

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

On Tuesday It's Yes

Next week is the Farmland Preservation Referendum. A question on the November 3 election ballot will decide the issue. The way the voters vote will determine if the State Farmland Preservation Act on the books will have the dollars to accomplish its task.

With all the discussion that has taken place on this issue in recent weeks, it's regrettable that such a small group of Pennsylvanians will decide this important issue. Since only about half of the eligible voters are registered that immediately cuts the voting ranks. In addition, statistics show that only a small percentage of the registered voters actually vote on an off-year election. And of the few who do vote, many don't even bother to check the referendum questions.

Someone has estimated that maybe only 7 to 8 percent of the population will decide if money is available for farmland preservation in Pennsylvania. That is the apathy of freedom, we guess. But it does make your vote all that much more important.

So just before the vote, let's go over a few facts again.

The program is voluntary and only for farmers who are already in an agricultural security area. Let's say a farmer has a desire to keep his farm available for his children to farm, but also needs the market value of his land for his pension. This farm family could place a deed restriction on the land, sell the farm to the children at land value for farming and receive the difference from development value from the bond money allowed by a yes vote on the referendum to buy the development rights.

After 25 years, depending on the

type of restriction placed on the deed, the children could then make their own decisions as to whether the deed restrictions should be continued. And since 25 years is for all practical purposes a generation in the life of a farmer, this seems like a very reasonable period of time if we are to have any real effect on preserving the balance between agriculture and industry or urban sprawl in Pennsylvania. The farm family continues to own the land with only the development restriction.

The amount that would be paid for the development rights would be the difference between two appraisals of the land. One appraisal estimates the full market value of the land for any use, and the second estimates the agricultural use value of the land. On the case of the 25 year restriction 1/10 of the difference is paid.

Certainly it is hard to be totally objective on this issue for anyone who loves farming and the good earth. And not everything about this referendum is what we would like. Many side issues and other farm issues should also be addressed.

But at this point, we have not been given the option to vote maybe. And the side issues will need to wait for another time. On Tuesday it's yes or no.

State Senator Noah Wenger sent out a questionnaire recently, and the results showed that nearly 70 percent of the more than 2,000 persons who responded favored the state's support of farmland preservation. In light of all the facts, we agree with this majority. Vote yes in the farmland referendum this week on election day.

FARM FORUM OUR READERS WRITE

Editor:

At first glance it seems like a good idea to have a 100,000,000 bond issue to buy development rights to farmland. However, I have my doubts. Governmented bodies still have the right to condemn ag land. Is ag land more lost if it goes for housing rather than a road or landfill? The issue of condemning ag land has not been adequately addressed.

The bond issue might buy development rights to 100,000 acres. Development pressure will still be there. Prices will be bid up on non-saved acres. More bond issues, higher prices, like topsy turvy.

In recent years, many Amish and Mennonites have moved to places like Perry County. They get

along very well and maintain their identity. Unlike Lancaster County, they aren't gawked at by tourists.

Development isn't all bad. Many ag areas have few jobs.

Is the proposed bond issue to help tourist traps in Lancaster County? Farmers might be better off without the bond issue and concentrate on eliminating condemnation of ag land.

Richard M. Wright
Elliottsburg

Editor:

When the animal rights activists are getting after the poultry farmers, I have to write about some serious facts.

Years ago a farmer could raise

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NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

To Observe Weed Populations

Now that most of the corn is harvested, we can plainly see what weeds failed to be controlled in those fields. We are seeing more of the persistent, hard-to-control weeds appearing in our crop fields during the past 10-12 years. In part, this is because we have changed our farming methods, particularly tillage techniques and we're not using crop rotations in the case of continuous corn.

Bindweeds, horsenettle, hemp dogbane, curly dock, Canada thistle, Johnsongrass, and yes, even woody plants such as brambles and small volunteer trees have appeared in increasing numbers. We need to note the presence of these weeds now and then prepare to deal with them.

When you notice a new weed, have it identified and take appropriate control measures before that weed becomes a menacing prob-

lem. If weeds are presently escaping from your control efforts, find out how to change your weed management program.

To Winterize Small Engines

Many small engines on farms and around homes will be hard to start next spring. But you can change that by properly winterizing your small engines. Here are some suggestions:

- After running the engine to reach operating temperature, drain the crankcase and refill with new oil of proper weight, as specified in the operator's manual.

- Add a few teaspoons of gasoline stabilizer into the gas tank and run the engine for several minutes to make sure the additive flows throughout the fuel system.

- If the engine is water cooled, be sure the anti-freeze in the cooling system is sufficient for the lowest temperature.

- Remove the spark plug and pour a tablespoon of clean oil into the cylinder. Also clean and regap the spark plug or replace with a new one.

