

OUR READERS WRITE, AND OTHER OPINIONS

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been part of the law for years and the only addition is a general definition of what constitutes shelter. As a practical matter, judges have ruled against the necessity of providing shelter for certain farm animals other than natural windbreaks, so farmers needn't fear this provision as it doesn't apply to sheep and other hardy species that are used to living in the elements.

Agents of duly incorporated SPCA's are already authorized to seize animals on probable cause that they are the victims of cruelty. No added authority is given to these agents under Senate bill 1208. The immunity proposal would prevent "nuisance" law suits that do nothing but enrich the

attorneys involved and invariably get thrown out of court (but not before much legal entanglement).

Farmers needn't fear this proposal as the immunity does not apply in cases of willful misconduct and gross negligence and it is only under these conditions that a law suit today would make it into the courts. Frivolous law suits against an agent are more likely now than would be frivolous seizures by an agent under the new proposal.

All in all, Senate Bill 1208 is a good piece of legislation and farmers of Pennsylvania need not fear its passage.

Erik Hendricks
Executive Director
The Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Philadelphia, Pa.

Set it straight

Regarding the article on the proposed cruelty to animals bill, S.B. 1208 in the Jan. 2, 1982 issue of Lancaster Farming, you did not get all your facts correct.

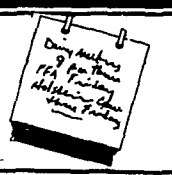
The part about ear cropping of dogs, and failing to milk cows, as well as labor time for work horses has been a part of the existing law for some years.

Agents of recognized Humane Societies are already authorized to seize any animal if it is apparent that animal is a victim of cruelty.

You should make it known through a follow-up Page 1 article, addressed to P.F.A. and P.F.U. members that farmers have nothing to fear from S.B. 1208, unless of course they are doing something illegal for the sake of some personal gain, in which case they should not be entrusted with the care of animals anyway. Please set the record straight as soon as possible.

John R. Kurtz
Lansdale, Pa.

Farm Calendar



- Today, Jan. 23**
Frederick Co., Md. Sheep Breeders Assn. meeting, 7:30 p.m., Extension Office, Frederick, Md.
1982 N.J. Farmers Week, continues through Saturday, Jan. 30.
- Monday, Jan. 25**
Keystone Cornucopia, Penn Harris Motor Inn, Camp Hill, 6:30 p.m.
Peninsula Dairy Meeting, Sheraton Inn, Dover, Del.
Del.-Md. Dairy Days, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Sheraton Inn, Dover, Del.
Chester County Extension annual meeting, 8 p.m., West Chester Extension Center.
W. Bradford ABC meeting, 8 p.m., at Greg Zanders.
Franklin County Soils & Crops Day, 9:30 a.m., Lemaster Community Center.
- Tuesday, Jan. 26**
14th Pa. Wine Conference, Hershey Lodge & Convention Center, 10 a.m., continues tomorrow.

- Horticulture & Vegetable Conference, Hershey Lodge & Convention Center, continues through Thursday.
Cattle Feeders Day, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Lancaster Farm & Home Center.
Cumberland-Franklin sheep producers meeting, 8 p.m., Cumberland Extension Office, Carlisle.
Wednesday, Jan. 27
Mt. Joy Farmers Co-op, noon, Hostetter, 363 N. Barber St.
Eastern Lancaster County Adult Farmer program, 7:30 p.m., Union Grove School, topic: swine management by Jerry Applegate.
Thursday, Jan. 28
Del. Nurserymen's meeting, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Sheraton Inn, Dover, Del.
Lancaster Farm & Home Foundation annual dinner meeting,

No laughing matter

The recent article on the "mysterious Whirly-Bird caper" (Lancaster Farming Dec. 24, 1981 issue) suggests an air of fictional, humorous fantasy.

The fluctuation of the population to and from the Three Mile Island area, especially in the media, is unfortunate because the history of TMI and the wide-ranging health effects is a long, tedious and complex report that requires intensive investigating with a devil's advocate approach.

A fresh approach to an old problem is sometimes advantageous but in this case past events are related to present events.

There are several pieces of the "whirly-bird caper" puzzle that were probably unknown to the reporter who covered the story.

1. Low testing of Unit I began on August 23, 1981. Water treatment had already been in process for some time from Unit II. During Oct. 9, 1981 (the date of events) "processing was interrupted for approximately two days for correction of reduced flow in the auxiliary building ventilation system". (see NRC Status report Oct. 19, 1981) Page 3.) Sirens were heard at TMI at 3 a.m.

We will never know how much radioactive particulates were released but low-level radiation will manifest itself in many ways when released into the environment.

2. On the week of Nov. 20 (Friday the day of entry into containment building and contamination of a worker) a blue and white "whirly-bird" was sighted on Tom Derr's 26-acre farm in Rockford Heights in the Linglestown area. Again the pilot was engaged in illegal trespassing — remaining on the ground for several minutes.

