are now talking about the near possibilities of cloning — producing absolutely identical offspring of our 'super' cows.

We grow vegetables in water, hatch featherless chickens, and seed corn in gel strips. Things that have become commonplace in our ag society, like no-till planting, embryo transfers, and farming with computers, would have boggled the minds of farmers of the early 1900's — even those of just two decades ago.

What lies in store for agriculture in the U.S. and elsewhere? The answer lies in the fields and laboratories of our universities and research farms. It's both exciting and frightening to try to speculate just how advanced the American farmer could become.

With all the progress that has been seen in the past few years, it is not unfathomable

Peepin' at the farm picture



that farmers will soon be watching a computer print-out terminal while they drink their morning coffee rather than turning an ear to the radio for market information.

Computers and lasers on planting equipment will ensure that seeds are 'lovingly' dropped at just the right depth and spacing. Complete intake and output information on cattle, hogs, and sheep will be available at the touch of a button for producers to use in determining profit margins.

Dairy and beef herds will be made up of identical super cows produced through a procedure where a single cell is 'sliced' and grown into calves.

Sound too far-out to be plausible? Don't forget that's what people said about embryo transfers and automatic magnetic feeders.

Ag progress — the sky seems to be the limit. But in all the vast possibilities, we need to keep in mind the dangers of becoming 'too smart' and the fact that we are still just mere humans trying to make our lives, and the lives of others, a little easier and hopefully a little better than before.

## NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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### To Apply Lime When Seeding Small Grain

Preparation is being made for fall wheat and barley seeding. This is an excellent time to apply lime. A soil test will indicate how much per acre, if needed. This is doubly important if you plan to seed down a grass-legume mixture next spring.

Many times a clover or alfalfa producer will wait until spring to have lime applied to his field. This is not the way to get a good stand. Lime needs up to six months to react in the soil and correct the acidity.

If soils need lime, it should be worked into the topsoil when the small grain seedbed is being prepared. Legume seedings are costly; be sure the soil is between 6.8 to 7.0 pH so they have a good chance to survive.

### To Fertilize Strawberries

The new strawberry patch that you planted this spring should be pushing runners by this time of year. It's a good idea to fertilize these new plantings during August. A fertilizer high in nitrogen or nitrogen only would be best.

The objective is to encourage more runners and develop a stronger plant. It will also increase yields for next summer. Another thing, weeds must be controlled at all times to have a healthy strawberry patch. The earlier in the summer we can get the runner plants to take root, the better way they will be established for next year.

### To Plan Winter Cover Crops

This is a good time to give some thought to a winter cover crop on land that has been tilled this past season. The seeding of ryegrass, bromegrass, or winter grains following the harvest of the main crop this fall, will help reduce soil erosion.

In addition, a cover crop adds organic matter when it is incorporated into the soil next spring. Cover crops are especially helpful on slopes and hillsides where water erosion is a problem. Just a word of caution, some herbicides used on corn (atrazine) may prevent the growth of any grain or cover crop this fall.

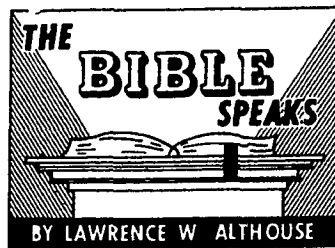
### To Be Aware Of The Adult Stage Of The Corn Rootworm

The adult stage of the northern corn rootworm are starting to emerge. In fact I've seen a number of these little green beetles in our home. They are merely a nuisance in the home.

If you recall, the life cycle is something like this; the beetles lay most of their eggs during September and October in the soil around the corn roots. The eggs remain dormant for 8 or 9 months and begin to hatch in the latter half of June. The small white larvae hatch for corn roots and begin feeding as soon as they find them. If the larvae cannot find corn roots, they will die. This is the reason that rotation of crops is effective in controlling corn rootworms.

So, keep a close watch for the small greenish beetle, this will be an indicator on what to expect next spring.

If you find the green beetle on your corn silk, they will do very little damage since most of the corn is pollinated.



YOU CAN DO IT!  
August 23, 1981

### Background Scriptures:

Deuteronomy 30:11-20.

Devotional Reading:

Nehemiah 9:26-31.

"It's too late for me to change my life!"

"Things are too messed up to straighten out!"

"I've always been this way and I always will be!"

"There's no way I can start over!"