- Use an air gun to blow loose dirt and chaff from the engine. Remove and service the air cleaner.

- Finally, cover the engine with a piece of canvas and store in a dry place under cover.

To Check Stand-By Generators

The winter season brings with it snow and ice storms that can damage and knock out our supply of electricity. Most farmers are badly crippled without electricity so the

need for a stand-by generator is recognized. I know that many poultry farms in particular already have this equipment. However, if the generator is not in good working condition, it may not do the job in case of emergency. These generators should be run once a week to reassure yourself that it's in good running condition. If it is a tractor hookup type, then take the time to make that connection each week. When the power goes off, you don't have time to run tests of the equipment to make sure it's in the proper working order.

To Notice Spiny Pigweed in Pastures

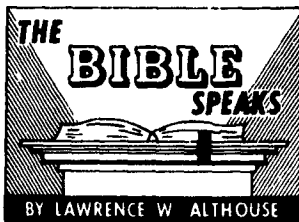
An annual summer and fall weed we see increasing in pastures is the thorn covered redroot or pigweed. The weed is a first cousin of our common redroot -- except this one has spines on it.

No animal eats it for obvious reasons. Spiny pigweed grows freely in too many pastures, causing considerable loss in grass production in our County.

The weed can easily be seen. It appears red all over, particularly the stem, in the fall. Touch the plant (careful now!) and you will come in contact with the horrible spines. Grazing animals avoid it 100%.

Control — Spiny pigweed can easily be controlled by Banvel or 2,4-D applied in late May and early June when in its seedling stage.

A second herbicide application likely will be needed as a cleanup to get late germinating weed seeds. Mowing the pasture helps but the weeds will always recover.



NOBODY'S PERFECT

November 1, 1987

Background Scripture:

Genesis 30:25 through 31:55.

If you go looking for human perfection in the Old Testament, you won't find it. In fact, many of the Hebrew "heroes" were not even close to being perfect. Moses was a murderer. Abraham was a blatant liar, passing off his wife Sarah as his sister for fear of the Egyptians. David was an adulterer and arranged for the death of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband.

And then there was Jacob — who shamelessly deceived his own father and cheated his brother,

Esau, out of both his birthright and his father's dying blessing. Nor was he the kind of man who, having sinned, stayed to face the music. With the encouragement and help of his mother, Rachel, Jacob ran away from his family and home rather than face the consequences.

RUNS IN THE FAMILY

When at last Jacob arrived in Haran, it seems that he is ready to settle down. His mystical experience at Bethel seemed to have made a profound impression upon him. And so, Jacob the ruthless schemer seems to become Jacob the honest, hard worker.

But Jacob soon finds that his Uncle Laban is just as ruthless as he had been. In fact it would seem that deceit and subterfuge run in the family. Just as Jacob had cheated Esau, so Laban cheats Jacob.

Laban and Jacob are "family," but that doesn't keep them from trying to put something over on

each other. In other words, the same dynamics we find in many families today are present in the story of Jacob, even though the details may be quite different and considerably more subtle. There is jealousy, deceit, envy, greed, and exploitation.

NO CARDBOARD SAINTS

The people in the story of Jacob are clearly no cardboard saints. Neither are they thoroughly depraved. Like many of us, they are somewhere in-between. They are seriously flawed, but they have their good points too. When Jacob first arrived at Laban's home, it appeared as if this was going to be a good positive relationship. Out of it comes tremendous prosperity for Laban and recognition for Jacob. As Laban later admits to Jacob, "I have learned by divination that the Lord has blessed me because of you" (Genesis 30:27).

The relationship, it seems, is going to be beneficial for both Laban and Jacob. But then, as it often happens even today, the good prospects are ruined by human emotions. Instead of being grateful for the prosperity that Jacob has brought him, Laban decides he wants all of it for himself. Jacob overheard his cousins complaining, "Jacob has taken all that was our fathers; and from what was our father's he has gained all his wealth" (31:1). It wasn't true, but they believed it.

Yet, despite the fact that none of these people — Jacob, Laban, Rachel — are anywhere near perfect, we can see God working to bring about this purpose. They were real people struggling with real problems. So what makes Jacob a great Hebrew patriarch is not so much that he was "wonderful," but that God was able to do wonderful things through him.

Just as he is able to do in, with and through us! No need to wait, he can use you as you are!

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Farm Calendar

Saturday, October 31
Southeastern Holstein Sale, Berkeley County Youth Fairgrounds, near Martinsburg, West Virginia.

First Payment of Maryland Futurity #7 due on this date. Estimated purse value is \$3,960 with \$710.00 going to the winner.
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