



OPINION

Targeted Farm Program Payments

There seems to be a growing concern among Americans that the farmers who most need help don't receive most of the benefits provided under federal farm programs. This year something just might be done to solve this problem, says Gerald F. Vaughn, University of Delaware Extension specialist in resource economics and policy. "Congressional attention could well be focused on revising the formula for making direct payments, so that a larger share of program benefits goes to farmers truly in need."

Limiting or capping the payments that can be received by large producers often is mistaken for targeting, Vaughn says. But while capping may remove the appearance of excessive payments to individual producers, it encourages farmers to reorganize their businesses to avoid the cap. As a result, program benefits are not redistributed as intended to farmers who are more in need.

"Proposals for targeting seek to base farm program payments on a farmer's financial need," Vaughn says. "They generally urge that aid should be greatest to family farms of moderate size, which at this time need an income boost more than part-time or large commercial farms do."

Such targeting proposals usually call for higher payments to family farms of moderate size and progressively smaller payments to other farms, Vaughn says. Some proposals would require that payments go only to farm operators, not landlords.

"Targeting makes sense in relation to supplementing farmers' incomes, but it may be at cross pur-

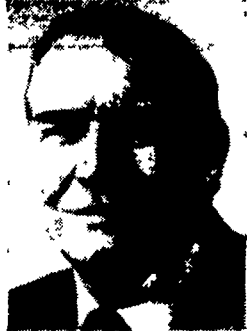
poses with other farm policy objectives," the economist cautions. Direct payments compensate farm operations of all size and ownership status for taking land out of production. Direct payments also made possible the 1985 Food Security Act's lower commodity loan rates, which are aimed at stimulating increased sales of farm products in domestic and world markets.

"Even so," Vaughn says, "Congress may well consider some revision of the direct payments formula this year in favor of the family farm of moderate size."

Other than this possible legislation, Vaughn says he "can't remember a time when farm program proposals have shown so little clear movement in any direction. The proposals that have been offered all seem to cancel each other out."

With the Food Security Act of 1985 not due to expire until 1990, Vaughn says Congress has little inclination to tackle complex farm program issues now. "What legislative action does occur," he says, "is likely to focus on the issue of targeting farm program payments. That's the only place where I see sufficient concern that may lead to prompt action."

So, farmers need to be thinking about how program targeting would affect them. Depending on the size of the change and how it relates to their particular farm operation, some producers would receive lower benefits. The general shift should be away from very large, commercial farm businesses toward more moderate-sized family farms.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

To Be Aware of Child Labor Laws

If you have boys or girls between the ages of 14 and 16 that plan to operate a farm tractor or machinery on a farm, other than your own farm, be sure they have the proper certificate. Under the child labor regulations, the law requires that those boys or girls between 14 and 16 years of age, be certified and carry a certification card before they are permitted to operate hazardous equipment. Some equipment listed under the law as hazardous are: a tractor with over 20 PTO horsepower, corn picker, hay baler, feed grinder, fork lift and many more. Again, on your own farm, your children can operate any equipment that you feel is safe for them.

The Certification process in most areas is through the Vocational Agricultural Department in the schools or through the 4-H Tractor Clubs. Contact either for more information.

To Attend Winter Meetings

This is the time of year that a lot of educational meetings are held and they're held during this season of year for a good reason — you have more time to attend meetings. During the spring, the summer and into the fall, there's just too much field work that must be done. Take the time to become acquainted with the meetings of interest to you and your operation. Some meetings are designed to reach certain production groups such as Dairy Days, Livestock Day, Crops and Soils Day and Poultry Day, but others are programmed to reach all agri-business people like the Financial Management, Estate Planning and Farm Transfer Arrangement meetings.

Also, many agri-business and

- Chestnut Level Presbyterian Church, 11:45 a.m.
- Northeast Winter Dairy Mgmt., Olean, NY, Castle Inn and Restaurant, through Jan. 20, For info. call 607-255-2196.
- Berks Co. Dairy Day, 9 a.m., Milk and donuts. Berks Co. Ag. Center.
- PA Lime, Fertilizer, Pesticide Conference, Sheraton State College. Through Jan. 21. Call John Rowehl, 757-9657.
- Wednesday, January 20
- Upper Eastern Shore Agronomy Day, Chestertown, Md.
- International Poultry Educational

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lending institutions conduct meetings to keep you abreast of the changes in their organizations. We urge you to mark your calendar as these meetings are announced and attend as many as possible.

