



OPINION

Farm Safety Week

Farmers are under pressure during the harvest season to bring in their crops while the weather is good.

"It's natural for us to take pride in our ability to work long hours in pursuit of a goal," says Ron Jester, University of Delaware extension safety specialist. "However, fatigue, drowsiness and illness frequently contribute to mishaps in the field. Try to recognize when you have 'had enough' and turn the operation over to someone else."

Jester also warns farmers not to rely on stimulants to keep working or depressants to calm nerves. "Drugs and alcohol work against the keen awareness that is vital to safety," he says.

Periodic breaks relieve the monotony of machinery operation. "If you're going to eat in the field, at least climb down from the machine and relax for 15 to 20 minutes," he says.

President Regan has proclaimed September 20-27 as National Farm Safety Week. This year's theme, "Farm Safety Makes Good Sense" is underscored by the fact that nearly 1,700 people died in farm accidents last year and 170,000 suffered disabling injuries. Agriculture remains among the nation's most hazardous major industries. According to the National Safety Council, the total direct and indirect cost of an average disabling work injury is

\$12,200, while the cost of the average fatal injury is \$460,000 in future lost earnings alone. Most accidents can be prevented with care and protective equipment.

A major potential problem this time of year is the silo gas hazard.

Preventing accidents caused by the inhalation of silo gas is, in theory, very simple. Whether or not this is true in your experience depends upon your willingness to practice these safety tips:

1. Keep children away from the silo and adjoining area for at least two weeks after silage has been put in the silo.

2. Close the feed room door to the barn.

3. If entry into a silo becomes necessary, you should:

- ventilate all silo areas,
- get the help of a second adult, and
- wear a dust mask.

Regard silo gases as a real hazard NOW! Don't wait until you become a statistic. This goes for every type of potential farm accident.

Since equipment is involved in most serious and fatal injuries, Jester suggests the following precautions:

* Equipment should be made harvest-ready in the off-season, or at least several weeks in advance of use.

* All routine maintenance

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NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

To Prepare For Wheat Planting

Wheat is an important crop in many of our farming programs and the selection of good seed will result in a better crop next year. Due to some fungus infections in our winter wheat over the past several years, growers should be extra careful this fall by planting clean seed. Certified seed would be free of these problems. If you are planning to use homegrown seed, then do an extra good job of cleaning and treating. Vivatax 200 is a recommended fungicide for seed treatment. The fly-free date is either after the first killing frost or, in southeastern Pennsylvania, October 10.

Just a few reminders on planting wheat—it should not be planted in the same field more often than once every 5 years; this time period will reduce the fungus carryover in the soil. Plow the field as early as you can, then disc and harrow to

kill as many weeds as possible. It's also a good idea to harrow the field thoroughly the day of seeding.

To Help Cows Adjust

During this time of the year, cows are subjected to many stresses. They need all the help they can get from you to adjust to new feeding programs, changing weather and to indoor confinement. Feeding changes should be made gradually. Bringing cows in from the pasture and confining them to concrete all day long can be a severe stress. An earthen exercise lot will do wonders for these cows. Good stall maintenance can also increase their comfort. When cows are kept in confinement, we have the obligation of providing proper ventilation. This is especially critical during fall and spring when the weather can change quite drastically and quite suddenly.

It is a good idea to work closely with your veterinarian to develop a good health program for your herd.

To Be Aware Of Potential Silo Fires

The unusual growing condition—dry July and August and heavy rainfall just prior to corn harvest—could cause a higher-than-usual amount of silo gas to be given off by this year's corn silage. One of these gasses is a yellowish-brown, nitrogen dioxide gas, which is toxic to breathe. Another gas is methane, which is very combustible. Both are heavier than air, and can accumulate in silo chutes and feed rooms. A single spark can ignite the methane, which in turn can ignite accumulation of dried

chaff in the silo chute. The smoldering chaff can burn its way through wooden doors and into the silage. Our recommendations are to ventilate the chute and feed room well, using fans as needed, but being careful of any sparks. Keep the silo chute free of debris. When working around the silo, use the buddy system, and contact your physician upon exposure to these gases.

Caution - Do Not use water on a silo fire; this could create an explosion, call your fire company.

To Watch For Unwanted Guests

Now that the weather is getting cooler you may find some unwanted guests in your barn and home. You won't see them too often perhaps, but they're there. These guests will destroy more food and property than they eat. The guests in question are rats and mice. As the weather gets colder, they migrate from outdoors to indoors.

Rats are dirty, destructive and disease-spreading pests. You knew that. But did you know... * Rats cause an estimated 25% of all farm fires... * Rats have a new litter every 30 days - multiply so rapidly a pair could have 15,000 descendants in a year's life span... * And that rats destroy about 20% of all crops planted each year.

