



OPINION

We Need The Facts

On three different occasions this week, speakers at farm meetings talked about environmental issues. State Secretary of Agriculture, Boyd Wolff, mentioned his work in representing agricultural interests in the face of environmental pressures. Wolff opened the third annual Corn Conference in Carlisle. At the same conference, Varel Bailey, Anita, Iowa, said that the environment was the most important issue that would change the way we farm in the next few years. And at the Lancaster Poultry Progress Days, Mitchell Woodward, Nutrient Management Specialist from Penn State, said that 70 percent of the soil tests from Lancaster County contained more nutrients than are necessary to grow a crop.

As farmers we are confronted by a rather well defined attitude by the Environmental Protection Agency and other environmental groups. They make the assumption that any pound of pesticide, insecticide, or fertilizer applied to the surface of the earth will eventually end up in the underground water supply. So they take the number of pounds sold times the number of acres and make a scary case to discontinue the use of many of the products that have given agriculture its lofty position in world food

production. So we need facts to prove the EPA's assumption wrong.

Unlike the milk, meat and egg industries that have taken their cholesterol battle to research for ammunition to set the facts straight, crops and soils people have not yet generated the facts to uphold the farmers' end of the story. Certainly, we need to do all we can in agriculture to keep pollutants from our streams and underground water supply. Yet we're now at a point where government will soon be telling us how many animals we may have on our farms, how much manure we may spread on each acre, and they will systematically outlaw each product that is alleged to cause chemical contamination in the underground water supply.

So we need to begin right now to work with our agricultural colleges, extension and soil conservation services, and agribusiness firms to get the needed research done. Who knows, we may find that industrial chemical spills and worn-out septic systems contaminate our world just as much as excess manure. But we'll never know if we don't have the facts. And without the facts we'll not be able to uphold our end of the story.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin
Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

To Plan Location For Tobacco Planting

We have been saying for years that animal and poultry manure is an excellent fertilizer. It still is... but not for tobacco. Research shows us that animal manure, particularly dairy, increases the chlorine content of the tobacco; this chlorine content reduces the "burn" quality of the tobacco, and buyers frown on that.

Locate the area that you plan to transplant your tobacco, and be sure NOT to apply any manure to that area this year.

We suggest that a soil test be taken as an indicator of your present nutrient level. Then apply fertilizer at the recommended rates. The fertility program, recommended by our Research Agronomists, for a 2,000 pound tobacco crop, should consist of 80 pounds of nitrogen, 35 pounds of phosphorus (P₂O₅) and 165 pounds of potash from either sulfate of potash or potassium nitrate. This fertility program will increase quality and reduce buyer resistance.

To Avoid Soil Compaction

One of the real dangers of being in too big a hurry in getting on the soil in the spring with heavy equipment is that we pack this wet soil so hard that poor yields result. With modern machinery, the weight is much more than a team of horses or mules. As a result we have ground that is as hard as concrete and it is slow to recover. It is important to wait until the soil is dried out sufficiently before taking this heavy equipment over the fields. When the soil is worked too wet, it becomes hard and forms clods. This type of soil structure will not give you the best yields. Don't be in too big a hurry, slow down and leave the weather catch up to you.

To Check Pastures

With March arriving and mod-

ernment Meeting, Farm & Home Center, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Maryland/Virginia Dairy Herd meeting, Ramada Inn, Hagerstown, Md., 10:00 a.m. Dairy Council Inc. annual meeting, Trevose Hilton, 10:30 a.m. Livestock Biosecurity Meeting, Dr. Larry Hutchinson, Towanda, Bradford Co. Ext. office, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. or, Troy Vo-Ag Room, 8:00 p.m. Christmas Tree meeting, Bigler-

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erating temperatures, our thoughts quicken to early spring pastures. We need to be concerned with pastures and exercise lots along rural roads for discarded junk. Unfortunately, people still throw bags of waste from their cars into nearby fields. Some of the materials may be poisonous to livestock. Every producer should remove these materials before starting to graze. Also, in hay fields the materials should be removed before growth begins. Bottles and tin cans will damage equipment and be a threat to the livestock eating the hay. Be sure your animals are not poisoned through someone's carelessness.

