

OPINION

Vote Yes For Farmland

(Continued from Page A1)

Of course, we've heard a lot about this subject. The concept of preserving valuable farm land has been a major discussion in Pennsylvania for nearly 25 years. Much of the fine tuning of the farm land preservation as a public issue came late in the '60s after former Governor Raymond P. Shafer appointed a committee to study the issue. But while all of the states around Pennsylvania initiated programs to provide public funds to pay farm owners for the difference between farm land values and development land prices, Pennsylvania's governors and legislators have generally agreed with the idea but have never provided the funds to accomplish the task.

Now that has changed. The present legislature and Governor Robert Casey have approved legislation to put the issue on the November ballot. The question the voters will be asked to vote upon calls for a one-time \$100 million bond issue to fund the purchased development rights program in Pennsylvania.

According to those of us who support the preservation of family farms, this is the most important referendum question in recent agricultural history. That means that now is the time to start work-

ing for a yes vote in this important referendum.

Certainly farmers will want to vote yes. But also tax payers, workers, naturalists, hunters, vacationers and consumers will want to vote yes also.

At the rate we are losing farm land in Pennsylvania, we won't have a second chance. In 1965 agriculture utilized all 7.3 million acres. In 1969 Pennsylvania had about 8.9 million acres in farms. In 1978 census of agriculture revealed that the number had fallen to 8.7 million acres. A loss of 2.6 million acres in 13 years. Of course, the trend is not uniform throughout the state. Some areas lost more than others. But the loss cannot be denied.

But now we have a chance to do something about it. Many groups and organizations have taken positive positions on farm land preservation. This is an indication of grassroots support for preserving prime farm land. Every voter in Pennsylvania should be prepared to do whatever is necessary to promote passage of the upcoming referendum at the Tuesday, November 3, general election.

So get prepared to vote yes for farm land. And get your urban and city friends to join you with a yes vote, too.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin
Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

To Mow or Not To Mow Alfalfa

Each year we receive a lot of calls as to whether alfalfa should be cut the first part of September or not. According to crop authorities it is not just a simple yes or no question. If you have left one of your cuttings go into full bloom, then you do not need to be concerned; however, if you have not, then do not cut the first two weeks of September. The reason for this is, it's the period when the plants are storing food in developing rhizomes for next year's growth. To disturb this development will result in less rhizomes and less growth next year. The final cutting can be made in late September or early October. On stands that have been established this spring, from which one or two cuttings have already been made, it's best to allow it to stand; this will give a little better winter protection.

potash fertilizer this fall is a good practice. Use your soil test results as a guide on rates of application.

To Be Safe During This Busy Season

We are entering one of the busiest and most hazardous times of the year... silo filling and corn picking time. Blend into that time wheat and barley planting and the last cutting of alfalfa. This means a lot of farm machinery will be on our highways during semi-dark or dark hours.

Slow moving vehicles such as farm equipment traveling on highways presents a real traffic hazard. The motorist must recognize that a tractor traveling at 10 to 15 miles per hour is almost standing still compared to a 55 mph car. Most highway drivers have never driven a farm machine on the highway and simply do not realize how slow they do travel.

Proper identification and warning is real important. Let's keep alert this busy fall season both on the highway and in the fields.

To Control Johnsongrass

This sorghum-like grass is a problem on many fields in this part of the state. There are cases where nothing is being done to control this weed; for those I would remind you that Johnsongrass is listed as a noxious weed in Pennsylvania. In corn there is little that can be done at this time of year except cut the seed-head off and burn them. It'll require treatment at planting time.

However, in other fields such as

Johnsongrass reaches 2 1/2 to 3 feet... in the boot stage... the plants may be sprayed with Roundup. These plants are very heavy seed producers; a few plants allowed to go to seed this fall will mean hundreds of plants next summer. Johnsongrass is fast growing and will crowd out most farm crops. We urge landowners to make every effort to eliminate Johnsongrass from their farm. The 1987-88 Agronomy guide lists control information.

To Appreciate Lancaster County

While attending the National County Agent's meeting in Fargo, North Dakota last week, we had the opportunity to visit farms in the beautiful Red River Valley area. Their main crops are wheat, sugar beets, potatoes, hay, sunflowers, flax and barley with some corn and soybeans. Yields are less than what we experience because their annual rainfall is only about 17 inches compared to our 42 inches. I was impressed with the rich black soil that ranged in depth from 5 to 60 feet. The country is flat and the rivers run north; that's right, north.

The speakers were very informative and inspirational but the most important part for me is the exchange of ideas and concerns with agricultural agents from all states in the U.S. You really appreciate the many good things that we have at home.

