



OPINION

Selecting A Farm Computer

Not long ago finding computer software designed for farming was almost impossible. There just weren't many programs available. You either developed your own system or purchased an off-the-shelf package that didn't fit your farm accounting needs.

Today the picture has changed. Now you can even get a whole directory of agricultural software. Selecting the right software for your farm is now tougher than figuring government programs. It's complicated, time consuming and requires your divided attention.

Farm Management, Inc., from New Lenox, Illinois, says a good software system can improve a good manual accounting system, but it can't help a poor one. Make sure you are familiar with the accounting needs of your farm operation.

In addition, you'll need to make a financial commitment of about \$3,000 to \$6,000 for a good system that includes both software and hardware. Beware of spending too little and winding up with a system that doesn't meet your needs. And don't forget to commit time for learning, setting up and getting use

to the program that you select. For the first 30 to 90 days, you'll probably want to maintain your manual system and the computer system in parallel, which means double duty.

The sole function of the computer is to operate the software. Just as the purpose of your grain bin is to provide storage. No one would suggest that you limit the number of acres you farm to fit the size of your grain bin. But that's exactly the way many farmers begin buying a computer system. They buy a computer first and then start looking for software to automate their farm operation. Find the software first, the kind that will give you a system exactly right for your farm. That way the computer you select will be more functional and efficient.

We know many farmers are anxious to throw out that old cumbersome manual system and get a new computer to do all the work, but you may not want to react too fast. Once you've made the decision to automate, you still have many things to consider. When selecting a farm computer system for your operation, you will do well to look before you leap.

FARM FORUM OUR READERS WRITE

Dear Editor:

As a health professional, I was particularly interested in your editorial OPINION of November 22, 1986. It is because I think that it is so important that I am writing this note. Please do not construe this to be nit picking.

As you say, "rabies is a deadly disease." This is where my concern begins. You state that if anyone has been exposed to a suspected rabid animal, "submit the carcass as soon as possible to the nearest health department." I suggest that you call the nearest health department for your own and your readers information. You will be amazed. They will not receive it, in fact, they will not even help transport it. You will be told that it is up to you to get it to the nearest state lab. I am really concerned about untrained people who are already exposed being

responsible for this procedure. Your article nicely mentions that the virus enters the body through various methods, and the untrained would just be adding to their risk, if they are asked to handle the carcass.

Next, ask the health department staff the procedure to follow for getting the rabies vaccine — this is a deadly situation we are talking about — experience for yourself just how complicated the process is made.

Please understand that I am asking you to check out these items because of the seriousness of the situation. I do believe as public health care providers that some procedures must be changed and others clarified for the sake of everyone.

Respectfully submitted,
Concerned

Farm Calendar

Saturday, November 29
Mercer County Holstein Banquet, Steese's Restaurant, 8 p.m. Contact the Extension office.

Monday, December 1
Superior Calf Sale, Harrisonburg, Va.
National Agricultural Aviation Association Annual Con-

vention/Expo, Acapulco, Mexico; continues through Dec. 4.

Tuesday, December 2
Delaware State Grange Convention, Capital Grange Hall. Continues tomorrow.
USDA "Outlook '87" conference, Washington, D.C.; continues



NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

To Control Weeds In Alfalfa

To Control Weeds In Alfalfa
Have you been bothered with some of the winter time weeds such as chickweed or Shepherds purse in your alfalfa stands? If so, now would be a good time to apply a herbicide to knock out these weeds. Too many alfalfa growers wait until they see a heavy growth of these weeds and then think of spraying.

All weeds are easier to kill when small and before they choke out the alfalfa plants. The period between Thanksgiving and Christmas is excellent for applying herbicides to alfalfa stands. The material to use will vary with the age of the stand and whether or not

any grass is there as a companion crop. We suggest that growers refer to the Agronomy Guide or to their local pesticide dealer for suggestions relating to materials. The important thing is to do the spraying while the weeds are small.

To Use Only Needed Fertilizer Elements

Fertilizer prices continue to be high, so we suggest that farmers act now to hold this production cost in line. A complete soil test now will reveal the exact fertilizer elements that are needed in certain fields for certain crops. The idea of applying the same amount of the same analysis of fertilizer each year might help but is not the best way to obtain the most from your fertilizer dollar. Some fields may have sufficient amounts of potash, or be in excess of some elements; in these cases it is not economical to apply more of these same elements.

Testing in the county over the last year has revealed that some fields will require no additional fertilizer. So with high fertilizer costs we suggest that farmers do soil testing and then apply only what is needed for each crop, and be sure to include the nutrient value of manure when calculating your needs.

To Observe Withdrawal Time

Drugs and antibiotics are needed in many cases to protect the health of livestock, poultry and dairy animals. Their use is quite com-

mon in many farm operations. However, the misuse of these materials is where trouble can start.

When these items are administered to animals or poultry, the owner should read the label for directions relating to withdrawal periods for milk cows or time between treatment and slaughter for meat. It's only common sense that these regulations be followed.

To short-cut the period of time is only jeopardizing the product and the entire farming business. Don't take chances with our valuable food products. Also, keep accurate records of all treatments. In case excess tolerance is found, it might save time and money.