To Prune Fruit Trees

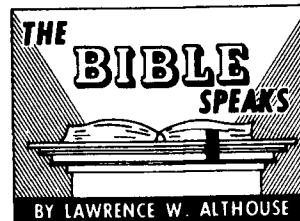
Whether you have a few or several hundred fruit trees, orchard

pruning need not be delayed until spring. It may be started in colder weather. But it is a good practice to work on the hardiest trees first.

Early pruning can involve some problems from winter injury, but in many cases an early start will be necessary to complete pruning of large orchards before spring. By confining early work to the older, hardier trees, fruit growers keep injury to a minimum.

Apple and pear trees are the hardiest of the fruits, with plums and sour cherries next in order. Because peach and sweet cherries are most tender, delay their pruning, particularly the younger trees, until late March.

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



HAVE YOU BEEN GOOD?
March 6, 1988

Background Scripture:
Matthew 21:1-11;25.
Devotional Reading:
Isaiah 58:6-12.

Yesterday a woman at our church greeted me with those familiar words from everyone's childhood: "Reverend, have you been good today?" I feigned thinking deeply about that before replying, "Yes, I think I have." "Good," she replied as she rummaged in her purse, "then I have a reward for you!" and she handed me a large piece of chocolate candy. "Gee," I kidded her, "if I had known you carried candy with you, I'd always be good."

On the way back home from the church, the words we had spoken in jest came back to haunt me. How easy it had been to answer that question when I was a child. Being "good" meant not having been disrespectful to my elders, not lying or cheating at school, getting all my homework done and completing my chores. Basically, it meant that I had "stayed out of trouble."

HOW GOOD?

On that basis, I had answered my friend honestly: I had not been "in trouble" that day. I hadn't blasphemed God, borne false witness against anyone, committed adultery, murder, or stolen from anyone, I hadn't broken any civil laws either, unless you want to count a few miles per hour over the speed limit. My religious beliefs and practices are pretty orthodox — at least I think so. Furthermore, I had been generally cheerful and friendly to one and all. By popular standards I had been quite "good."

Then I thought about Jesus' standards of being "good" and I began to suspect that my response

to her had not been all that honest. According to Jesus' parable on that day of final examination it won't matter much what beliefs I subscribe to, what doctrines I confess, what heights of benign "niceness" I can claim. What will determine whether or not I have been "good" will turn on my acts of service to those who are in need — to the hungry whom I have fed, to the strangers whom I have welcomed, to the naked whom I have clothed, and the sick and imprisoned whom I have visited. Judged on those standards, I had not been all that "good."

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

To translate this passage into the here-and-now, all I had to do was turn on the television for the evening news and listen to a report that warned of alarming growth in the number of homeless in our city. Jesus may not have mentioned by name the homeless in his parable, but they are clearly there by implication. I don't mean to imply that our church doesn't do anything at all for the homeless of Dallas—we're all doing "something," aren't we? Actually, we are doing as a church considerably more than we were doing five years ago. The question is not whether we're doing something, but whether we're doing enough. In light of the tremendous need, the answer would seem to be "no." In light of our potential, the answer is still "no."

What about you? Have you been "good"? Of course you haven't killed anyone today, or robbed them, beat, or vilified them. No one will likely find you lying drunk in the gutter today or see you hauled off to jail for narcotics violations. In all probability, you've been generally nice to people, perhaps even gregarious. But that doesn't really count. What Christ wants to know at the final judgment is whether we have gone out of our way to help those in need. Obviously, I can't answer that question for you. It is enough that I have to answer it for myself and you for yourself.

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Farm Calendar

Saturday, March 5

Horse Clinic, Wayne Co. Extension Office, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Hunterdon County 1988 Extension Bake-Off; for information, call 201/788-1340.
New York Flower Show, Pier 90, Manhattan.
MD State Jersey meeting, New Midway Fire Hall.

