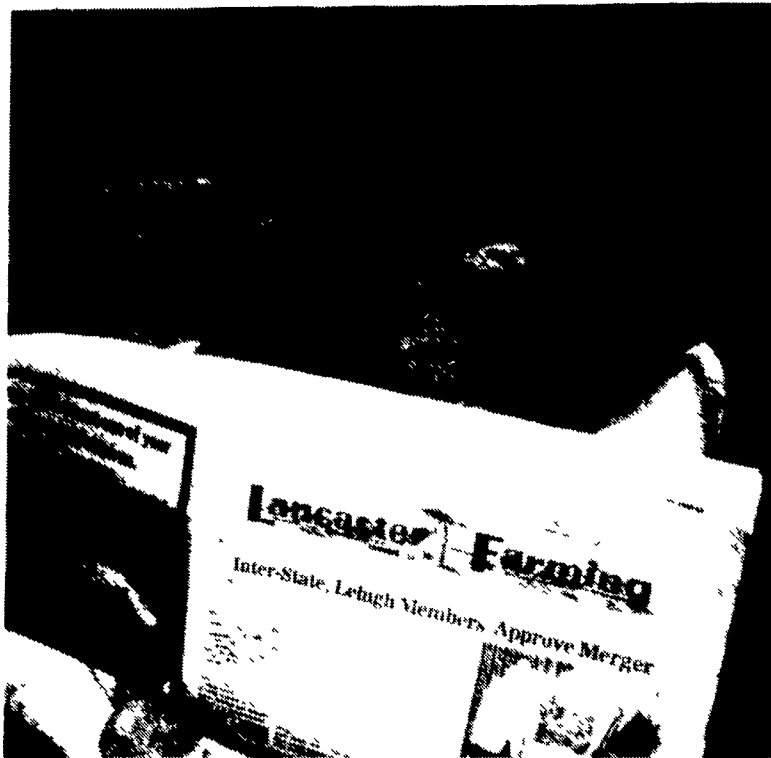




# OPINION

## You Are Never Too Young To Start Farming

You don't usually see a photograph on this editorial page except for the small picture of Lancaster County Extension agent Jay Irwin that runs with his weekly column. But here is a picture of one of the farm community's youngest members that we just had to show you here.



Little six-month-old Paul William Buel of Strasburg, Lancaster County, inherits a tradition of reading Lancaster Farming. His parents Laura and Dennis do it. And so do his grandparents David and Ellie Cornelia of Paradise.

Grandma Cornelia who sent us the picture said she just wanted to show us her grandson "keeping up the family tradition". "We have friends all over the United States that read Lancaster Farming," Grandma said. "And we just thought it would be fun to show them our grandson in the pages of Lancaster Farming."

So here you are friends. Paul William Buel reading Lancaster Farming's November 22 issue where we reported the dairy story announcement of the Interstate/Lehigh Valley merger. And we certainly agree that you are never too young to start farming.

### FARM FORUM OUR READERS WRITE

Dear Editor:

Earl Butz, at the No-Till Conference as reported on Dec. 27, spoke about a "natural economic evolution" taking place in the agricultural community nowadays. He feels that the loss of the family farm is inevitable because it is economically sound to reduce production costs by adopting new technologies and spreading the "efficient" operation over more acres. These ideas are neither more "natural" nor more sound than the absolutely contrary ideas of encouraging small farms on low technology. It is important that the agricultural community realizes that it has a choice to make—its future is not wholly predetermined by the economic structure as Butz maintains.

For many generations, government and university planners have been devising an agricultural system in the U.S. designed to produce the highest yield utilizing

the least number of laborers. Farmers have been enticed by the new technologies; they have bought up the large equipment which mandates a large amount of acreage to make the expensive equipment cost-effective. This trend seems to have relegated the small farmer into being out-dated. However, this notion is simply untrue. Farmers with larger farms have not substantially increased their standard of living. Small farmers with low technology can enjoy the same standard of living as the high technology/more acreage farmers—it is simply a matter of a different method and a different philosophy. The Amish people are living proof that even the simplest farming methods can prove to be profitable. It is not often that one sees a farmer walk in and buy an expensive farm for his son with cash, yet many of the Amish are able to afford it. A small farmer does not need to reduce his

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## NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

### 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 recommendations.

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

prevention is good maintenance.

### 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.

Dairy farmers 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 Appreciate Your Farm

Life can become so hectic...too much to do...on the run. You've been on the tractor or in the barn almost nonstop since sunrise and there's too much on your mind to notice the stunning sunset.

Farming is still full of the best in life. Probably many of the reasons you wanted to be a farmer or live on a farm are the very things you don't pay much attention to anymore. It's more than machinery or livestock, bills or market fluctuations — it's a way of life which in itself holds much to be desired and appreciated.