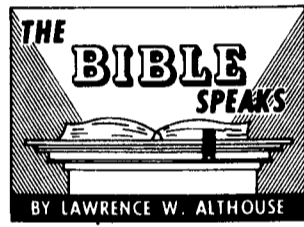
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Farm Calendar



- Saturday, August 29**
PA State Shorthorn Show, Hookstown Fairgrounds.
Maryland State Fair, through Sept. 7.
- Monday, August 31**
Nitrogen Management Field Day, Francis Mains Farm, 9:30 a.m.
- Tuesday, September 1**
Centre County Holstein Show, Centre Hall, 9:30 a.m.
Maryland State Fair, through Sept. 7.
- Wednesday, September 2**
Lancaster Co. Conservation Day Mtg., Farm & Home Center, 7:30 p.m.
Garrett Co. MD Manure Mgt. Workshops, Deer Park Fire Hall, 9 a.m.
- PA Food & Drug Council meet, Rural Elective Assn. conference Room, Harrisburg, 10:30 a.m.
- Friday, September 4**
Central District Dairy Show, Beaver Springs, 9 a.m.
- Saturday, September 5**
Southwest District Dairy Show,

- Martinsburg, 9 a.m.
- Mon Valley District Dairy Show, Washington Co. Fairgrounds, 9 a.m.
- Northwest District Dairy Show, Crawford County Fairgrounds, Susquehanna Co. Holstein Show.
- Tuesday, September 8**
New Jersey Holstein Barn Meeting, William Terhune, Belvidere, 8 p.m.
- Wednesday, September 9**
veterinary Nutrition Forum. Speaker - Dr. Peter Van Soest. New Jersey Holstein Barn Meeting, William Teets, Cokesbury, 8 p.m.
- Veterinary Nutrition Forum Dinner Meeting, Host Town, 7 p.m.
- Thursday, September 10**
York County Pesticide Recertification, Extension Room, 7:30 p.m.
- Schuylkill County Ag Extension Annual meeting, 6:30 p.m.
- New Jersey Holstine Barn Meeting, William Petit Jr., Vincetown, 8 p.m.



FOR GOD'S SAKE!

August 30, 1987

Background Scripture: Romans 14:1 through 15:13.

Devotional Reading: Romans 14:5-9.

I wish that the 14th chapter of Romans were printed in headline-size type. Starting with the very first verse: "AS FOR THE MAN WHO IS WEAK IN FAITH, WELCOME HIM, BUT NOT FOR DISPUTES OVER OPINIONS." If Paul were taken seriously by a majority of Christians, it might just about ruin church life for many...

I'm reminded of the story about an elderly Scotch Presbyterian elder who was visited by his minister. Tiptoeing into the room, the man's nurse informed him that "the Reverend" was there to pray for him. Suddenly the old man's

eyes lit up and he raised his head to protest loudly: "I dinna want him to pray for me; I want to argue with him!" And as Paul so clearly predicted, that's what religion is for many people: disputes over opinions that are unfortunately regarded as no less than divine revelations.

WHO IS RIGHT?

Paul was addressing a growing problem in the early church: disputes over Jewish food laws. The Jewish Christians continued to abide by these laws and harshly judged the Gentile Christians who did not. Similarly the Gentile Christian looked down upon the Jewish Christians for their observance of laws that they regarded as sheer Pharasaism.

Who is right? Paul's answer: neither and both. Actually there is no virtue in either observing or breaking these laws except that which the individual imputes to it. As Paul puts it, "I know and am persuaded in the Lord that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean" (14:14). So, both the sin and the virtue are to be found in the mind

of the individual, not the act or absence of it.

We find that there are many things that are inherently neither good or bad. Sex, for example, can be either. Money, too. Even atomic energy. The key is the usage to which we put it. Thus one person can eat "in honor of the Lord," while another "abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God" (14:6).

FREE & OBLIGATED

It would seem, then, that Paul is opening wide the door to doing whatever we want so long as we can do it to the glory of God. But once again Paul strikes a balance between freedom and obligation. One should never use his or her freedom in any way that will cause another person to fall into sin. Paul says: "If your brother is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love" (14:15). Whereas on the one hand we are free to follow our own conscience wherever it may lead, we are not free to use our freedom in a way that is harmful to someone else.

Paul goes on to say, "For the kingdom of God does not mean food or drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." And to that statement could be added a long list of other things that the Kingdom of God does not mean: disputes over opinions, personal pettiness and bickering, ego and power trips, and any items over which Christians manage to raise a controversy.

"Do not, for the sake of food (or any of the above) destroy the work of God!" No, for God's sake — and your own — "let us no more pass judgement on one another."

NOTE: Rev. Althouse will lead a 9-day Holy Land Pilgrimage, March 11-20, 1988 with an optional extension to Greece. To inquire or register, please contact him at: 1st United Methodist Church, Ross & Harwood Sts., Dallas, TX 75201.

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