



## An ag lullaby

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

Are we lulling ourselves into another false sense of security?

Most of us watch the steadily falling prices at the gasoline pump as avidly as the investor eyes the Dow-Jones going the other way. This is welcome news, particularly when it's close to the time to start burning the gas or diesel to plant another crop. Any drop in the cost of a major ag input will help that bottom line.

But now what about all of that research and some significant investment that went into alternate farm fuels? Should all of this be put on hold and allowed to gradually disappear like the gasohol pump?

While this immediate fuel lullaby played to the tune of some confused Arabs is important, the problem of false security goes much deeper in agriculture. The other day we received a report on the basic ag research at the Charles F. Kettering Research Lab in Ohio. This ag think tank is primarily studying nitrogen fixation and photosynthesis. Scientists are trying to understand just how

crops like alfalfa and soybeans can put nitrogen back into the soil and how plants use sunlight to grow. Then, perhaps things can be done to help these processes along or even reproduce them synthetically.

But there was another project that caught my eye. Essentially, it's using excess electrical power produced on the farm to manufacture fertilizer. The only raw materials needed are air, water, limestone or rock phosphate and the power to make calcium nitrate or soluble phosphate fertilizer.

The process has been proven in small pilot operations, but is a long way from large-scale application. But it does point out what may be possible in the future.

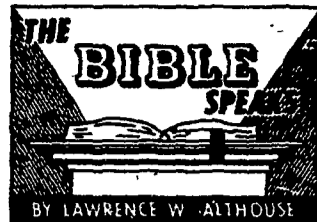
But things like this all begin with basic research. It's the kind that paves the way for later commercial application to bring forth better seeds, fertilizer, equipment or whatever. It's where young ag scientists cut their eye teeth. It's what our whole agricultural network is based upon. And it's the type of publicly-funded research that has all but disappeared.

Just ask people at Penn State or other land grant institutions how much public funds are going into basic ag research these days. Beginning in the mid-60's the public research fund flow was cut back until it's now little more than a trickle.

Things like grain surpluses have lulled us into yet another possible false sense of security. Today, the government is more concerned with PIKING away at these surpluses than about the long-range future.

Basic ag research is a slow, gradual process. One block of progress is laid upon another. It's not like this year's corn crop. You don't plant a research idea in spring and reap its benefits in the fall. The growing season for basic research, such as plant breeding, is a decade or more.

It's time to get these long-term research planting intentions back in proper order.



## THE HARDEST COMMAND

March 6, 1983

Background Scripture: Exodus 33: 15,16; Luke 1:1-4; 24:36-53; Acts 1.

Devotional Reading: Exodus 17:1-7.

Jesus gave his disciples some hard commands during his ministry, but perhaps the hardest command of all was the one he gave during his resurrection appearances: "...he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4).

The last thing the disciples must have wanted to do was to "wait"! Spiritually and emotionally they were all "charged up." The horrible defeat at Calvary had been turned to an overwhelming victory. Jesus had been vindicated. The kingdom of God was not lost, as they had feared. In those circumstances, feeling as they did, they probably wanted to do something - something that was appropriate to the wonderful thing that had happened when Jesus rose from his tomb.

### Wait For The Promise

Jesus' instructions to "wait for the promise of the Father" must have troubled them, particularly impulsive Peter who never seemed happy unless he was making something happen. Not easily put off, the disciples pressed Jesus for something specific: "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Waiting might not be quite so hard for them if they could pin Jesus down to a specific date. His reply was hardly what they had wanted: "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his

own authority." Yet, although he would not give them dates, he did leave them with an important promise: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses on Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

Acts 1 lifts up for us two of the most difficult aspects of being a follower of Jesus Christ: waiting and living by God's promise. Waiting is difficult because we fail to realize that our own concept of time is different from that of God. As we see things, we believe NOW and no later is the moment when we want something to happen.

### The "Right" Time

I've been waiting for something very specific to happen in a portion of my life for the past 25 years. That's almost half my lifetime and it seems a long, long time to wait for God to answer my prayer. Yet, I realize that, in God's sight, the time may not be right. That is not a rationalization to get God "off the hook," but an acceptance of the limitations of my human time-space perspective. I have been wrong many times in the past about what was the "right time" for God to do this or that.

So I am left with two alternatives. One is to conclude that my waiting has been in vain and that the longed-for blessing from God will never come. The other is to live by the promise of his grace - hard as that may be - until the promise is fulfilled. I have found time and again in the past that one must learn to live on the promise of God and not let go of the conviction that in his time they will be fulfilled.

# NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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### To Attend Poultry Progress Day

The Lancaster County Poultry Association and our Penn State Extension Service have developed a new all-day event this year called Poultry Progress Day. This event replaces the three evening meetings that were held the past several years.

Poultry Progress Day will be held on Thursday, March 10, in the auditorium at the Farm and Home Center. Registration will start at 9 a.m. and the program will end at 3:45 p.m. Lunch will be available.

