



Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

Time to clean up our act

Autumn is officially here in Pennsylvania. And, just as if Mother Nature was watching the calendar and noticed the fall equinox occurred on Thursday, the weather in Pennsylvania has certainly turned "seasonal."

This week, as we dug out sweatshirts and jackets to snuggle in and keep away the damp, bone-chilling air and incessant drizzle that dampened all but the participants' spirits at area fairs, it became apparent those sweltering days of summer have vanished for yet another year.

And just as the weather signals a change in apparel, it also provides the catalyst for farmers to change gears in our fieldwork routine. It seems those crisp fall mornings help us shrug off the doldrums of hot-weather haymaking for the year, revitalizing us for the challenge of long hours in the tractor seat, coupled with stiff necks, as the fall plowing season begins.

Just the other morning, one farmer, with sweatshirt hood tied snugly about his ears, clipped down the highway enroute to a waiting cropfield. His tractor's muffler was puffing out a cloud of exhaust as it broke through the crisp morning air.

Eager to begin turning under a worn-out alfalfa stand now that this week's rains provided the right "softening" action to change "concrete-hard" soils into workable land, the farmer set his plows.

As plow shares bit and tore through a tangle of deep-reaching roots, the farmer was met by the sweet, musty aroma of the freshly turned ground. Making his way around the field, he turned back toward the road. That's when he was confronted with a question of conscience.

"Where am I obligated to lift my plow out of the ground?" was the nagging decision this farmer faced. "Do I stay back away from the road or do I farm tight up against it?"

Wisely, instead of trying to stretch his field out almost to the centerline of the road, this farmer chose to leave a sod strip between his future winter grain crop and the blacktop's birm. But, many of his counterparts fail to see the wisdom in leaving the highway's right-of-way unturned as they plow and plant their crops, farming down over the banks and into drainage ditches.

These types of farming practices have prompted certain townships across the state to pass ordinances forbidding this right-of-way infringement. Repeated warnings to farmers to keep their crops in the field and not on the highway turned out to be ineffective. So now they've enacted laws that make the decisions about where to stop plowing cut and dry, leaving nothing to farmers' consciences.

Every township and state road has a 33 foot right-of-way — that's 16½ feet from the center

of the road. And, although the highway's paved surface doesn't extend completely across the 33-foot span, that unpaved fringe still belongs to the highway departments and is their maintenance responsibility.

Although most farmers argue the highway departments don't hold up their ends of the bargain in maintaining these strips of land that border cropfields, the fact they neglect to spray the weeds or trim the trees doesn't allow farmers carte-blanche privileges to do it for them.

According to the Lancaster Conservation District, the ideal coexistence between farmers and highway departments would find grass strips bordering crop fields and road gutters. "Unfortunately, too often the field is plowed and disked and sprayed and no vegetation is left, causing soil to erode onto the road. This presents a traffic hazard as well as the potential for water pollution," they say.

Another area of contention between farmers and highway departments is the transporting of sharp-edged equipment on macadem roads. Road superintendents don't hide their annoyance when they follow tell-tale tracks of sliced and broken pavement up to a farm lane. Turning steel-wheeled machinery on paved roads also stirs up trouble as the blacktop is spiked and scoured by the wheels.

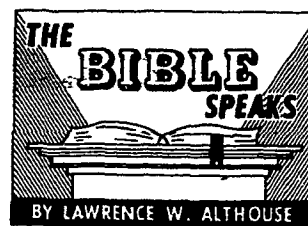
One growing problem area that is becoming increasingly annoying to township road superintendents is manure spillage. Just recently one Lancaster County township heard complaints from local citizens on this very subject.

Luckily, most rural governments and residents understand the fact that farmers sometimes need to haul livestock waste to the fields via public roads. And most don't mind driving through the accidental dribbles and sashes that inevitably spill from even the best of spreaders.

But farmers can't expect these same folks to put up with inches of manure slopped across the roadway through careless management. And there are regulations under the Second Class Township Code that can be enforced to prevent it. Farmers who track manure or mud out onto the road are responsible for cleaning it off. This is the same regulation that requires building contractors or any other guilty party to keep mud off the highways or clean it up.

So far, we know of no prosecutions or warnings that have been issued to farmers concerning manure spillage, but it could happen.

Getting along with highway departments and neighbors only takes a little time and consideration by farmers. And for our "better image" efforts, it will be easier for these same people to go that "extra mile" for us.



IN THE MIDST OF EVIL
September 26, 1982

Background Scripture:
Genesis 37; 42 through 45; 50.
Devotional Reading:
Genesis 37; 12-28.

