



# Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

## Who needs a water bill?

Pennsylvanians, a group non-exclusive of the farm community, need a water management bill, like House Bill 1483, now.

This piece of legislation would provide for the development of a sound state water plan, with the data and background needed to insure the Commonwealth's precious resources are not depleted and that all citizens would have an equal right to their life-giving, often taken for granted, water supplies.

There are many interest groups who have gone on record opposing HB 1483, including the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association. PFA testified in Allentown, this past August and again last week in Brookville, that "while provisions of the bill which call for inventory of ground and surface water resources and planning for water emergencies are good, other provisions which require permitting of large water users by the Department of Environmental Resources pose a threat to agriculture."

Last week PFA proposed that "water management legislation should be based on the availability of water resources and the freedom of individuals to buy or sell their water-use rights in the marketplace." They called for existing users of water to have their rights secured with legal enforcement to protect those rights.

These proposals, except for the water-right auctioning part, are currently addressed in HB 1483 which calls for a continuing survey of the state's surface and underground water supplies and monitors the consumption of volume users to insure they don't drain and strain the sometimes short supply.

As far as legal enforcement of individual water rights, Pennsylvania currently has no regulatory program covering the use of groundwater supplies and only oversees withdrawals from springs, lakes and streams by public water suppliers.

In the case of a private citizen complaining that a large industry or housing complex has dried up his stream and lowered his well water level, cases are settled in the courts under common law — and liability can only arise where the withdrawal was proven to be malicious or negligent and where it caused foreseeable harm to adjacent lands. These are not very firm guidelines for private citizens, and costly court battles against Goliath enterprises are crises not relished by most.

H.B. 1483 does set up some rather stringent rules requiring permitting and record-keeping for anyone who will be using more than 10,000 gallons of water each day. This, however, is not such a great threat to the freedoms farmers and individual homeowners now take for granted.



The average dairy farm supporting 40 head of cattle and providing a home for a four-member family is estimated to use 1,500 to 2,000 gallons of water per day. To reach the 10,000 gallon limit, a farm operation would have to be five times larger — this would effect only a small percentage of farms in the state.

And, as pointed out by D.E.R.'s Tim Weston, the large acreage holdings of farmers would be a protective buffer — their increased water needs would not imping on close neighbors as readily as a large industrial plant, moving next-door to a housing development. Even if more farmers go to irrigation and increase their water consumption, only those farmers in "protected areas" who are using over 10,000 gallons of water per day would have to fill out a short form and apply for a permit. Currently, the two primary protected areas are the eastern Delaware River Basin around suburban Philadelphia and the Monogahela, an industrialized western Pennsylvania watershed. Neither of these two areas contribute a large portion of their land to agriculture.

This is not to say there are no short-comings with HB 1483. There are. As expressed by York County's Rep. Carville Foster and Wyoming County's Rep. Carmel Sirianni, the bill is "too cumbersome and all-encompassing." This, in part, is the result of its being drafted by a D.E.R. employee who probably is used to carrying out cumbersome and all-encompassing regulations.

The bill should address water conservation incentives, as pointed out by the State Grange and the Conservation Districts. And it should appoint more of its power to local officials rather than giving across-the-board decision-making authority to D.E.R.

Farmers in Pennsylvania stand to gain more than they'll lose if H.B. 1483 is passed out of committee and moves its way through the halls of our state capitol building. In the future, water supplies will not be jeopardized by the ever-growing migration of large industry and housing into rural areas — there will be a law to prevent that sort of thing. Without such a law, those Hollywood battles at the water hole depicted in late-night westerns could be played out here, or 'water sharks' could make a killing selling water rights on the black market.

In this over-regulated society, it's hard to swallow another law governing our lives and our farming operations. But water is too precious to ignore — a drought is always devastating. A law to equitably divide a short supply of water could only help agriculture.

## NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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**To Add Extra Insulation**  
Many people keep putting off the addition of extra insulation but as winter approaches, we need to take a real good look at energy conservation.

In many cases extra insulation in the side walls and in the ceiling areas will prevent the loss of heat in cold weather and reduce the

amount of cooling needed during hot weather. Fiberglass batts, rolls or loose pour-in pieces, can be used to add to current insulation materials.

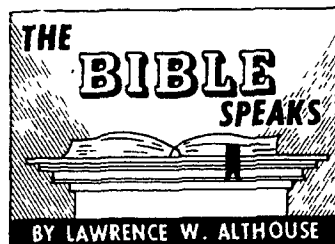
The energy problem is real, and we all need to practice conservation in all areas of our home, farm and business. The investment in insulation is a good one, and will

result in a saving in both heating and cooling costs.

### To Help Cows Adjust

Gleñn Shirk, Extension Dairy Agent, reminds us at this time of the year, cows are subjected to many stresses. They need all the help they can get from you to adjust to new feeding programs,

(Turn to Page A12)



### NO "FREE LUNCH"

October 4, 1981

Background Scripture:

Isaiah 55

Devotional Reading:

Ezekiel 36:22-32.