To Protect Farm Machinery

Winter weather is very hard on farm machinery. As I travel throughout the county, I still see too many pieces of machinery sitting out behind the building or in the fields. This is very costly to the owner. Moisture causes rust and shortens the life of the equipment.

Machinery costs are very high and weather protection is one way to reduce the cost of replacement. Separate machinery sheds are suggested in order to keep everything from being stored in the main barn. Good care and maintenance is needed to lengthen the life of all farm machinery.

The Cooperative Extension Service is an affirmative action, equal opportunity educational institution

through Dec. 4. Contact Diane Decker, 202-786-1419.
Southern Maryland Crops Conference, Mechanicsville Fire Hall, Mechanicsville, Md. Contact H. Travis McPherson, 301-645-3903.

Wednesday, December 3
Lancaster Conservation District Board Meeting.
Chester County Fall Homemaker's Day, Dilworthtown Presbyterian Church, 1385 Birmingham Road, West Chester, 9:30 a.m.
Insurance Coverage for Farm Families, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., York County Extension Office, Pleasant Acres Road, York.
Pennsylvania Christmas Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg; continues through Dec. 7.

Thursday, December 4
Peninsula Horticultural Society Meeting, vegetable production session, Wicomico Youth and Civic Center, Salisbury, Md.

Friday, December 5
Berks County DHIA Banquet, 7:15 p.m., Berks 4-H Center. For reservations contact Forrest Stricker, 215-678-7629.

Saturday, December 6
Southeast Regional 4-H Leaders Forum, Montgomery County 4-H Center.

Monday, December 8
Tax Week at Penn State, J.O. Keller Conference Center, Penn State University main campus; continues through Dec. 11.
Chester County Co-op Extension Annual Meeting, Southeast Farm Credit office, Avondale, 7:15 p.m.
Dairy Farms of Distinction meeting.
Fourth Annual Cooperative

Directors School, Pa. Association of Farmer Co-ops, Penn State University, 814-863-0655.

Tuesday, December 9
Winter Forage Meeting, Maryland - Delaware Forage Council, Hartly Fire Hall, Hartly, Del.
Lancaster County DHIA Banquet, Good and Plenty Restaurant, 11:30 a.m. For reservations call Jay Myling, 665-5960. Meeting repeated tomorrow.

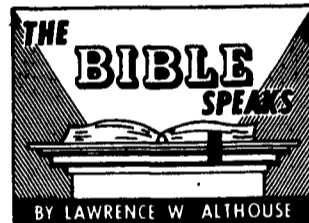
York Extension Meeting; Topic: Sodbuster Provisions, Dover High School, 1 p.m. Kennard

Dale High School, 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 10
Penn State Dairy Computer-Management Conference, Sheraton Penn State, State College. Contact Joe Hlubik, 814-863-3912.

York Extension Meeting, Topic: Sodbuster Provisions, Farmers Bank and Trust, Baltimore Street, Hanover, 10 a.m.; York Extension office, 1 p.m.

Thursday, December 11
Golden Harvest Sale, Lebanon Fairgrounds.



A LIGHT TO MY FEET
November 30, 1986

Background Scripture: Nehemiah 8:1-12; Psalms 119.
Devotional Reading: Psalms 119:9-16.

"For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law." Thus Nehemiah records for us the reaction of the returned exiles when, having completed both the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and the temple, Ezra read to them the words of the law. Perhaps it is difficult for Christians to understand not only their response, but also the revered place the law has always enjoyed in Judaism. Christianity has no comparable law, but we do regard the Bible itself in a similar capacity. So, that although the Psalmist's words, "Thy word is a

lamp to my feet and a light to my path," were originally a reference to the law of Israel, Christians regard these words as equally descriptive of the Bible itself.

THE PEOPLE WEPT

But why did the people weep when Ezra read the law? Was it not because they realized how impoverished their lives had been without it, forgotten by many during the Babylonian exile? As Jesus indicated again and again, despite the possibility that the law could be greatly distorted and even become a substitute for God, still it was a tremendous comfort for them. They needed something solid, dependable and enduring to make the foundation for daily living.

Once again, as many times before in the life of Israel, the people have been challenged to renew their covenant and they do so willingly. It is true that God's people had failed him miserably, but once again God was giving them the opportunity to renew the covenant. It was a time of great emotion and the people wept. But their leaders told them, "This day is holy to our Lord your God; do not mourn or weep" (Nehemiah 8:9b). So the people rejoiced and had renewed Israel's ancient covenant. It was a time of new beginning.

THEY REJOICED

Just as the law of Israel is no longer instructive for us, so the rites and rituals of Judaism have almost no meaning for us. But, although the outward forms may seem alien, that does not mean that we do not need the inner essence of their experience. Perhaps in our own way — ways suitable to our times and our own needs — we need to learn to recognize the light God gives us and celebrate it by committing ourselves anew to walk in his way.

(Based on copyrighted Outlines produced by the Committee on the Uniform Series and used by permission. Released by Community and Suburban Press.)

