

Budgets and extension

News stories over the past few weeks have explained how the Gramm-Rudman tax cuts would affect Agricultural Extension Services. And the news has certainly been bad.

At first, the extension programs were going to be cut entirely. Even now, wholesale reductions in staff and services are being discussed, with 4-H and family living programs a prime target.

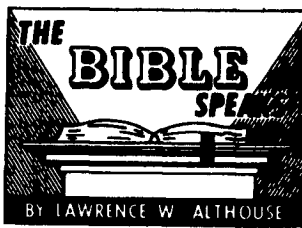
In an era of budgetary limitation, the extension services can hardly expect to be viewed as a sacred cow. Cuts will be made, and new realities will have to be recognized.

But extension services have proved their worth year after year, in the help, advice, counseling and personal services they provide to farmers and rural residents alike. Cutting many of these programs now, in one of agriculture's lowest moments, would truly be short-sighted.

Perhaps states can and should assume a greater burden. After all, federal funds guarantee an adequate food supply through purchase of surplus commodities and other programs to maintain prices. Shouldn't the states assume greater responsibility for the aid and development of the agricultural businesses within their borders?

Decisions about what programs to fund — and how to fund them — are political decisions, decisions that will be made in the heat of the coming political campaign.

Farmers have every right to participate in that process, making suggestions about what programs could be cut . . . and which ones have proved their worth. And they have a responsibility to their industry to fight for the programs they think are absolutely essential.



COUNTING GOD'S SLOWNESS

March 16, 1986

Background Scripture:

2 Peter.

Devotional Reading:

2 Peter 1:3-11.

A few months ago I was privileged to hear a lecture on cosmology by Dr. Robert Jastrow, now of Dartmouth College but internationally known for his work in the space exploration program of NASA. Speaking to the Isthmus Institute, an organization that explores the convergences of science and religion, Dr. Jastrow fascinated us by reminding us that the balance of forces and elements in the creation of this universe is so intricate and finely-tuned that a seemingly significant change in that balance would have created a

universe quite different from the one in which we live.

15 BILLION YEARS

Dr. Jastrow said that, "if the strength of the nuclear force is decreased by about one percent, nuclear reactions would take place so slowly in the universe that none of the elements on which life depends—carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, and so on—could be formed in the 15 billion years' since creation. So, the slightest change in the balance of forces would have resulted in a universe without any life whatsoever. And it is difficult to conceive of that delicate balance coming into being by accident or without a Creator.

The other idea with which Dr. Jastrow boggled my mind was to remind me that, if the creation took place 15 billion years ago—as science generally assumes—the time span of human life on this earth is but a flyspeck in the total expanse of time science creation and our civilization, our own era and lifetime are utterly invisible on the universe's timeline. Thus, when the writer of 2 Peter says, "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (3:8), he is probably even understanding the difference between time as we see it and as God views it.

AS SOME COUNT IT

So, it may seem such a very long time since God gave us his promise of "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (3:13), but that is only because our sense of time is so short term when viewed in the broad expanse of the universe. It is because of this, then, that he can say to us, "The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness..." (3:9). That's the problem right there!—not that God is slow, but that we "count time" strictly from our very limited human perspective.

As I write these lines, the problems facing the world today seem overwhelming: violence, terrorism, crime, corruption, the nuclear arms race and so forth. But this is my 56th year and I can recall that each year of my brief span has had its share of alarms and crises and I can hardly remember what it was 10, 20, 30, 40 years ago that seemed so earth-threatening.

The God who created this universe 15 billion years ago still is in charge of where creation has been and where it is going. And if he seems slow, the problem is with our sense of time, not his.

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NOW IS THE TIME

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To Practice Safety Around Liquid Manure Pits

Many manure pits will be cleaned out at this time of year for field application. This by-product of the livestock and dairy business is very useful as fertilizer. However, the pit can be a safety hazard because of poisonous and explosive gases.

When the mixture is agitated in order to be removed, these gases are more plentiful and much more dangerous. Good ventilation above the pit is very important. Also, anyone who goes down in the empty pit should be wearing a gas mask. These gases are dangerous and can be fatal to both humans and animals. We urge all farmers to caution their employees of this potential danger.

To Control Wild Garlic

We may like onions on our hamburgers and in other foods, but very few of us like onion-flavored milk. This can easily happen on dairy farms where wild garlic plants are allowed to grow. Many pastures are infested with wild garlic.

One of the best times to start control measures on this weed is early spring when the young plants are 4 to 8 inches high. An application of 2,4D will knock them down. Follow the label for directions. When this is applied around the middle to latter part of March, little damage is done to any legume in the area. If garlic plants are allowed to mature each year, the pasture area will become so contaminated that dairy cows cannot utilize the grass.