3. In reference to Dr. Cable's lack of information, after the many evasions — out and out lying by the Agriculture Dept. about the death of 500 birds in Annville, Pa. (not to mention the reports of many, many birds found dead on the highways and backyards, the refusal of the Agric. Dept. to come and look at sick animals, and the refusal to take the live animals to the Summerdale Lab (freely offered by the farmers) labels of sloppy farming charged to farmers who farmed all their lives, we no longer bother to notify anyone in the Pa. State Agri. Dept. about problems. (see NRC response to animals health effects.)

They have stated there are no problems except sloppy

6:30 p.m., Farm & Home Center.

Hunterdon County, N.J. Dairy Interest Day, 11:30 a.m., Pfenninger's Hilltop Inn, Flemington, N.J.
Endless Mountains Maple

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management. Never mind the farmers who have farmed for 30 to 60 years without any problems such as we now encounter and began to encounter in 1976. (Unit I began in 1974)

To hear officials speak; there are no health problems — human or animal; there was no blue & white helicopter; the trees didn't defoliate in the summer of 1979 until it looked like winter in August; there were no excessive infant deaths, stillbirths abortions of hypothyroidism; there was no lying or cheating by Met Ed. personnel; there was no accident, it was just an incident; in fact nothing happened; we are all suffering from psychological damage, including the animals and the unborn.

Now what do you suppose a pilot in a helicopter would be looking for when scooping up a soil sample following a two-day shutdown of the water-treatment system at TMI? His contact lenses perhaps?

It is interesting that prior to the reported event, we sighted this aircraft on almost a weekly basis. Since the initial landing report, it has not been sighted in this area even once. That was 12 weeks ago.

Several reporters representing various media visited our farm. It is a strange experience indeed to be told that our credibility is in doubt, that we must prove the event of a helicopter landing despite 4 witnesses.

Farmers always carry cameras with telephoto lenses, with them while they are working in the fields, tending the cows and the million and one other chores that require our full attention. How dare a farmer report an event without photographic proof!

I dare say that if we had the whole report about what happened at TMI and is still happening, we would choke in our own attempt to humor the issue.

Strange, is it not, that every word is printed (with the i's dotted and the t's crossed) when it emanates from the P.R.-mouth of Met Ed, but the credibility of offsite witnesses is nil?

In a local newspaper dated Dec. 9, 1981, Met Ed. announced another venting of krypton into the air. "The release to be less than three curies".

Whenever releases are made, Dr. Thomas Trosko of Grantville says he picks up the radiation in his "Thyro-tech" thyroid gland testing machine. The "Thyro-tech" checks radiologically the ability of the thyroids to produce hormones. The hormones so necessary to animal and human development.

Before the machine is used, the technician must adjust it to account for changing background radiation, much the same way you need to adjust the bathroom scale to zero before you get on it.

Dr. Trosko's assistant says the background radiation doubles whenever TMI releases radioactive Krypton gas before employee entry into the containment building of Unit 2. Something Met Ed. and state officials fail to tell the public.

We do not intend to make a career out of explaining or justifying events we and others have already witnessed.

The results of radioactive materials (low-levels in particular) finding their way into the food chain and the air we breathe will take their toll in sufficient numbers in due time and those results will not have any humorous connotations.

Now is the Time

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opportunity to ask questions, visit with other cattlemen and businessmen and to inspect commercial exhibits.

To Recognize Fertilizer Values

Since the cost of commercial fertilizers continues high, we should take a look at other sources of plant food; I am referring to farm manure and legume sods in the crop rotation.

The 1982 Agronomy Guide gives a very good comparison of these fertilizer values on page seven.

With the amount of manure that is being applied to some of our livestock and poultry farms, it is quite possible that very little commercial fertilizer will be needed.

Alfalfa sod can add as much as 75 pounds of nitrogen per acre. This is one advantage to having legumes in the crop rotation.

A complete soil test will reveal the needs of each field. Then the needs can be met by using farm manures, legume sods, or commercial fertilizer. Careful handling and storage of manure will preserve many of these valuable fertilizer elements.

To Provide Supplemental Heat

This is the time of year when many pigs and lambs are being born into cold quarters. If the newborn animal becomes chilled that first hour, it will be in trouble. Many digestive and respiratory problems can develop.

We urge producers to provide heat lamps, or some other source of heat, for these animals the first few days. Modern farrowing barns already have supplemental heat units that provide the proper temperature to get little pigs off to a good start. However, many sheep barns are too cold for little lambs.

The placing of a heat lamp over the small pen in which the ewe and lamb are kept for the first few days will be very helpful. Be careful that the heat lamp is well attached and out of the reach of animals.

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