



**Straw fire, Mississippi mud, popcorn and the 1985 Farm Bill.**

**BY DICK ANGLESTEIN**

Next to the crowded, uncomfortable conditions in airplanes, the worst experiences in agricultural travels are found in rental cars. O. J. Simpson and Arnold Palmer may always get the ideal vehicle, but I was never that lucky.

Here are a few recollections concerning rental cars during ag ramblings.

The first lesson I learned was to never pull a vehicle with a catalytic converter into a wheat field during harvest. I did it in Kansas and started a little straw fire. Now, a lot of big wheat farmers burn off their fields, but they like to wait until the harvest is over.

If you ever read the fine print on the back of a car rental contract, it specifies that the vehicle is not to be operated off paved roads. Well, it's pretty hard to film and photograph combines or other machinery at work from a paved highway.

Once during a swing through the South I learned the true meaning of Mississippi mud. Driving out a levee, I suddenly ran out of paved road and soon was mired in some thick gumbo -- not the eating kind. It took a few hours to work the car back out and the first stop was a car wash where the vehicle was bathed inside and out.

The car was still a mess when it was turned in and that was the first time -- but not the last.

-- I got docked extra by Hertz for operating off a paved road.

And then there was the time in Illinois, or was it Indiana. We were out filming combines in specialty crops. One of the crops was popcorn being grown for that guy you see on TV -- Orville (funny last name).

Well someone in the camera crew got the bright idea to try and pop some of the corn by dropping kernels down the defroster vents and turning the heater on full blast.

Needless to say, it didn't work. But that was another time that Hertz didn't find much humor in our escapades and tacked an extra charge on the bill for removing the corn that clanked and bounced around every time someone turned on the heater.

And what does this have to do with the 1985 Farm Bill. Not much really, except providing a different way to introduce some comments about it.

Preliminary talk about the bill has already begun in Washington and I hope that the heat of campaign rhetoric doesn't overshadow common sense and dumb mistakes aren't made like pulling a hot car into a field of straw.

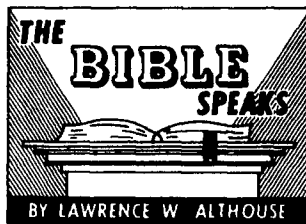
Also, as each faction of agriculture submits input, I hope that the whole process doesn't get bogged down in biased details and drafters of the bill lose sight of the general overall modernization that is needed in ag legislation.

And, finally you gotta admit it's pretty dumb to try and make popcorn in a car heater. All you get is a lot of noise and a bill to rectify the stupidity. Also, it's been pretty dumb for the government to continue to try and solve the farm surplus problem with stop-gap temporary measures that have failed time and time again.

**SO LONG, TRISH**

This is Trish Williams' final issue with Lancaster Farming. She has moved on to the American Dairy Association in Towson, Md.

If Trish brings the same enthusiasm and freshness to the job of promoting dairy products that she displayed here, perhaps some progress finally will be made at whittling away at those surpluses.



**THE SECRET OF PLEASING GOD**  
February 26, 1984

**Background Scripture:**  
Isaiah 58 and 59.  
**Devotional Reading:**  
Isaiah 59:1-15.

If you handle this one carefully, you'll be okay.

After all, much of what the Prophet Isaiah is talking about in Isaiah 58 is the practice of fasting, something that is likely a "non-issue" for 99 and 44/100% of those who will read these words.

So, as long as Isaiah talks about something that's outside our religious experience, we're safe from guilt, aren't we?

**SPARE NOT!**

No, not really. For fasting is not the issue in Isaiah 58. The issue is insincere worship and hypocritical religion. If you're a non-faster, you're not necessarily excluded, because anytime we practice hypocrisy, we stand under God's judgement.

But surely you can't mean that we might be hypocritical?

Why not? It is one of humanity's more prevalent spiritual sicknesses. In my own life, I've seen the symptoms far too often: saying one thing and living another. I've attempted to trade-off to God some respectable religious practices as substitutes

for doing what God really wants from me.

Are you sure you've never experienced these same symptoms in your own life? If not, you must be a very singular person, because hypocrisy from time to time afflicts all of those who profess to serve the Lord. It is in our human nature to frequently talk a better game than we play.

Since... prevalent among us, the only thing to do is to be vigilant so that when it occurs in our lives, we may spot it and root it out before we lose our capacity to see it for what it is. And we frequently need help. As the Prophet says, "Cry aloud, spare not" (58:1).

**THE FAST HE CHOOSES**  
It is important for us to realize that Isaiah was not condemning the practice of fasting. It is a valuable spiritual discipline. What he condemned was the practice of using it as a substitute for living in a manner that pleased God. So it is with lots of our practices today: regular church attendance, participation in church activities, bearing responsibilities in the congregation, making a pledge to the church, putting a sticker on your car's bumper.

There is nothing wrong with any of the above. All of them are valuable religious acts -- so long as they are not substitutes for doing what really pleases God. And what is that?

...to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free...Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house...? (58:6,7)

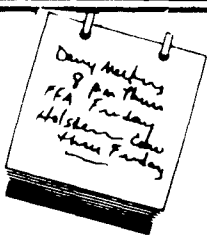
Actually, there's nothing very secret about pleasing God. It's a secret we all know. But there's a gap between knowing and doing.

