



OPINION

A Matter Of Life Or Death

With so many reports that try to scare us, we could easily ignore another "epidemic" report-- especially since we have heard about rabies for the last two years. But Ted Fox told Lancaster Farming this week that Lancaster County now has the highest number of rabies cases in Pennsylvania. Ed Gosnell called it an epidemic. Fox and Gosnell are State Conservation officers.

Since wildlife such as skunks and raccoons get credit for much of the spread of the disease, farmers are likely to be apathetic. But they shouldn't be. At this time of year when the domestic animals head out to the spring pastures in close proximity to infected wildlife, farmers become especially vulnerable. For all practical purposes, these paragraphs are a life and death warning to all of our farm family readers.

Don't play with Rabies. This means don't pet wild animals--especially nocturnal creatures that come around your farm buildings in broad daylight and act friendly, dumb or sick. If the animals don't have their normal fear of you, assume they have rabies. This is not open season, but if this kind of animal gets on your property, near your children or farm animals,

shoot it, carry it with a shovel, bury it deep enough that your dog won't dig it up, and leave the contaminated shovel in the sun for a few hours to kill the disease germs.

In addition, don't feed your pets outside at night because wild animals will be attracted to the food. Keep your dog tied. It's the law, and it will provide one less possible contact with rabies for your family and livestock.

You should be aware that many infected animals are destroyed without being tested, so they don't get in the publicized numbers for reported cases. Authorities know this. Some think it's good because it puts less strain on the testing system. Others think it creates a false impression that could lead to complacency when the numbers of rabies cases are reported. Either way you should know that right now you are in a hot spot for the rabies virus. Be cautious. Watch for tell-tale signs in every animal you see-- both wild and domestic. Do everything you can to protect yourself, your family and your farm animals from this dreaded disease. And if you are exposed to a suspected rabies carrier, call the emergency number and get advice immediately. In this case, it is a matter of life or death.

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin
Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

To Plan For Oat Planting

I know some farmers are considering the use of feed oats for planting this spring, but this may not be a good idea. Feed oats may contain quackgrass, bindweed and other weed seeds. Planting feed oats will generally result in lower yields. You also have the problem that any weed seeds planted will be a problem for years to come. Keep in mind that high quality seed is the smallest part of producing a crop. So, saving a few cents by using inferior or weedy seed doesn't make much sense. On the other hand, homegrown seed of varieties proven successful on your farm can be cleaned, treated and planted if the germination is 80% or better. You can place the seed in a tray with moist soil, cover with wet burlap and keep in a warm place. Then count the seeds that germinate against the total and determine the percent of germination.

To Evaluate Winter Wheat Topdressing

During this season of the year many farmers ask the question, does winter wheat need fertilizing? According to Agronomists, topdressing with fertilizer may or may not be a good idea. There are several things that should be considered before making the decision.

In the first place, do not topdress winter wheat with nitrogen fertilizer if the wheat is to be overseeded with clover or alfalfa. Nitrogen causes heavy growth of wheat which may smother out the new seeding. Now, the winter wheat fields that have come through the winter looking thin, should be topdressed. Use only a straight nitrogen fertilizer, such as urea. Topdressing winter wheat with phosphate or potash fertilizer has not given any increased wheat yields.

Apply the nitrogen fertilizer in early spring at the rate of 30-40 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre.

To Provide Farm Security

Theft and vandalism on farms is on the increase. This is very difficult to prevent because of the various items around farm buildings and homes; also the number of buildings and places to enter are many. However, we suggest that every farmer take some steps in protecting his machinery, tools, livestock and supplies. The automatic lights that come on at dusk and go off at dawn should be of

real value in discouraging burglars. There are also many new sensing devices that detect movement around the premises.

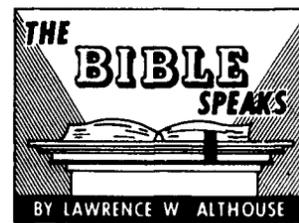
Watch dogs are also very useful in detecting strangers around the property. Shops, garages and other smaller buildings should be kept locked when possible. The identification of animals by tags, branding and photographs is very helpful. It is also a good idea to mark all machinery and tools with a permanent ID number. The best number to use is your drivers license number preceded by DL PA (Drivers License, Pennsylvania).

Remember, Social Security numbers are non-retrievable so it's best not to use it. Farm thefts are on the increase so farmers should take steps to protect their property.

To Increase Pasture Production

One of the best ways to improve permanent pasture is to apply lime and plant food, practice rotational

grazing and clip them regularly. This is quicker, cheaper and involves less risk than tearing up the old sod and reseeded. Most permanent pastures have sufficient seed of desirable grass species. The only thing they need is a little tender loving care and the opportunity to grow, and to recover from grazing pressures. Thus, fertility and rotational grazing are very beneficial. The more paddocks you have, the better it is. If your acreage is limited for your size herd, restrict the amount of time cattle and livestock are permitted to graze. Don't let them trample the grass unnecessarily by allowing them to roam freely over the pasture while not grazing. After a paddock has been grazed, it can be clipped to control weed growth and to keep the grass young and nutritious. This is also a good time to apply fertilizer and necessary herbicides, while allowing the grass to recover prior to being grazed again.