The Bible asks some tough questions and none is more disturbing than the one the prophet poses to us in Isaiah 55:2—"Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which does not satisfy?"

Why, indeed?

Much of our lives is spent in laboring for "that which does not satisfy" us. We surround ourselves with things that do not satisfy us—not in the long run, that is. We spend our money on experiences that may be exciting for the moment, but do not stay with us. We spend most of our lives working...for what? We want something out of life, but do we really know what it is we want?

### BUY WITHOUT PRICE!

We lose our health before we realize that health is invaluable and cannot be bought at any price. We search for happiness, but no price we pay can ever even put a downpayment on it. Actually, the price is more than we can ever afford. As Jesus said, "For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?"

Yet, when we finally realize that we can never have enough to purchase what we want out of life,

we are also ready to discover that it was never intended to be bought, but given: "...he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1). It is a gift, but it is not a giveaway. It is intended to be given to all, not just a few deserving: "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters."

Actually, the emphasis is on the Giver, not the gift. That doesn't mean that the gift is not important, but that if we focus only on the gift, we will miss both it and the Giver. The key, then, is not in our "spending" our in our "labor which does not satisfy," but in the Source of what it is we are looking for: "Hearken diligently to me and eat what is good...Incline your ear, and come to me; hear that your soul may live" (5:2b,3).

### WHILE HE IS NEAR

Thus, our task is not to work and strive for happiness or even to attempt to "nail down" our salvation, but to "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near" (55:6). Pursue God, not happiness, and happiness will be thrown in. "Seek first the kingdom of God" and all the other things will be added to our lives by his grace. But it's not a "free lunch," for it costs God enormously.

It sounds as if the prophet believes that sometimes God is "near" and other times far away, sometimes to be "found," and sometimes not. That's a very human perspective, but the truth is that God is always near us, always ready to be found by us—or better to find us—but there are times in our lives when we are more aware of and responsive to the great banquet of eternal life which he wants to give us. It is particularly at those times that we need to "return to the Lord."

## Farm Calendar

**Today, Oct. 3**  
KILE competition continues through Tuesday.  
Woodcarving & decoy show, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., York College Gym, York. Continues tomorrow.

**Sunday, Oct. 4**  
4-H Week begins and continues through next Saturday.  
Fun Horse Show sponsored by Boots & Saddles, held for therapeutic riding school, 1 p.m., Fellenbaum farm, Fruitville Pike, Lancaster.

**Monday, Oct. 5**  
Holidaysburg Community Fair, continues until Thursday.  
Manheim Community Fair,

continues until Friday.

**Tuesday, Oct. 6**

Bradford Dairy Feeding & Management School, 8-9:30 p.m., Troy High School Ag Room, continues Oct. 13, 20, 27 & Nov. 5.

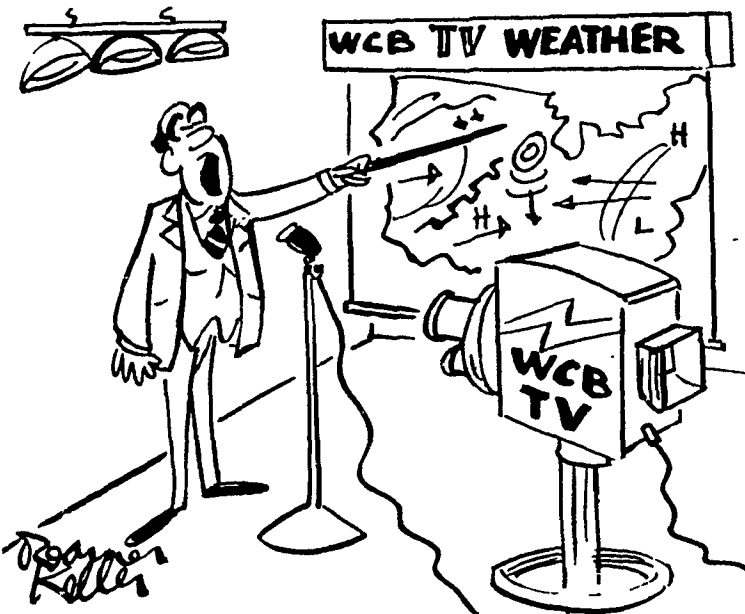
House Ag and Rural Affairs Committee, 9:30 a.m., Room 104, Capitol.

Woodlot Management tour, Chester County, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Buck & Doe Farm, off Rt. 82 near Doe Run.

York Co. Agri-Women, 10 a.m., home of Cecil McPherson, New Park.

(Turn to Page A.2)

## HAY HAWS



"AND NOW A FINAL WORD TO THOSE FARMERS IN THE LOWER VALLEY--RUN!"