**NOW IS THE TIME**

By Jay Irwin  
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**Farm Calendar**



- Saturday, Feb. 25**  
Woodcutting and chainsaw safety program from 10 a.m. to noon in the Vo-Ag Department of Blue Mountain High School.
- Monday, Feb. 27**  
Fayette Co. Agronomy Day from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Piowar Farms, Uniontown R6.  
Lancaster Pork Day at 9 a.m. at the Martindale Firehall.  
Luzerne Co. soil fertility day at 1 p.m. at St. James Lutheran Church, Hobbie.  
Cumberland Cooperative Sheep and Wool Growers banquet at 7 p.m. at the South Middleton Firehall, Boiling Springs.  
Delaware Conservation Conference at the Dover Sheraton Hotel.  
NE regional fruit growers meeting at 10 a.m. at the Ramada Inn, Chinchilla.

- Bedford Co. dairy meeting from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Bedford Trinity Lutheran Church.
- Tuesday, Feb. 28**  
Bradford Co. NIR forage testing from 8 a.m. to noon at Rockwell Mills, and from 1 to 4 p.m. at Claverack Electric, east of Wysox.  
Mid-Atlantic irrigation conference at the Treadway Resort Inn, Lancaster. Continues tomorrow.  
Del. Safety Seminar at 7 p.m. at Odessa Firehall.  
Conservation Tillage Day at 9 a.m. at the Farm and Home Center, Lancaster.  
Cumberland sheep producers meet at 8 p.m. at the Extension Office, Carlisle.  
Farm Financial Management School at the Lampeter Firehall. Continues tomorrow.

- Lebanon Valley National Bank ag seminar at 8:45 a.m. at the Prescott Firehall.
- Md. Holstein Convention, Sandy Cove, Md. Continues tomorrow.
- York Farm Forum at 6:15 p.m. at Moser's Restaurant.
- W. Pa. Turf and Grounds Maintenance School at the Pittsburgh Marriott.
- Wednesday, Feb. 29**  
Pa. wine conference at Penn State. Continues tomorrow.  
Md. Holstein Convention Sale at Sandy Cove, Md.  
Leb. Beekeepers meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Lebanon Extension Office.  
Acid rain meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Lower Paxton Township Building, Harrisburg.  
Dauphin Soil Conservation Day at 9:45 a.m. at the Upper Dauphin High School.

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**To Use Quality Seed**  
Many people are making plans for the 1984 growing season. In these plans, we should be preparing to use the very best quality seeds possible. Leftover seeds may be satisfactory if properly stored. If they are certified or top quality seed to start with, it would be a good idea to run a germination test to be certain they will grow. This can be done with the old, but still effective, "Rag Doll" method (wrapping seeds in rolled-up moist rags or by placing seeds in a dish on wet paper towels, cover with plastic, and keep in a warm place for at least 10 days. If these seeds do not grow under either of these tests, don't rely on them for your crop. Certified seed may cost a little more in the beginning, but usually is worth the difference.

**To Consider Topdressing Wheat**  
At this time, we are not certain how our wheat crop will survive the winter elements because we

still have March to contend with. And March, with its freezing and thawing conditions, is one of the hardest months on wheat.

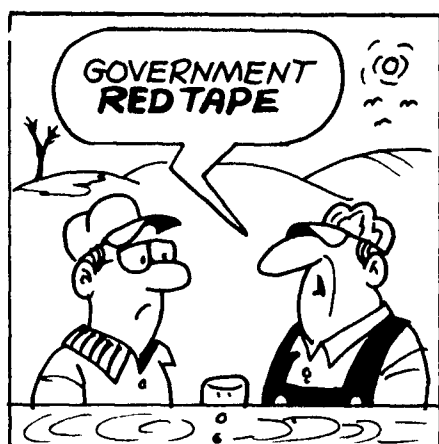
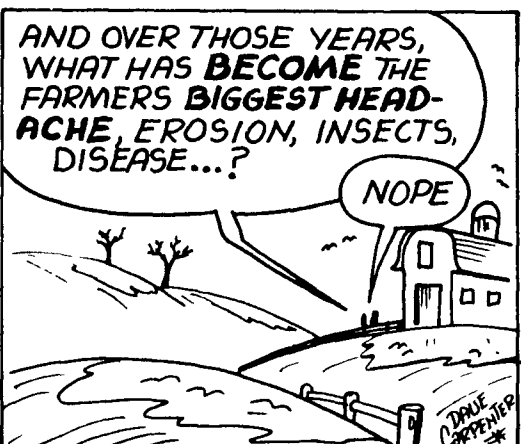
In any event, topdressing wheat with nitrogen will generally result in an extra 10 to 12 bushels per acre. This can result in extra profit to the grower.

The ideal time to topdress wheat is just when it begins to "green-up" in the spring. This will generally occur in the middle to latter part of March. However, wheat can successfully be topdressed earlier in March when the ground is "honeycombed". Be cautious of highly fertile land that has received a lot of manure in the past. This kind of land does not need additional nitrogen.

Most wheat varieties can use between 40 and 50 pounds per acre of nitrogen. There are few activities around the farm that can return more profit, with less input, than topdressing wheat with nitrogen.

**To Store Supplies Properly**  
Many farmers have purchased and accepted early delivery on seeds, fertilizers, and other supplies. It is very important that these supplies are stored properly. I have seen bags of fertilizer stored too close to a barn door or an open window where the rain and snow blow in; also seeds in similar conditions. Extra moisture on these materials, or under them on a damp floor, can seriously affect quality. It's also very important to keep seeds away from weed killer chemicals. These herbicides may reduce or kill the germination of the seed. Be sure to store all farm

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