



OPINION

A Good Year For Farmers

If you were to measure agriculture's success by beneficial state legislation, you would call 1988 a very good year. The General Assembly approved and Governor Robert Casey signed a number of bills that enhance the position of agriculture in the commonwealth.

Some of the major bills already signed by the governor are well known. The creation of an independent Animal Health Commission will provide stability for the state's animal health efforts. The secretary of agriculture will chair this commission.

And the \$100 million farmland preservation program got underway with guidelines on funding and how the program will operate.

In other acts, the state ag department can license and regulate poultry haulers and dealers and establish standards for cleanliness of vehicles and crates. This will help prevent the spread of disease. In addition, the state Crime Code now contains separate offenses for ag vandalism. And the coyote attacks on farm animals, especially sheep will receive attention from the state dog law's livestock indemnity fund for losses of livestock, poultry and game birds due to coyotes.

But maybe the greatest success for the farmer was the passage of the bill that paves the way for local tax reform. While the legislation must be approved by the voters in a referendum, the prospects for property tax relief give farmers a lot of hope. The tax changes if approved will eliminate the local per capita, occupation assessment and personal property nuisance taxes and will allow school districts and municipalities to reduce property taxes by 25 percent. The reductions will be offset by personal income taxes up to 1.5 percent for school districts and .75 percent for municipalities. Counties will be able to collect a sales tax of up to .5 percent.

The Pennsylvania Farmer's Association estimates the tax changes will save Pennsylvania farmers a total of \$23,750,000 annually for an average of \$420 per farm. That's not chicken feed. In fact PFA's President, Keith Eckel calls the various pieces of legislation "A harvest of state legislation--one of the best in recent memory."

With all the political maneuvering, we come to the last day of the year and look back. And we conclude they must have had the farmer at heart in Harrisburg after all.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin
Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

To Attend Farm Show Events

Time has a way of creeping up on us, and here it is... nearly Farm Show time. The Farm Show will open again this year on Sunday, January 8 and close on Friday, January 13. The theme for the exhibition is "Pennsylvania Agriculture -- The Keystone of our Economy." Well, we are proud of our agriculture because of the hard work of our family operated farms. And here is an opportunity for our farmers to show the consuming public the high quality products raised on our farms today.

Active farmers should recognize the many educational meetings and banquets that are held during the week. Many of these are state-wide organizations and should have economic benefits to the producer.

To Sharpen Management

As we look ahead to 1989, it is difficult to realize just what major problems will confront the average farmer. It remains to be seen what effect the political atmosphere will have on agriculture. However, it is evident that profits will be difficult to realize and some very good management will be needed to come out in the black. Today's farmer must be a better businessman than his forefathers. A farmer must be able to handle labor, money, equipment and keep up-to-date on all regulations and cultural practices. A farmer should practice good public relations with his neighbors and respect the rights of others. Good management is just as important in farming as it is in any other industry or business. Work at it and it will pay dividends.

For Better Water For The Bay, And Lancaster

An important part of Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Program is showing farmers in this area that adopting "best management practices" or BMP's benefits the Bay as well as agriculture, according to Mitchell Woodward, Nutrient Management Agent with Penn State Cooperative Extension. Through the Bay program, farmers learn improved erosion control techniques as well as ways to manage applications of manure and fertilizers. The program provides financial assistance and technical guidance to landowners for installation of BMP's.

During the first two days of the

program, five watersheds in the lower Susquehanna River Basin were targeted for the initiation of the program. By late 1986, the first 100 farmers were enrolled and had developed crop nutrient management plans.

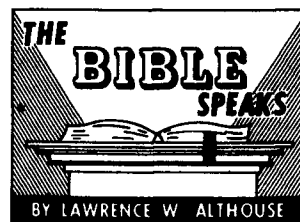
Good progress has been made since then. Farmers as well as homeowners, businesses and industry have all contributed and made an impact on cleaning up our water in our county. However, if the program is to succeed, ultimately we all must make a commitment, as many farmers and other have done.

With all of us concerned and committed to water quality, each doing what he can instead of placing blame, we can make significant

strides in improving water quality here and in the Chesapeake Bay.

To Be Sure Ice Is Safe For Skating

Farm ponds make great ice skating rinks... that's so long as the ice is strong enough. The general rule on thickness is that two inches will support one person and three inches will support a line of people. Thickness is not always the most accurate guide though. Other factors include color and age. New ice is stronger than old ice, and clear blue ice is stronger than slush ice. Be especially cautious with ponds that are either fed by a spring or have a fast moving current. The thickness of these ponds will vary considerably.



A KINGDOM TOO SMALL
January 1, 1989

Background Scripture:
Luke 4:14-14.

