



Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

We have a right to farm

Farmers' rights are going to come to the test, soon.

We've already heard a lot about a country 'cousin' — animal's rights. And now it's time for the human counterpart of the ag world to stand up and be counted, too.

Although most farmers think their deeds are the legal documents that constitute their inherent right to farm, many have been finding that those pieces of parchment don't guarantee the landholdings they represent can be used for farming.

Other factors, such as local zoning and court rulings, have made decisions for farmers — sometimes without their approval or knowledge — that have taken their farmland out of production, either directly or indirectly.

In small, stuffy meeting rooms, handfuls of people with no particular training in land use or development, pass judgement on the lands that have been tilled and tended by hard-working farmers for generations. They 'rule' that those lands can no longer support large numbers of poultry, hogs, and cattle, that farmers can only spread manure or perform tillage operations during certain time periods; that new outbuildings and silos can be located only where they meet specific distance requirements and won't annoy non-farm neighbors regardless of how this affects present structures and operational layout.

And the legislated atrocities against agriculture continue to grow as local boards add new faces from suburbia who wield their acquired powers to enact new ideas about what country life should be like.

Although this sounds like science fiction, a tale out of someone's wild imagination, unfortunately, this happens to be a true life story for many Pennsylvania farmers.

Not all the harassment to farmers has to come from local legislation, however. Neighbors, too, can make our Commonwealth's agrarian community members question why they stay in the business of feeding these people who complain about every season's noise and smells. Some of these work-away neighbors even take their complaints to court, suing their hard-working farm neighbors for spreading, spraying, and anything else that annoys them.

One Dauphin County hog producer recently discovered his lot-owning, split-level neighbor had decided actions could speak louder than



words. So, as the farmer proceeded to empty his manure storage pit, hauling the slurry to a field located some distance away from the dividing boundary line, his neighbor loaded a gun, and fired in the direction of the spreader.

Luckily, no one was hurt in the incident. But, now, the township officials are deciding on what regulations need to be drafted so that future violence will not occur.

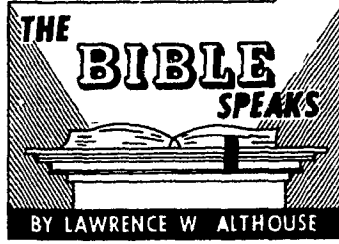
Township officials are not the only ones looking into the problem. State legislators are considering a bill introduced by Lancaster's Rep. Noah Wenger which would protect agricultural operations from nuisance suits and ordinances.

HB 1823 would protect farmers who are performing normal, necessary operations from being sued or shackled by local laws for creating an occasional 'country' odor, or a little corn fodder dust. Squealing pigs, bawling cows, whirring fans, and reverberating machinery engines, all part of the overall farm picture of pastoral tranquility and scenic beauty, would not be allowed to be singled out as offensive by non-farmers who share the quality life the country has to offer.

But, HB 1823 needs the support of the farm community it's trying to protect. A similar bill was introduced by Rep. Wenger last year. It passed the House with a favorable vote only to die in a Senate Committee. Even in its initial test in the House Ag Committee, HB 1823 met with two opposing votes out of the 22 legislators who acted on the bill. One representative's comment was that farmers who sold the lots off to neighbors in the first place shouldn't be given any special consideration.

What about those farmers who never sold a single lot, but watched as other farmers pared out parcels to urbanites and suburbanites who yearned for the 'good life'? And what about those farmers who learn their non-farm township officials have passed an ordinance that limits what type of livestock they can raise, and how many head are allowed.

Yes, this is the decade for Farmer's Rights. Let's hope it passes the legislative test, and farmers receive the support and backing we deserve from our government. For in the end, what good are all their efforts to preserve farmland, if farmers are lost to nuisance suits and ordinances?



WHO BUILDS THE BARRIER? November 8, 1981

Background Scripture:

Romans 8.

Devotional Reading:
Galatians 5:16-24.

In those times when God seems absent from our lives, when it appears that he is not present to help us in our trouble or sorrow, it is customary for us to assume that he has for some reason placed a barrier between himself and ourselves. It is also customary for us to assume that the reason for his absence is his displeasure with us—something we've done or not done, something present in our lives that shouldn't be there or something lacking that should be.

The Psalmists frequently complained that God had forsaken them: "O God, why dost thou cast us off forever?" (74:1). King Saul was convinced that God no longer listened to his prayers. Even Jesus cried on Calvary, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" If all of these—and more—experienced a barrier between God and themselves, it is not so surprising that we have also experienced it.

According to the Flesh

Yet, the Bible seems to indicate that it is really not God who abandons us, but we who abandon him. If there is a barrier between us in times of great need, it is

because we have perhaps unwittingly erected it ourselves. God does not desire to separate himself from us even in the midst of our sin.

