

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

Today's Lancaster Farming contains a story on a proposal by the Governor's Energy Council of Pennsylvania to fund studies to see if it is feasible for smaller farmers to get together and cooperate in methane digester projects

On the surface the concept sounds good. The state says such energy co-ops could provide income for farmers through the sell-back of power and reduce nutrient-runoff.

But let's look a little deeper.

Total funding for the study is \$35,000 -- not a lot of money in these days of big government spending. But still a lot of money to someone like a poultry farmer with an empty house and no income currently or someone hit hard by the drought last summer.

Also, the money to be spent is federal Department of Energy funds. It falls into that all too familiar federal fiscal situation of "if you don't spend it before the fiscal year ends, you lose it."

The co-op digester program is just another example of the piece-meal approach that government continues to take to one of the biggest long-range domestic problems facing this country -- righting some of the ecological wrongs caused by our modern life-style.

President Reagan made reference to the Chesapeake cleanup and acid rain in his State of the Union address the other night. These are sure to be ecological bywords during the

upcoming campaign. A lot of money is filtering out in many different directions in these efforts.

The EPA's Superfund is to be bolstered for toxic waste cleanup. And still efforts continue in Lancaster County to locate a hazardous waste landfill right in the heart of the area targeted for water cleanup.

Isn't it about time that an alternative approach is found to this piece-meal method -- which often, in attempting to correct one problem, only creates or worsens another?

Isn't it about time that a totally integrated approach to ecologically living within our life-style is attempted?

And what better place to try it than in Lancaster County?

Lancaster County is a microcosm of all the major ecological problems of the country. And probably nowhere are the ecological problems of a triumvirate residential-industrial-agricultural society more concentrated and mixed together than in Lancaster County. But this concentration is what makes it ideal for a pilot project feasibility study of a totally integrated approach.

Such a total study would take a look at the effects on the environment of everything we do in living, working and farming. In one place, can we:

--Halt all landfilling and require the total separation of all residential garbage and the appropriate safe handling of each type?

--Require industry to be responsible for the recycling of its own hazardous wastes?

--Find a long-range solution to the mountains of livestock wastes being generated?

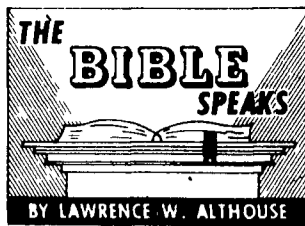
A list of priorities can go on and on.

Only if we attempt such a specific-site feasibility study of total ecological compatibility will we ever know if it can be done. Such a feasibility study makes more sense in the long run than the continuing political-expedient, piece-meal approach.

Everything we do in reaction with our environment is like a charge account. In today's modern life-style too much is being charged against our water and land.

And like all charge accounts, the bill is really going to come due against future generations.

(Written with thanks to Dale E. Baker, professor of soil chemistry at Penn State.)



THE RANSOM  
January 29, 1984

Background Scripture:

Isaiah 34.

Devotional Reading:

Isaiah 26:7-11.

"Weak hands" and "feeble knees"!

Is that not an apt description of how we feel some days? It may be that we feel physically exhausted or our weakness may be of a more intangible kind.

Everyone has this feeling some times. For lots of people it is a daily companion as they face hardships, tragedy, disappointments, and problems that seem insurmountable. There is hardly anyone I know whose life has not known some measure of tragedy, failure or obstacles.

OF FEARFUL HEART

Others may have not experienced such negative things in their lives, but live in a constant paralysis of fear that they will occur. And, if it hasn't happened to us personally, we have still tasted the uncertainty of life as it is reflected in wars, depressions, disaster, and global conflict.

So it is that the Prophet Isaiah comes to us with an uplifting message from God just as he did

to the people of Judah several thousand years ago:

Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, fear not!...' (35:3,4.)

Isaiah assured the people of Judah that "He will come and save you." But does that promise mean anything to us? Many of us are fearful about a nuclear holocaust--can we trust that God will save us from our own self-destructive frenzies? Scientists last year warned us of the disastrous "greenhouse effect" that spells serious trouble for the planet earth. Does Isaiah promise that God will deliver us from that, too, as well as war in Lebanon, Ireland, the Caribbean, and elsewhere?