Devotional Reading:
Isaiah 61: 4, 10, 11.

It might appear that, according to Luke, Jesus began his ministry in his home town of Nazareth. If you read carefully, however, you'll find that by the time he arrived there, "a report concerning him" had already gone out "through all the surrounding country" that he was teaching in the various synagogues. (Luk. 4:14-15). And there was more: Jesus was performing miracles of healing. When Jesus came to Nazareth, he anticipated that his fellow townspeople wanted to say to him: "What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here also in your own country" (4:23).

So, it would seem that the people of Nazareth were receptive to him and when he read from the scroll of Isaiah in the synagogue, Luke tells us "all spoke well of him and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. Although some commentators would disagree with me, it seems these people were ready to accept him as a "local boy who made good," "Is not this Joseph's son" they asked with growing pride.

ONE OF OUR OWN

If Jesus had left town at that very moment, perhaps they would have continued to claim him as one of their own. After all, the countryside was buzzing with accounts of what he had said and done in neighboring towns and villages. But Jesus knew these people and realized that their receptivity was motivated by pride, not by faith. They were glorying in his sudden fame and what they really needed was humility.

So Jesus quickly brought them

to earth: "Truly I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country" (4:24). Jesus saw himself as a prophet, not a celebrity, and the purpose of a prophet is to evoke humility, even repentance, not pride. If you like what you hear a prophet saying, you probably didn't understand his or her message!

Nobody in the Nazareth synagogue liked what they heard Jesus say. Citing two incidents from their scriptures — I Kings 17:1-16 and 2 Kings 5:1-14 — Jesus reminded them that God's grace did not belong to the people of Israel. God sometimes gave his help to foreigners and not the people of Israel. So, in a time of great drought, God sent the prophet Elijah to aid a single Syrophenician woman and later, when there were many lepers throughout the land, Elijah healed only Naaman, the Syrian general, of leprosy. What really infuriated the people of Nazareth was the reminder that God had helped strangers and failed to bring relief to Hebrews with the same complaint.

WHO BELONGS TO WHOM?

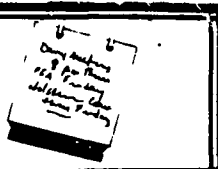
The people of Nazareth liked the idea of the kingdom of God, but the kingdom they looked for was too small. Their kingdom was not big enough for outsiders. They thought that being God's chosen people meant that they had the right to expect preferential treatment. If God was going to help or heal anyone, let it be one of them!

We can understand how they felt, can't we? Aren't most of us tempted to think that same way? Wouldn't it bother us if God were to send us a prophet who was to spend much of his time and efforts outside the church? After all, he belongs to us, doesn't he? We're the ones who are trying to do his work on earth. We're the ones who go to church on Sundays. If Christ is going to appear anywhere on earth, it ought to be in a Christian church — preferably ours, of course!

But no, we've got it all wrong: he doesn't belong to us, we belong to him. It is his kingdom that matters. Not ours, for they are never big enough.

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Farm Calendar



Saturday, December 31
Deadline for Emergency Feed Program Applications To Be at ASCS Office.

Wednesday, January 4
County Tobacco Meeting Show, Lancaster Farm & Home Center, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Wayne Co. Dairy Reproductive Management Seminar, Extension Office, Honesdale, 9:30 a.m.

Schuylkill County Dairy Day, Penn State Schuylkill Campus.

Thursday, January 5
Northeastern Weed Science Society Symposium, Stouffer Harbor Place Hotel, Baltimore.

SOILS PSU Course, 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Montgomery Co., 4-H Center, Creamery, PA.

Future of Lancaster Agriculture, Lancaster Farm & Home, 7:30 p.m.

Lycoming Co. Annual Meeting, Hoss's Steakhouse,

Williamsport.
Saturday, January 7
PA Farm Show, Harrisburg Farm Show Complex, through Jan. 13.

Dauphin County Annual Meeting, Dauphin Co. Ag & Natural Resource Ctr.

Monday, January 9
Pesticide Exam, Lancaster Farm & Home Center.

York County Family Records Workshop, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Extension Office.

Egg Producers Meeting, Lancaster Holiday Inn North, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, January 10
Annual Meeting & banquet of the PA Dairyman's Association, Sheraton Harrisburg East.

Thursday, January 12
SOILS PSU Course, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., Montgomery County 4-H Center, Creamery.

Westmoreland/Indiana Dairy (Turn to Page A35)

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WELL UNCLE OTIS, ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE ANY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS?

I DON'T SEE ANY NEED TO MAKE ANY CHANGES

'CAUSE RIGHT NOW I'M ABOUT AS CLOSE TO PERFECTION AS ONE COULD GET

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM DAVE CARPENTER AND A MODEST OTIS