To Preserve The Topsoil

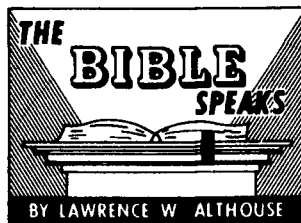
The spring of the year is an excellent time to develop some soil conservation practices on the land. Contour strips, slit tillage, terraces and diversion ditches can all be established before the 1988 crops are planted. These various methods of controlling water will not only prevent soil losses but will help hold more water on the higher slopes and fields. Good topsoil is a precious natural resource, and every land owner should make an effort to keep it from eroding. Farmers that are growing continuous corn should be very careful to keep their soil from washing away. In these cases terraces and contour strips can be established to help slow down the loss of both water

and soil. Addition of extra organic matter in the form of crop residues and green cover crop will help keep the soil loose with a higher water holding capacity.

To Use The Farmers Tax Guide

I have to mention it, yes it is Income Tax reporting time again. For farmers this becomes quite complicated with the many changes in the regulations.

The Farmers Tax Guide is published by the Internal Revenue Service and is a real help to farmers and others who file for agricultural concerns. We have a supply in our office, as do other Extension Offices. They are also available from the Internal Revenue Service. Most farmers have their taxes filed by a tax practitioner, but you will find the tax guide very helpful in preparing your materials for the tax person. The filing date of March 1 for farmers rolls around rather quickly.



CORRECTIVE LENS

January 17, 1988

Background Scripture: Matthew 7.

Devotional Reading: James 1:22-27.

My records at the optometrist's office say I am nearsighted and must wear corrective lens. Actually, I think I'm spiritually farsighted, because sometimes I simply can't see the "logs" in my own eyes, but have no trouble at all seeing the "specks" in the eyes of others. In fact, it's amazing how easily I can see those "specks" even at great distances. Furthermore, there's the problem of perspective -- those "specks" in the eyes of others look so big. On the other hand, the "logs" in my own eyes appear so microscopic that I'd swear there's nothing there.

What I need, I suppose, is some kind of corrective lens that will help me to see "specks" and "logs" in a true perspective. Actually, that's what the Bible does for me sometimes. For example, I read "Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matt. 7:1), and I can suddenly "see" that I have been doing just that: judging others. Understand, I don't come right out and say to someone, "You, sir, are not telling the truth!" There are ways of getting that idea across without being so obviously judgmental.

THE REASON WHY

Furthermore, in these rare moments of insight, I realize not only that I have been judging others, but also understand why I have been doing it. By judging others, I have been attempting to minimize my own failings. If I concentrate upon your "specks," I

can manage to put out of my mind the "logs" in my own life. In fact, I very often find that what I am judging others for is something about which I am vulnerable, too. Therefore, I am critical of "pushy" people. The reason: I like to get my own way and "pushy" people get in the way. Neither do I like self-important people -- they detract from my own sense of self-importance.

Recently there was a great commotion in the media about a presidential candidate who, it was discovered, quoted people in his speeches without acknowledging it, and also was not entirely truthful about his academic record. Like just about everyone else, I was dismayed and thought the man was quite correct in withdrawing his candidacy.

Then I got to thinking about the charges against him. Suddenly it dawned upon me that I was not entirely blameless in either regard. I have often used other people's ideas and occasionally even their words without attribution. In fact, there are all kinds of books written to help preachers do just that -- Bible commentaries, books of sermons, sermon-starters, and so forth. I know there have been times when I've gotten credit for saying or writing something that was not original with me.

NOT BLAMELESS

As to leading people to think more highly of me than is justified, I can remember writing some resumes or applications that might be said to be technically misleading. In fact, there have been many times when the reality has been a lot less exciting and impressive than as I've presented it.

Thus, this political figure's difficulty with the media led me to examine my own life through corrective lens and I realized that I couldn't afford to judge others on these matters, lest I be judged with the same standards.

And how is your insight?

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Farm Calendar

Monday, January 18

Rental Rates For Farmland, Cumberland Co. Ext. Office, 7:30 p.m. Carlisle.

Octorara YFA at Octorara High School, Ag. Dept. Speakers Noah Wenger and Art Hershey on Land Preservation, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, January 19

NIR Van, Forage Testing and Dairy Ration developing, Shippensburg Fairgrounds, Shippensburg, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Cumberland-Franklin Beef Pro-

ducers, Vo-Ag Room, Shippensburg Jr. High, 7:30 p.m.

Adams Co. Swine Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Ext. Office, Gettysburg.

Crawford Co. Income Tax Meeting, Edinboro Holiday, 8:45 a.m.

Sire Power Annual Meeting, 10 a.m., Sheraton Harrisburg West.

Delaware Extension Beef Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Research Farm, West of Middleton.

Delaware Horticulture Expo, through Jan. 20. Sheraton Inn, Dover, Del.

Atlantic Dairy Coop, Dist. #3,

- Chestnut Level Presbyterian Church, 11:45 a.m.
- Northeast Winter Dairy Mgmt., Olean, NY, Castle Inn and Restaurant, through Jan. 20, For info. call 607-255-2196.
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