For control, use bait stations and keep fresh bait in the stations each week.

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

- Saturday, September 26**
 PFA Chester/Delaware Meeting, Octorara High School, 7 p.m.
 PFA Lehigh County Meeting, Seiptstown Grange Hall, 7 p.m.
- Monday, September 28**
 PFA Green Co. Meeting, Waynesburg Methodist Church Hall, 7 p.m.
 PFA Clarion Co. Meeting, Murphy Grange 7 p.m.
- Tuesday, September 29**
 PFA Mifflin Co. Meeting, Belleville Mennonite School, 7 p.m.
 PFA Blair Co. Meeting, Williamsburg Elementary School, 7 p.m.
 PA Association of Farm Cooperative Annual Meeting, Harrisburg Sheraton - West, September 29-30.
- Wednesday, September 30**
 Pa. Poultry Federation annual conference, through 10/1, Grantville, Holiday Inn.
 East-Central Holstein Show, Bloomsburg
 PFA Adams Co. Meeting, York Springs Community Bldg., 6 p.m.
 PFA Layette Co. Meeting, Layette Fair Grounds, 7 p.m.
 Public Meeting—Farmland Preservation Referendum, Lebanon Municipal Building Audi-

torium, Lebanon, 7 p.m.
Thursday, October 1
 Keystone International Livestock Expo., Farm Show Complex, through 10/5.

PFA Cumberland Co. Meeting, Huneydale Fire Hall, 7 p.m.

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FARM FORUM OUR READERS WRITE

Editor:

This is in response to the article printed in the August 22, 1987 edition of your paper. In this article titled "Ecologically Safe Farming Methods Needed, McHale says" former Secretary of Agriculture of Pennsylvania, James McHale pointed out that the use of manure as fertilizer would solve many of the pollution problems to the Chesapeake Bay and that the real problem was the overuse of commercial fertilizers.

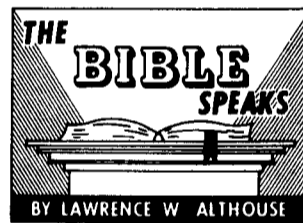
Our Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Program emphasizes a complete nutrient management program developed for participating Pennsylvania farms. Our program further recognizes the use of animal waste as fertilizer in conjunction with a balanced system using only those amounts of commercial fertilizer necessary to grow a specific crop. Where commercial fertilizer is needed, it is only recommended in environmentally safe quantities in order to avoid any pollution to the ground or surface waters of the Commonwealth.

To date, we have had nearly 200

farmers participating in high priority watersheds by signing a contractual agreement with our local conservation districts to implement a total nutrient management plan for their farm. In most cases these plans will reduce the amount of purchased commercial fertilizer used to carry out the cropping program on individual farms. In some cases fertilizer amounts have been cut in half from previous years application. The total nutrient management concept recognizes the need for a balanced nutrient program in order to produce crops in an environmentally safe manner.

We are pleased with the response that Lancaster Farming has given the Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Program in the past and we hope that this clarification of our Nutrient Management Program will offset any misleading statements about the accomplishments of our program.

James R. Grace,
 Deputy Secretary of
 Resources Management



ON MAKING A NAME FOR OURSELVES

September 27, 1987

Background Scripture: Genesis 11: 1-26.

Devotional Reading: Proverbs 16: 1-19.

Just what does God want and expect of us? Sometimes it would seem that we are reprimanded and even punished when we try to use the resources he has placed within us. If we are intellectually and creatively able to invent and develop the wonders of this technological age, should we not assume that this is good in God's sight, inasmuch as he is the source of this potential?

TO CONFUSE THEIR LANGUAGE

This is one of the important questions raised by the story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11. Where did these people on the plain of Shinar go wrong? Certainly they did not offend God or

thwart his plan by learning the art of brickmaking and mortar. Certainly there was no sin in their decision, "Come, let us build ourselves a city" (11:4). Was it the building "a tower with its top in the heavens"? Or was it their desire to "make a name for ourselves"? Neither can we imagine that there was any offense in having but one language.

It would seem that the writer of Genesis wants us to believe that God opposed all of the above. It sounds as if God is concerned that his creatures will be too smart and too constructive. "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will be impossible for them" (11:6). To stop this "dangerous" development, the writer of Genesis represents God as saying, "Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." **TOWER OF BABEL**

There are far too many passages in the Bible, particularly the New Testament, indicating God's plan to unite his children for me to believe that God really wants us to be alienated. In fact, it would seem that at no point in the world's history has there been any "danger" of humanity being too unified and too productive. God is concerned because we make too little, not too much, of our human potential.

What, then, is the point of this story? Perhaps the key is in that they wanted to "make a name" for themselves and forget about the God who gave them their potential in the first place. Our sin is not in our ability to build towers of Babel, but in letting these creations take the place of our Creator.

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