

# Ramblections

## Staging ag-stravaganza

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

Now, that I look back, one of my ag jaunts that I remember most was a trip to the Tennessee Delta to film a soybean harvest. At the time though, it wasn't so memorable.

The final destination of our film crew was Tiptonville, Tn., close to the Mississippi River, where a farmer grew more than 12,000 acres of certified soybean seed. The farmer bought 10 new combines at one shot and we wanted to make the most of the publicity opportunity. Purchases like that don't come along every day.

The filming actually began in southwestern Kentucky because that was the location of the equipment dealer who sold the combines. Each, after setup and servicing, had to be trucked to the farmer, some 70 miles away.

In order to get under bridges and power lines along the way, the big tires of the combines had to be taken off and the air removed from the smaller rear tires. Even then, the combine on the flat bed just squeezed under some obstacles.

All along the way, the truckers were plagued by the highway patrol, who delighted in giving oversize load tickets. Needless to say, the troopers had some comments and orders for us when we filmed some of the confrontations.

It isn't easy to film 10 combines all at once and the only way is to do it aerially. So, we made arrangements for a helicopter pilot to fly up from Memphis and meet us.

But no one bothered to tell us that our pilot was the original "Murdock," the crazy chopper pilot on the A-Team. Our pilot acted and flew just about the way Murdock is portrayed on TV. Now, that might be fine for television drama and pulling wounded men out of the jungles of Viet Nam, but needless to say it presented some problems when you're squinting through a movie or still camera, balancing yourself at the open side door of the helicopter.

Some of the farmer's fields were 400 to 500-acres in size so the location of all 10 machines in one place was no problem. But to keep the combines in a staggered uniform lineup moving through the field together was a problem. Anyone who has operated a combine knows there are enough things to worry about other than trying to keep uniform speed and position with nine other machines so that the picture looks like a choreographed mechanical ballet.

The trick is to put the best drivers in the first and last machines and hope that they can keep

the others between them in an orderly fashion.

Needless to say, the farmer didn't want too many passes in convoy through the soybeans. Harvesting just isn't done like that. He had visions of a 10-combine pileup in the center of those 500 acres that would rival any accident ever seen on a Southern California freeway.

But finally, we got our aerial footage that showed these 10 red and yellow monsters eating their way through the soybeans in an agricultural chorus line that would have rivaled the Rockettes of Radio City.

The filming was done in the morning when the beans were dry enough to harvest yet damp enough to cut down on the dust. Ten combines in one place can give off a dust screen that resembles a prairie fire.

Next was another special scene for the camera. One of the farmer's best isolated fields was on an island in the middle of the Mississippi. Needless to say, you just don't drive to this field. Everything, from the machines to trucks, fuel and people had to be barged out to the island.

Now, it required a three-way coordination -- between our land-based convoy that crawled single-file along narrow levees to the banks of the Mississippi, our one-barge navy and our one-chopper air force.

It took an entire day to get a few minutes on film and we were glad for that.

It was quite a task getting all that equipment to the island. And each machine and driver had to take a running start from the barge in order to get up the steep island bank to the field. I remember one hapless tractor driver who happened to stall his machine half-way up that hill. I had visions of both him and his tractor being tipped into the Mississippi to make way for those behind him.

And mixed with these minor obstacles were others created by the unique requirements of harvesting seed beans. Each combine had to be set and reset exactly. Rotor clearances were critical.

And after finishing each field, there was the seed inspector who personally witnessed the cleaning of each combine. Every single bean had to be blown out of the combine's innards, the auger and the bin. That inspector didn't want the mixing of one single bean with another variety.

But all the trouble was worth it. It provided some pretty unique ag photography.

But if you ask if I'm intertested in staging another such ag-stravaganza, I'll pass. One of them per lifetime is enough.



GOD ON A STRING  
July 3, 1983

Background Scripture:  
Judges 11:1 through 12:7.

Devotional Reading:  
Matthew 26: 30-35.

I had forgotten the story of Jephtha.

Now I know why, having just re-read it once again. It is a horrifying story and it seems that there is no redeeming value in it for us -- unless we let it speak to us as a very negative example.

As the story begins, we can feel some sympathy for Jephtha. Born out of wedlock to a prostitute, he is rejected by his step-brothers and driven from his home. In exile he takes up a life of banditry, gathering around him a gang of outlaws. We can also share the satisfaction he must have felt when, terrified of the Ammonites, the elders of Gilead came to him "with hat in hand," asking him to lead them to victory over their enemies. We can feel some of his own satisfaction with him when he says, "Did you not hate me and drive me out of my father's house? Why have you come to me now when you are in trouble?"