They were both wrong and they were both right.

The sons of Jacob had every reason in the world to be furious with Joseph, their youngest brother and clearly their father's favorite. While they labored in the fields, he played and loafed. For their labors they barely received a word of appreciation from Israel, their father, while "that brat" was rewarded for his indolence with a coat of many colors. But the last straw was the arrogance with which he bragged of a dream in which they all had bowed down to him. Who could blame them for resenting this obnoxious brat?

All The Evil We Did

At the same time, who could blame Joseph for hating the brothers who almost killed him in jealous rage and sold him into slavery to get him out of the way? No matter what they held against him, nothing could justify their terrible conduct towards him. If Joseph had vowed that some day he would get his revenge, who could blame him?

And who would be surprised had not his family feud been carried on from one generation to another

until, at last, the original reasons for it had become obscured by new depredations in each generation? Once an evil deed has been done, it is easy for the evil to be perpetuated in an endless cycle of revenge.

Yesterday the Irish Republican Army detonated a bomb in London that killed and injured many innocent people. Although you and I cannot condone this act of senseless terrorism, we can at least understand the bitterness that gave rise to it: the Irish anger over what they consider to be centuries of British domination and subjection. "Who is right?" "Who is wrong?" we ask.

God Meant It For Good

Yet, reasonable as these questions are, they usually cannot solve the problem, particularly when the neutral observer concludes as we often do that "both are right and both are wrong." What kept the tragic enmity between Joseph and his brothers from being perpetuated was Joseph's recognition, not that what they had done to him hadn't been all that bad, but that in the midst of that terrible deed God had been working to turn the bad into good. God had not caused the evil—that rested squarely on Joseph, his brothers and even their father—but he did use that occasion to bring some good out of their human folly.

In every tragic human failure there are opportunities for God to bring forth some flowers from the rubble. Vengeance makes good sense to the human mind. Logic demands that we pay back in kind those who harm us. But the divine mind, working in the midst of the evil of human deeds, calls not for vengeance but forgiveness and reconciliation.

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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To Beware of Frosted Crops

Colder weather means frost. In fact this is good news to many of us who have had enough of hot humid weather this summer. Livestock producers who have fields of sudan-sorghum hybrids, should keep in mind that when frost hits these crops they could be toxic to livestock for seven to ten days following the freeze. After this period, and the plants are dead, they may be used safely. However, any growth coming from the plant after a killing frost might also be toxic.

Another frost hazard would be a permit livestock to graze alfalfa or clover stands while the frost is still on the plants. This can cause severe bloating. Allow the frost to melt and the plants to dry before grazing. Good management is needed on various forage crops after a killing frost.

For Increased Lamb Production

Proper nutrition and health is a must for increased pounds of lamb marketed per ewe. Ewes should be provided adequate energy and protein to insure breeding and lambing efficiency as well as desired levels of milk production. Ewes should be fed according to body weight and condition during breeding and gestation. After lambing, ewes should be sorted by number of lambs they are caring for and fed accordingly. The most up-to-date health management practices possible should be maintained on the farm. Increased lambing rates accompanied by increased lamb mortality defeats the purpose. Lambing rates should be increased to that level where management can properly care for

and maintain a lamb mortality rate of less than 5 percent. Labor should be intensified in and around lambing time. Health costs at lambing will pay for itself in lambs saved, remarks Chester D. Hughes, Extension Livestock Agent.

To Consult Your Veterinarian

Being on excellent terms with your local veterinarian is a very good thing. Most producers need some veterinary assistance once in a while. The developing of a health program and sanitary practices for the farm operation is strongly suggested. Veterinarians are trained in disease prevention and treatment with the most important part being disease prevention. When this is successful there is little need for high veterinary costs.

We suggest that producers regard their veterinarian as a valuable resource person for their farm operation; there may be times when it might be expensive; however, the prevention of infections and the saving of animals are things that must be done in order to make the most profit. Give him a chance to help.

To Store Pesticides Safely

Most producers are about finished with their spray materials for the year. Many of these can be held over until next year with good results. However, it is always best to buy only enough for one season at a time. When storing spray materials, always keep them in their original containers and away

Farm Calendar



Saturday, Sept. 25 Lebanon Fairgrounds. through Saturday.
Pa. Swine Breeders Cooperative Monday, Sept. 27 Dairymen, Inc. District 8 meeting,
Feeder Pig Show & Sale, Bloomsburg Fair, continues (Turn to Page A12)

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