To Care For Horses

Many horses and ponies are neglected this time of year. When they are kept in a stable for long periods of time...such as during the winter...they can get out of condition. And they may develop some bad habits. But you can avoid this by following good management practices.

Your horses are natural athletes and need a daily workout to keep their muscles, feet and legs in good condition. Twenty to twenty-five minutes on the end of a long line is one of the best ways. Just let the horse run circles around you. This keeps him from getting fat and developing weak feet and legs.

Don't feed moldy, dusty or dirty hay or grain to horses; this could result in respiratory problems. Free choice of clean water, salt and minerals should be provided. Good care now will help bring good performance during the rest of the year.

To Control Mice In Orchards

Now that the winter is almost

gone, our fruit growers should take a look at the newly-exposed grass sod in their orchards. If there are runways at the surface of the grass, it is a good sign that there are plenty of mice in the orchard even though a mouse baiting program may have been followed last fall.

The mice have used up their stockpiles of stored food and are now looking for a fresh supply. At this time of the year they will move quickly onto bark and roots of fruit trees.

Fruit growers should re-bait their orchards as soon as possible if there are fresh mouse signs.

For growers who put out bait stations in the orchard last fall, it will be a simple matter of replenishing the rodenticide-treated bait under all of the stations. You must remember that the mice are hungry and can do a lot of damage to fruit trees between now and the time that other plants start to grow in the spring.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, March 15

NE Regional Christmas Tree Grower's Meeting, 8:15 a.m. to 4 p.m., Luzerne County Community College, Nanticoke.

Pa. Ayrshire Breeders Annual Meeting, Grantville Holiday Inn, 10:30 a.m.; contact Milt Brubaker, 717-626-5788.

Monday, March 17

Lancaster 4-H Woolies Club Meeting, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 7:30 p.m.

Sullivan County 4-H Leader Dinner, Forksville.

York Sheep Management Meeting, 4-H Center, Bair Station, 7:30 p.m.

Small Fruit Seminar, Warrendale Sheraton Inn, 8:30 a.m.

Bucks County Milking School, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Delaware Valley College, Doylestown; continues through March 18.

Potter, McKean and Cameron Counties calf and heifer management workshop, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Calvary Baptist Church Youth Center, Coudersport; continues through March 18.

Tuesday, March 18

Crop Management Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Blue Ball.

Pesticide handling and safety, 10 a.m. to noon, Jefferson Firehall, Jefferson, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., Dover High School.

Wednesday, March 19

Future of Pa. Ag Conference, Holiday Inn, Harrisburg; continues tomorrow.

Thursday, March 20

Pequea Valley FFA banquet, 6:45 p.m., Plain and Fancy Farms.

Holstein Investment Opportunities Inc. Merchandising Workshop, 8:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., Bird-In-Hand Motel, Bird-In-Hand.

Manheim Young Farmers, Hempfield Church of Brethren, East Petersburg, 6:45 p.m.

Mercer County Pork Meeting, Mercer Extension Center, Denver, 7 p.m.

Friday, March 21

Crops Day, Berks County Ag Center.

Lancaster County Conservation District Banquet, Brickerville Firehall, 7 p.m.

Red and White Dairy Cattle Association Show, Guernsey Sales Pavilion.

Saturday, March 22

Montgomery County Dairy Princess Pageant and Montgomery Holstein Club's Annual

Banquet, Towamencin Firehall, 7 p.m.

Red and White Dairy Cattle Association's Sale, Guernsey Sales Pavilion.

Brown Swiss Canton meeting, Cloister Restaurant.

Tuesday, March 25

Safe Drinking Water Clinic, York County 4-H Center, Bair, 1 to 3 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m.

Wednesday, March 26

Berks Conservation District Meeting, Agricultural Center, Bern Township, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 27

"Pennsylvania on Parade" Sale and Show; continues through March 29.

Pesticide training meeting, 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., extension meeting room, Acres.

Friday, March 28

Performance Test Bull Sale.

Saturday, March 29

Adams County Beef Ball, Sheraton Inn, Gettysburg.

Pa. Holstein Spring Show, 8 a.m., Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg.

Antique Show and Sale, Millersburg Area High School, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., \$1 admission.

Ag Preserve Board

issues report

LANCASTER — The first Annual Report of the Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board has been published and is available in limited quantities. The local effort to save Lancaster County farmland is explained in detail in the report. Progress made in preserving one of the area's most important resources, prime agricultural lands, is highlighted.

The publication contains numerous photographs of the County's productive countryside and recognizes individual landowners and townships having made commitments to preservation.

Readers will find the 1985 Annual Report an insightful overview of a unique venture undertaken by landowners, government officials and community leaders to protect one of the most fertile regions of the world.

Copies of the publication available upon request through Agricultural Preserve Board, 299-8355 or P.O. Box 3480, Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17603.