**I WILL BE YOUR HEAD**

When things were going well they had treated him shamefully. But now they were in trouble and they knew he was the only one who could lead them to victory over the Ammonites. When you are in trouble, your view is likely to change. Theirs did and now they were offering this illegitimate

bandit the permanent leadership of Gilead in exchange for his generalship.

But Jephtha soon loses our sympathy because of his incredible attempt to manipulate God into giving him and the Gileadites the victory. Realizing that they could only win with the Lord's help, he attempted to buy God's help: "If thou wilt give the Ammonites into my hand, then whoever comes forth from the doors of my house to meet me... shall be the Lord's and I will offer him up for a burnt offering." Horrible as this offer is, Jephtha's behavior after his victory of the Ammonites is even more shocking. When it is his only daughter who comes out to greet him, Jephtha sadly determines that he will have to keep his vow to offer her as a sacrifice to God.

I cannot sympathize with him any longer. Who did Jephtha think would come out of that doorway? His wife? His neighbor? Jephtha's plan went wrong, not because his daughter came out that door, but because it was an immoral offer from the very beginning. Furthermore, it is an affront to God to assume that we can buy his favor with such a promise. It is an even greater blasphemy to go through with this vow once the cost was discovered. It is not the demand of God that is foremost in Jephtha's mind, but his own honor.

**ACCORDING TO HIS VOW**

God had not asked of Jephtha this inhuman vow, nor is there any indication in the scripture that God demanded that the vow be kept. The tragedy rests solely upon the shoulders of Jephtha. He had made the mistake of thinking he could bribe God to do Jephtha's will and he paid a terrible price for that attempt.

And so do we all when we attempt to put God on a string and manipulate him into doing our will.

## NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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### To "Take Care" When Harvesting Barley and Wheat

Barley and wheat are valuable crops to the economy of Lancaster County. Last year we planted nearly 30,000 acres of wheat and 8,600 acres of barley which had a value of over 5 million dollars. With this in mind, we need to follow good harvesting practices when combining these important crops. Make sure the combine is in top mechanical condition, and most importantly, be sure it is properly adjusted. Another thing, you can have all these things just right, but if you travel too fast through the field, you'll throw more grain out with the straw than all your proper adjustments can save.

So, when we harvest these important crops, let's take time to do a good job.

### To Follow Pesticide Recommendations

Weather conditions have been ideal for pests in the field, in the garden and on our flowers -- so pesticides for the control of pests ... such as weeds, insects, fungi and rodents. Keep in mind, if these materials are not used properly, they may contaminate soil, air and water.

If pesticides are applied to areas where there is considerable run-off or soil erosion during a heavy rain, residues may move with the drainage and accumulate in streams, ponds or lakes.

The most common mistake in

pesticide application is to exceed the recommended dosage. Using more chemical than prescribed will not control more pests and usually it will not be effective for any longer period of time. We find that most farmers tend to follow recommendations very closely, but many home gardeners tend to increase the dosage.

The best policy is to study the directions and precautions printed on the label and follow them to the letter.

### To Consider Lightning Rods on Shade Trees

How many times have you driven past a pasture field and noticed dozens of cattle or other livestock grouped together under one or two large trees? During severe thunderstorms, livestock will gather under these trees. If lightning strikes the tree, many of the animals will be killed. For the protection of valuable livestock, we suggest that some of these individual trees by fitted with a lightning rod system. If there is a woodlot in the pasture, or a number of trees, it may not be practical.

### To Check Insurance Coverage

For the past several decades the value of buildings and personal property have been on the increase. In order to cope with this situation, we have frequently suggested that property owners

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## Farm Calendar



**Tuesday, July 5**  
Penn State Center for Cereal Research Crops Day, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Rock Springs Agronomy Farm.

**Wednesday, July 6**  
Lancaster Conservation district meeting, 7:30 p.m., Farm and Home Center.  
Hunterdon County, N. J. Board of

Agriculture, 8 a.m., Extension Center.

**Thursday, July 7**  
Breeding Trotters and Pacers meeting, 8 p.m., Extension Center, Route 31, Flemington, N.J.

**Friday, July 8**  
Pa. Young Farmer Association summer conference, Mif-

flinburg. Continues tomorrow. Pa. Angus Breeders 100th birthday celebration, Centre County Grange Fairgrounds, Centre Hall. Continues tomorrow.

**Saturday, July 9**  
Jersey District III picnic at Charles Wollaston's. Bring place settings and two covered dishes.

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