An outstanding program has been developed which brings State Senator Noah Wenger in to give us an update on "Our Right To Farm" legislation. Secretary of Agriculture Penrose Hallowell will comment on the Outlook for Pennsylvania Agriculture. Then Clarence Collison, Extension Entomologist, will review poultry pests and their control followed by Forest Muir and Robert Graves on equipment and ventilation management. Spangler Klopps from I.C.B. will review the Marek's problem and give us an update on some new vaccines.

We'll also hear from Barret Cowen from the Wiley Lab at Penn State who will review the increasing Gumboro problem.

### To Use Caution Near Manure Pits

No doubt many barns, liquid manure pits and poultry houses will be cleaned out in the near future. I would caution you to be very careful because of the poisonous and inflammable gases that develop in these pits. Some cleaning methods require the agitation of the liquid manure in the pit before pumping starts. Good ventilation is needed over the pits at this time, otherwise animals and people can be suffocated. Also, smoking should be prohibited and all flames kept away. In addition, anyone going down into the manure pit, after being emptied, should wear a gas mask. Don't take chances on the presence of toxic gases.

### To Use Heat Lamps Safely

A portable heat lamp is a useful item around the home and farm during cold weather. The lamp's infra-red rays can be used to keep pigs from freezing, relax aching muscles, or warm crankcases of tractors and automobiles so they'll

start easier. The heat lamp can also be used in brooders for small pigs or lambs, or baby chicks or at your workbench to give you quick heat.

But, I'd like to add a word of caution. A heat lamp can be dangerous because the lamp's rays can easily burn you, the same as a sunburn.

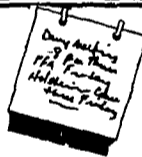
Also, if you are using the lamp continuously for a long period, use a porcelain socket. Brass and most plastic sockets will not be able to stand the heat. Another thing... in a brooding area, use a wire or chain to support the lamp. Don't hang it by its cord; the cord was designed to carry the current and not the weight. Remember, a heat lamp can come in handy around the farm or home in cold weather. But handle it with care.

### To Develop Good Pesticide Records

The arrival of March means the beginning of a new growing season and warmer weather. And, the use of various spray materials and chemicals will be a common practice. They're all intended for a special purpose, if used correctly.

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## Farm Calendar



- Saturday, March 5**  
Pa. Guernsey Breeders annual meeting, begins at noon, Holiday Inn, East, Lancaster  
Elizabethtown Young Farmers Annual Banquet, 6:45 p.m., Hostetler's Dining Hall, Mt. Joy
- Monday, March 7**  
Potter, Cameron and McKean Counties Corn and Forage Day, Vo-Tech School, Port Allegany  
Pa. Brown Swiss Breeders convention committee meeting, 11 a.m., Host Corral, Lancaster  
Inter-State District 5 annual meeting, noon, Willow Valley, Willow Street  
Bradford Co. Milker's School, continues until Tuesday  
Game Bird Conference, J.O. Keller Bldg., Penn State, University Park, continues through Tuesday
- Tuesday, March 8**  
Adams Co. Soybean and Small Grain meeting 10 a.m., Cross Keys Diner, New Oxford  
Dairy reproduction workshop, through Wednesday, Blair, Bedford and Huntingdon Counties, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Memorial Park, Martinsburg  
Keys to Farm Financial Success workshop, through Wednesday, Farm and Home Center, Lancaster, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Maryland DHIA meeting, Sandy Cove, Md. 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.  
Cedar Crest FFA annual banquet,

- 7 p.m. Middle School cafeteria, Lebanon  
Florin Feeds, annual poultry meeting, 6:30 p.m., Harvest Drive Restaurant, Smoketown  
American Dairy Assoc. annual meeting, 10 a.m., Holiday Inn, Syracuse, N.Y.
- Wednesday, March 9**  
Potato Growers meeting, 10 a.m. Centre Presbyterian Church, New Park  
Farm Estate Planning Clinic 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Penn State Schuylkill Campus, Schuylkill Haven  
Poultry Federation Council meeting, Host Farm, Lancaster  
Potter and McKean Farmers Assoc. directors meeting, 8 p.m., Bonanza Restaurant, Shippensburg
- Thursday, March 10**  
Penn Manor FFA annual banquet, High school cafeteria, 6 p.m., Millersville  
Lancaster Poultry Progress Day, 9:45 a.m., Farm and Home Center  
Pa. World Relief Heifer Sale, Guernsey Barn  
Farm Transfer meeting, 7:30 p.m., Farm and Home Center, Lancaster  
Adams Co. Poultry Banquet, New Oxford Fire Hall, 6:30 p.m.  
Maryland Mastitis meeting, 9:30 a.m., Walkersville Fire Hall, Frederick Co.  
Wayne Co. Sheep and Wool Producers meeting, 7:45 p.m., Pleasant Valley Grange

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