We must not let the excessive stress on the farm interfere with home and family life. Medical research estimates as high as 90 percent of today's illness and disease is stress related.

Farming is one of the most stressful occupations today. We must admit stress before we can deal with it. Most importantly, take time to "smell the flowers." And say to yourself — just for today, I will live through the next 12 hours and not try to tackle all life's problems at once.

### 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 see where and how much to prune. And it's easier to reshape tangled and low-hanging branches.

Most trees need thinning when they approach maturity. But corrective pruning is important when trees are young. While the young tree is growing, it's important to remove a branch starting in the wrong position because this branch could change the whole tree structure.

Pruning consists mostly of cuttings that train the tree...but it generally involves more and more thinning out of weak and dead wood as the tree matures.

There is a saying that "as the branch is bent, so will the tree grow." With pruning, the results are even more drastic, for a limb which is cut will not grow back. So it's important to know the proper method of pruning before you start. The pruning of dormant shade trees while they are young will determine to a large measure, the beauty and health of a tree in later years.

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

## Farm Calendar

Saturday, January 24

NJ Forestry and Christmas Tree Growers Association Meeting, American Hotel, Freehold. Call Charlie Dupras at 609-625-2307.

**THE BIBLE SPEAKS**

BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

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**ON WITH-STANDING GOD**  
January 25, 1987

Monday, January 26

Bradford County Tax Meeting, Athens Township Municipal Building, 8 to 10 p.m.

Northeastern Pa. Maple Syrup Producer's Association annual meeting, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Pleasant Valley Grange Hall, Route 191 north of Honesdale.

Adams County Corn Day, York Springs Firehall, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Reading Bone Fertilizer Pesticide Meeting, Kempton Firehall, Kempton, 9:30 a.m. For information call 215-756-6022.

York Sheep Meeting, York Extension office, 7:30 p.m.

Fayette County Farm Records Workshop, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Youth Building, Fayette County Fairgrounds. Continues tomorrow.

Tuesday, January 27

Pa. Vegetable Conference and Trade Show, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center; continues through Jan. 29.

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**Background Scripture:**  
Acts 10:1 through 11:18.

**Devotional Reading:**  
1 Peter 1:13-25.

From the hindsight of many centuries, we can all see how wrong Peter was when he argued with God in the midst of his housetop vision in Joppa. We can't help being a little shocked at his audacity, for, when God told him to "Rise, Peter; kill and eat," Peter responded, not with obedience, but an argument: "No Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth" (Acts 11:8).

What could possibly lead any person to respond to a direct command from God with "No, Lord"? The answer: Peter thought he was absolutely right in refusing to break the dietary laws of Judaism. It was not just his own "rightness" that caused him to say "No" to God, but the "rightness" of the Jewish religion. All Jews were expected to abide by these laws.

Obviously, Peter was basing his response on the basis of what people said God wanted, rather than on what he was hearing God say he wanted. "Ridiculous!" we

huff. "Why would anyone do that?" Why indeed? For isn't that what lots of us do — we choose to do what others say God wants, even when it is clear that what he wants is something else? Have you ever been in Peter's place? Have you ever rejected or condemned someone who failed to meet the standards, beliefs or practices of your brand of Christianity, knowing deep in your heart that that person was nevertheless "O.K." with God?

The reason Peter refused to do what God commanded is the same reason that many of us do the same thing. What he asks us to do is against our religious system — our beliefs, our practices, our rituals and our values. These systems have the effect of keeping people out and, when we keep people out, we find that we keep God out, too. Take a good look at your own religious system — does it take people in or keep them out?

God's reply to Peter is a ringing challenge to all of us: "What God has cleansed you must not call common" (11:9). Perhaps that ought to be engraved on the doorways of all our churches, for it is something we all tend to forget or ignore. It is also something which is of vital importance, for when we call or think of someone else as "common" or "unclean," we denigrate a portion of God's creation — and that is blasphemy. When we reject someone because of their race, color or creed, we are the ones who are injured most.

Fortunately, Peter was not so hardheaded that he continued to refuse God's command. Later, he told other Jewish Christians what happened at Joppa, as well as the fact that the Holy Spirit had descended upon and filled these Gentiles. Although they didn't like what had happened, they were unable to refute Peter when he said, "Who was I that I could withstand God?" (11:17b). And then, for Christians at least, an amazing thing happened: "When they heard this they were silenced."

Reluctantly, they decided they had to allow Gentile converts into the church because they realized that, not to do so, would be withstanding the will of God, a prospect for both them and us that is the gravest of all sins.