One of the ways in which we build such a barrier is to focus our whole attention and being on the material side of life. Whether our hangup is food, drinking, clothing, money, power or our other material pleasures, we stifle our spiritual selves when we fail to recognize that we are both flesh and spirit. It is not that God becomes angry with us for our material preoccupation, but that these "things" erect a barrier that tends to shut him out. Thus, Paul reminded the Romans that "all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Romans 8:14). Who is to Condemn?

Another way we build a barrier between ourselves and God is by failing to really accept his forgiving grace. Although in our minds we "know" that it is through God in Christ that we are freed from our guilt, we still may live as if we don't believe it. We act as though we are more powerful sinners than he is a Saviour. So Paul reminds us in Romans, "It is God who justifies, who is to condemn?" (8:34). To live with unrelieved guilt is to actually reject the grace of God.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" asks the Apostle (8:35). His answer: Nothing or no one! "For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (8:38).

Unless we ourselves build the barrier

Farm Calendar



Today, Nov. 7

North American National Livestock Expo, Louisville, Ky. Continues until Nov. 21.

Eastern Limousin Breeders Fall Sale, 7 p.m., Frederick, Md. Fairgrounds.

Springfield, Bradford Co. 4-H Good Grooming Club, 1:30 p.m., Extension Office.

Championship Rodeo, Farm Show Building, Harrisburg, Continues tomorrow.

Lancaster 4-H Sheep Roundup, Tim Fleener's home, 2418 Harrisburg Pike, 12:30 p.m.

Monday, Nov. 9

Poultry Servicemen's Seminar, 6:30 p.m., Holiday Inn North, Rt. 501, Lancaster.

PFA annual meeting, Hershey Motor Lodge Convention Center. Continues to Wednesday.

Lancaster County 4-H Beef Show, 1 p.m., Stockyards.

Adams County Home Energy Workshop, 7 p.m., Extension office. Continues Nov. 16, 23, 30 and Dec. 7.

Dauphin County Beef Roundup.

Tuesday, Nov. 10

Extension Income Tax Workshop, Bedford. Continues until Thursday.

Lebanon County DHIA, 7 p.m., Prescott Fire Hall.

PennAg-Penn State Dairy Workshop Day, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Harrisburg Sheraton West.

Cumberland County 4-H Beef Roundup and Sale, Carlisle.

District 4-H Beef Show, 9 a.m. sale 1 p.m., Lancaster Stockyards.

Berks Equine Council, 7:30 p.m., Ag Center.

Lebanon County 4-H Horse Banquet, 6:30 p.m., Schaeferstown Fire Hall.

Bradford County West DHIA Annual Meeting, 7:45 p.m., Canton High School.

Farm-City Banquet, Holland Union Building, Dickinson College Campus.

4th Annual York County Crop Improvement Show, 7 p.m., Dover High School.

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NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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To Winterize Small Engines
Many small engines on farms and around homes will be hard to start next spring. But you can change that by properly winterizing your small engines. Here are some suggestions:

After running the engine to reach operating temperature, drain the crankcase and refill with new oil of proper weight, as specified in the operator's manual.

Add a few teaspoons of gasoline stabilizer into the gas tank and run the engine for several minutes to make sure the stabilizer flows throughout the fuel system. It's actually better to drain the gas

tank and run the engine until it stops.

If the engine is water cooled, be sure the anti-freeze in the cooling system is sufficient for the lowest temperature. Use an anti-freeze tester for this check.

Remove the spark plug and pour about a tablespoon of clean oil into the cylinder. Also, clean and regap the spark plug or replace it with a new one.

Use an air gun to blow loose dirt and chaff from the engine. Remove and service the air cleaner.

Finally, cover the engine with a piece of canvas and store in a dry place under cover.

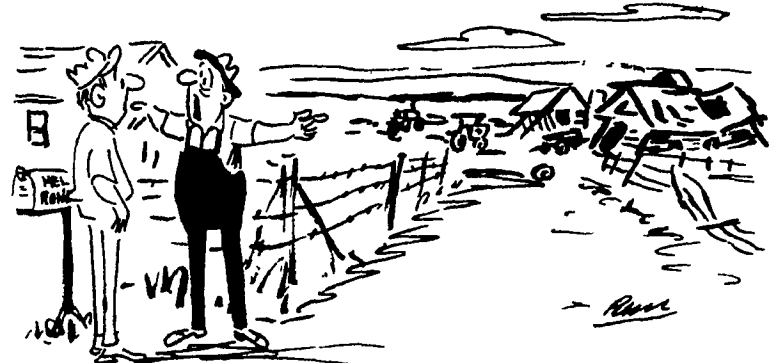
To Evaluate Tree Windbreaks

We are approaching the season when winter winds can drive through our homes and push the heating bills up. Buildings that are protected with trees, or some other type of windbreak, will require less heat. Under present conditions, everyone should make a special effort to conserve energy and reduce fuel bills.

Several rows of evergreen trees planted upwind from buildings will help a great deal. This is not a common practice here in the East; however in the Midwest, most

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HAY HAWS



"I told my kids someday all this would be theirs when I retired. I haven't seen hide nor hair of them since!"