These are just a few of the things that people tell me when I challenge them to put their lives in order. So many people conclude that there is a point at which a life is no longer worthy or possible of redemption.

I can understand those feelings, for there are times when the challenge to "clean up our act" seems totally beyond our meager capacities. We feel doomed to stay exactly where we are: at the bottom of the pit!

### The Choice Is Ours

But one of the enduring themes of the Bible is that it is never too late, never too difficult, never impossible, unless we choose to make it so. As Moses sums up his third discourse to the people of Israel, he makes it clear that their destiny depends upon their own choices: "See, I have set before you this day life and good, death

and evil" (Deuteronomy 30:15). As someone has put it, there are no hopeless situations; just people who have grown hopeless about them. If we choose to regard life without hope, it will be without hope. It has not been decided for us by someone else. It is our choice: "therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live" (30:19).

Moses makes clear, not only that we can choose life, but that, we are constantly making choices—good and bad—and there are consequences that follow those choices. If we choose not to follow God's commandments, there is an eventual price to be paid. "But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you this day that you shall perish" (30:17,18). So, we are not helpless victims of life; we shape our lives by the choices we make.

### Very Near

Neither is the good life in God's will so far beyond our grasp. "For this commandment which I command you this day is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?'" (30:11,12). Of course, it is not easy, but neither is it beyond our grasp, if we really want it. One doesn't have to have a high I.Q. nor rise from a higher culture to grasp that which we must do. No, "the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it" (30:14).

When we look at our own lives, it is easy to conclude that new life is beyond our grasp. But when we behold in us the power of God's redeeming love, we need to remember that: WE CAN DO IT!

## Farm Calendar



### Saturday, August 22

Central Pa. Holstein Show, Huntingdon, 6 p.m.

### Sunday, August 23

Carbon Co. Fair, Lehigh, until Saturday.

Somerset Co. Fair, Meyersdale, until Saturday.

### Monday, August 24

South Central 4-H Dairy Roundup, Farm Show Building,

Harrisburg, continues through Tuesday.

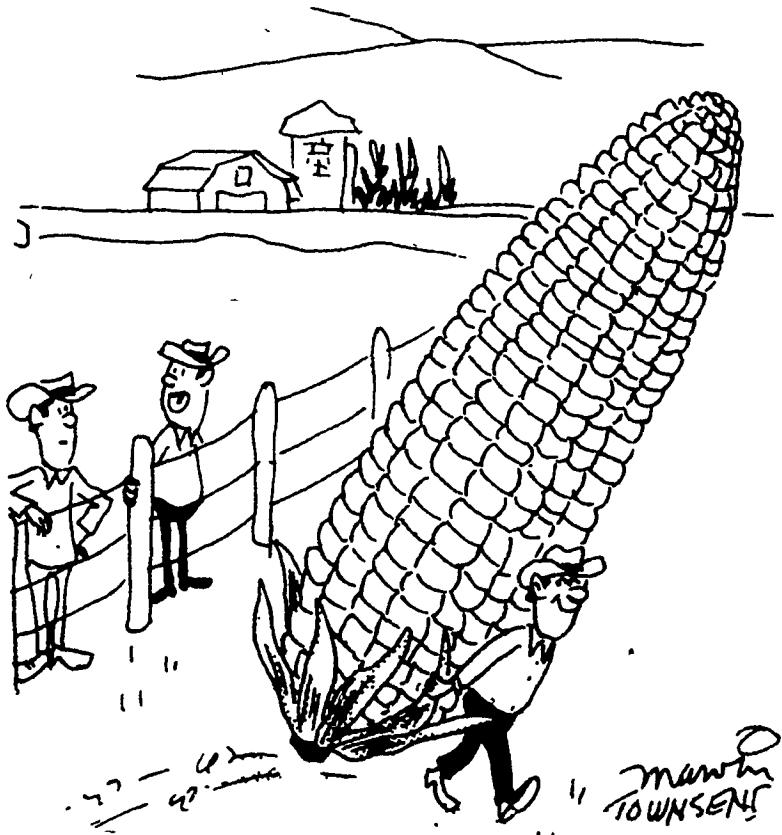
Montgomery Co. Fair, Gaithersburg, Md., continues to Saturday, for more information phone: 301/926-3100.

West End Fair, Gilbert, until Saturday.

Westmoreland Co. Fair, Greensburg, until Saturday.

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## HAY HAWS



"May be should ask him what hybrid seed he used."