THE SILENT VICTOR
March 27, 1988

Background Scripture:
Matthew 26:57 through 27:61.

Devotional Reading:
Isaiah 53:4-12.

Matthew's story of Jesus' last hours is a study in power. There is the mighty power of Rome vested in the Pilate, the Roman Governor. There is also the power of the chief priests and elders. It is not an absolute power, but, although the Jews have been subjugated by the Romans, the latter cannot rule successfully without some cooperation from the former. And there is the power of the people--subject though they are to Roman military might, Pilate cannot afford to ignore their potential for disruption of the *Pax Romana*, the peace of Rome.

Then there is Jesus.

At first glance, it would seem that he is powerless. The chief priests and scribes arrest him in the Garden of Gethsemane and hand him over into the custody of Pontius Pilate. Jesus appears helpless against both Jerusalem's religious leaders and the occupying Roman Empire. Furthermore, he is apparently in the power of the crowd, for Pilate puts it to them whether he shall release "Barabbas or Jesus?"

HOW POWERFUL?

Yet things are not what they seem. For all of the might of Rome, Pilate is obviously uneasy about this situation. When Jesus remains silent in the face of his questions, instead of flying into a rage, Pilate gropes for some alternative to Jesus' crucifixion. To further unsettle him, his wife sends word: "Have nothing to do with that

righteous man, for I have suffered much over him today in dream" (27:19). If Pilate had the power of life or death, why would he feel compelled to publicly wash his hands of all responsibility?

Pilate, a man accustomed to controlling large armies and administering Rome's holdings in Israel, could not compel Jesus to confess or deny the charges brought against him: "...he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge; so that the governor wondered greatly" (27:14).

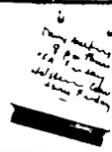
Consider also the chief priests and scribes. Neither are they as powerful as one might suspect. It must have galled them to have to come to Pilate to petition him for permission to put Jesus to death. These guardians of religious rectitude, for all their power, couldn't get Jesus convicted without false witnesses, perjury, and manipulating the mob. If they were so powerful, why did they have to resort to all of that?

Those who comprised the crowd outside Pilate's palace were also engaged in the struggle for power. But their power was a delusion. Pilate gave them the power of life and death over Jesus, but he was simply using them, letting them take responsibility should this prove to be an unpopular decision. The chief priests and scribes also used them, manipulating them to call for the release of Barabbas and the death of Jesus.

So who was in control here? Not irresolute Pilate, not the impotent chief priests and scribes, nor the frenzied crowds. As one reads this account over and over, it becomes apparent that it is Jesus who really is in control. Jesus, the silent victor teaches us all the nature of true spiritual power. Jesus could have made a brilliant legal defense, disrupted the court with violent outbursts or played upon the sympathy of the mob. But, refusing to play their power game, he conquered them with his silence.

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Farm Calendar



Saturday, March 26
Schuylkill Co. Fair Assn., Third Annual Spring Auction, New fairgrounds, formerly Happy Holiday Park, 9:00 a.m.
York County Pork Producers Assoc. Banquet, Colonial Valley, 7:00 p.m. Donald Sunda, 764-0233.
PA Spring Holstein Show, Harrisburg.
Spring Dairy Cattle Judging Contest, Ag Arena, Penn State University, State College.
Cook College Home Gardeners' School, New Brunswick
PA Spring Holstein Show, Harrisburg
Spring Dairy Cattle Judging Contest, Ag Arena

Sunday, March 27
Northeast Dairy Conference, Burlington, VT, March 27-29.

Monday, March 28
Bradford County Farm Energy Management, Wysox Fire Hall, 10:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Free calibration of farm sprayers March 28 through April 1 at any Delaware Extension Office. Call 302/451-1125 for information.
Regional Meeting, Energy In

Agriculture, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Wysox Fire Hall.
Increase Farm Profits through Energy Management, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Bradford Co. Wysox Fire Hall.

Tuesday, March 29
State Farm City Council Meeting, Kiwanis Office, Harrisburg, 10:00 a.m.
Chesapeake Bay Research Conference, Belvedere Hotel, Baltimore.
Calibration Field Day (spreader, planters and sprayers), Grey-stone Manor Farms, 10 a.m. Contact Mike Brubaker 717 627-0065.
Eastern Milk District 15. Lebanon Valley & Shaffertown Fire Hall.

Wednesday, March 30
Maryland/Virginia Milk Cooperative annual meeting, Ramada Inn, Hagerstown, MD, 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, March 31
Lancaster County Holstein Tour, Farm & Home Center, 8:10 a.m.

Saturday, April 2
York 4-H Spring Judging Contest (Turn to Page A23)

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HAPPY EASTER
EVERYONE
FROM UNCLE OTIS & DAVE CORPENTER