STREAMS IN THE DESERT

I think the answer to these questions is both "no" and "yes." No, God does not compel us to be good stewards of the planet, nor does he compel us to live in peace with one another. Yet, even though our rebellious and unyielding lives frustrate and hinder the plan and purpose of God, we are assured that in his own time, God will prevail.

It is not likely that I will live long enough to see a day of universal peace and brotherhood, nor an era of responsible stewardship of the planet earth. But Isaiah assures me that that day will ultimately come and God's plan will be fulfilled.

And in that assurance I find the power to live and work and witness in the midst of an imperfect world. I am freed of the bonds of fear and despair because of his promise: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return..."

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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Farm Calendar



**Saturday, Jan. 28**  
York Co. 4-H beef banquet, Seven Valleys, 7 p.m.  
N.J. dairy goat luncheon, Ryland Inn.

**Monday, Jan. 30**  
CPR training, Pencader Grange, Glasgow, Del. 7 p.m.  
Kent County, Md. DHIA, 7:30 p.m., Extension Office, Chestertown.  
Chester County Extension Service annual meeting, 7 p.m., Extension Office.

**Tuesday, Jan. 31**  
Pa. Vegetable Conference, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, continues through Thursday.  
Regional manure management seminar, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Bradford beef producers, 8 p.m., Extension Office.  
CPR training, Farm Bureau Office, Dover, Del., 7 p.m.  
Wayne County zoning meeting, 8 p.m., Knights of Columbus Mall, south of Honesdale.

**Wednesday, Feb. 1**  
Regional manure management seminar, Embers, Carlisle, 9 a.m.  
Chester County Dairy Day, 9 a.m., Guthriesville Fire Hall.  
Hunterdon County N.J. Ag Board, 8 p.m., Extension Center.  
Wayne County local government session, 8 p.m., Extension Office, Courthouse.

**Thursday, Feb. 2**  
Cumberland County Milker's School, South Middleton Fire

Hall, continues tomorrow.  
Regional manure management conference, Lebanon, 9 a.m.  
Clearfield Milker's School, Brady Twp. Bldg., Luthersburg, 10 a.m., continues tomorrow.  
Wayne County Ag Area meeting, 8 p.m., Calkins Grange Hall.

**Friday, Feb. 3**  
Pork Producers Council banquet, New Holland Fire Hall, 6:30 p.m.  
Franklin County Extension annual meeting and banquet, 6:15 p.m., Kauffman's Community Center.  
NE Sheep and Wool Growers, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Pink Apple Restaurant, Tunkhannock.  
Luzerne farm tax meeting, 1-3:30 (Turn to Page A12)

To Keep Farm Equipment In Good Condition

This is the time to replace those worn or damaged parts and tires on your farm machinery.

Maintaining and restocking needed spare parts should be a must before the really busy spring season is underway. Have the tractor engine timed by your local dealer. Consult the operator's manual and adjust field machines according to manufacturer's recommendation.

Order a supply of oils, filters and greases that are needed to maintain tractors and other equipment. It pays to take time out to start a system of record-keeping for each machine. Keep good records of maintenance and repairs and you can save some money in this highly mechanized farming operation.

Remember, a breakdown at planting time is costly. The best preventive is good maintenance.

To Make Sure Ponds Are Safe  
Over the last two or three weeks

I've noticed a lot of people, both young and old, ice skating on farm ponds. It's good exercise and an excellent sport. But, be sure you are prepared in case of an accident. Owners should be certain that rescue equipment is handy and not in the barn or garage several blocks away. Wooden ladders, boards or other items can be shoved out to the person in the water if needed; it should be large enough to distribute the weight of the person making the rescue. A rope is also a good item to pull people out with.

Skating is a very enjoyable winter time sport. Don't be the victim of an accident that could have been prevented.

To Exercise Dairy Cows

The importance of turning out the dairy herd each day from stanchion or comfort stalls should not be overlooked. As we expect more production per cow, the stresses are greater, and if not given exercise, more breeding problems will result. Dairywomen with free-stalls have the opportunity of observing heat periods all the time. However, cows that are confined to stalls present a problem with heat detection. There are very few days that the weather is so bad that the milking herd should not be turned out for a few minutes. If the dairyman is alert and observing, cows that are in heat can be observed and bred. Exercise might help the herds with breeding problems.

To Prune Shade Trees

Winter is a good time to prune the shade trees on your property because the trees are dormant and won't be affected by the trimming as much. The bare limbs let you

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Otis