Monday, March 7

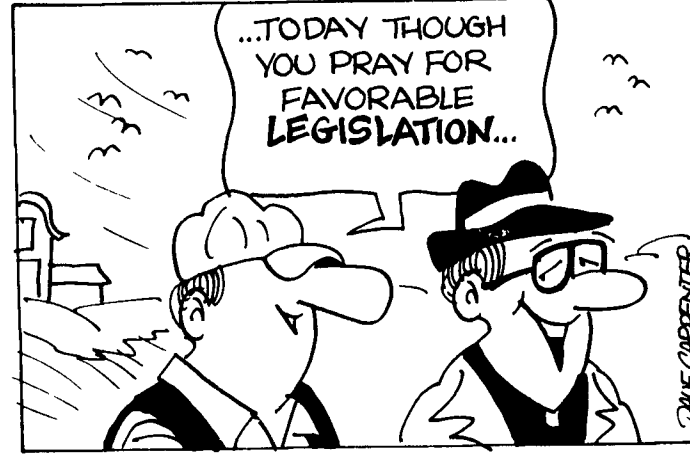
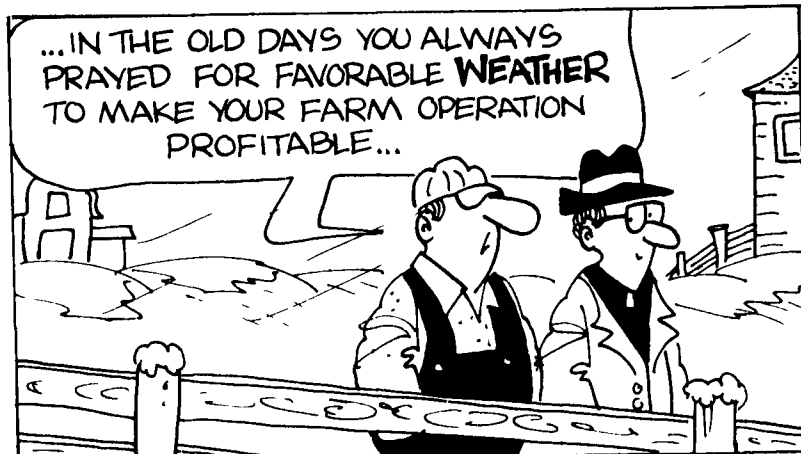
Hunterdon Co. Sheep Breeders, Extension Center, 8:00 a.m.
Pesticide Exams, Farm & Home Center, Lancaster, 9:00 a.m. to noon.
Octorara Young Farmers Association awards dinner, West Fallowfield Christian Day School, 6:45 p.m.
Cecil Co. Holstein meeting, Ron Underwood Farm, northeast Md., public invited, 7:30 p.m.
Phila. Flower Show, Civic Center, through the 31st.
1988 Dairy Day, Sheraton Inn, Mercer Co., Call for tickets 412/662-3141.
Wayne Co. Extension, Executive Committee meeting, Courthouse, Honesdale.

Tuesday, March 8

Lancaster County Dairy Day, Farm & Home Center, 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Maryland/Virginia Dairy Herd meetings, Friendly Farm Restaurant White House, Md., 10:00 a.m.
Annual Young Adult Farmer Banquet, St. John's UCC "Blymire's Church, Dallastown, 7:00 p.m.
"Managing the Small Farm Enterprise", a two-day small part-time workshop, Cecil Co. Extension office building in Elkton, 7:00 p.m.
Lebanon County Extension Annual Meeting, Shaefferstown Fire Hall, Shaefferstown, 7:00 p.m.
Water Quality Workshop, Ephrata Adult Farmers Group, Ephrata High School Ag Department, 7:45 to 9:00 p.m.
Maryland/VPI Dairy Heifer Management Program, Friendly Farms, Upperco.
Blair County Holstein Meeting, Williamsburg.

Wednesday, March 9

Lancaster County Risk Manage-



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