



# OPINION

## The Eyes Are Upon Us

Lancaster County farmers, as a whole, are good stewards of the soil and have been for years. They are known throughout the world for their productivity and ingenuity. This county has been host to hundreds of foreign visitors who come here simply to learn what makes this county's farmers successful. They return home in hopes that they, too, can turn their corner of the world into a Garden Spot.

But this Garden Spot is now beset with an animal waste disposal problem—a by-product of this county's agricultural productivity. And, no doubt, the eyes of the country and perhaps the world are now upon us all, farmers and non-farmers alike, to watch how we solve this problem.

A mandatory nutrient management program—is that the solution to this problem? If all farmers in the county or state are required by law to have a nutrient management plan, will that clean up our ground water and protect the Chesapeake Bay from further contamination?

Who will administer it? Who will pay for it? How will it be enforced? From past experience it's obvious that enforcement of a statewide or even countywide plan would be monumental. That is to say, it may not get done. What good is a plan if it's not enforced? But why mandate a blanket program in the state or in the county? Why force all farmers to have a plan, when data, which is now being gathered, isolates those areas where nitrate levels in the ground water are the highest?

As a whole, Lancaster County farmers are changing the way farm. They are changing voluntarily because they want to protect the environment, they want to protect the ground water, they want to protect their investment.

It is a small minority of farmers, who have not implemented advanced management practices to curb nitrate leaching and runoff, who need a nutrient management plan. Locating those farmers and helping them to adopt different management techniques may do as much, if not more, to solve Lancaster County's animal waste disposal problem, as a mandatory nutrient management plan at a fraction of the cost.

There are alternatives to a statewide or countywide mandatory nutrient management plan. The Lancaster County Conservation District has already drawn up a sample manure ordinance to be used by townships. Also, instead of a blanket plan, why not a blanket standard. When nutrient management plans are needed to control high levels of nitrates, these plans would conform with this predetermined standard.

Maybe the eyes of the world are not upon us here in Lancaster County, but certainly, what we do here in the next few years to solve our animal waste problem, may well be the model copied by others.

We should commend the majority of the county's farmers for a job well done and focus our time, efforts and funds on those who need our help.



## NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin  
Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

### To Group Dry Cows

The needs of dry cows are considerably different than those of lactating cows, according to Glenn Shirk, Extension Dairy Agent. To feed and manage them properly, they should be divided into three groups: a recently dry group, a main group and a close-up group.

Cows recently dry should be placed in a clean area for about a week where they can be observed frequently. The goal at this time is to cure and prevent udder infections and to see that the udder involutes properly.

During the main part of the dry period the emphasis is on feeding cows properly so they will be in good flesh and have good nutrient reserves by calving time and on giving cows sufficient time (50-60 days) to recuperate from the previous lactation and to regenerate milk secreting cells for the next lactation.

Two to three weeks before calving, cows and springing heifers should be placed in a close-up group where they can be observed frequently and where the emphasis is on sanitation. The goal at this time is to gradually acclimate cows to some of the lactation ration ingredients and to increased levels of grain feeding, and to prevent infections of the udder and uterus and of the newborn calf.

### To Exercise Breeding Animals

Many farm animals are kept in close quarters during the winter months. This is fine for animals being fattened for market, but may

not be suitable for breeding animals. The flock of breeding ewes should have access to an exercise lot daily; there will be less trouble with paralysis in the ewe flock and stronger lambs born if ewes are exercised daily.

When the ground becomes frozen, or snow-covered, some shepherds will feed hay on the ground out in the exercise lot in order to force the ewes to exercise. Dairy cows need outside exercise to maintain good feet and legs, and to provide opportunity for heat detection. Brood mares need the same daily exercise if they are to remain in the best of health.

### To Practice Holiday Safety

This is not a new idea but one that bears repeating. With the holiday season approaching, there are many extra decorations and events that can present fire hazards. We urge every parent to discuss the need of safety measures that will prevent serious fires and possible human injury. Too many people are careless with evergreen decorations and Christmas trees. Candles, fireplaces and overloading our electrical lines are all possible fire hazards when not carefully

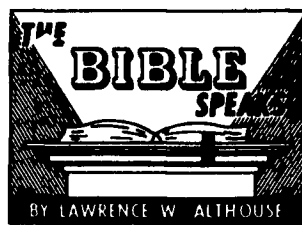
handled. We urge everyone to make an effort to be careful with holiday decorations, and certainly don't take chances. If there is a possibility of a fire, then eliminate that item.

### To Properly Store Firewood

We are more energy conscious than we've ever been ... and that is certainly a good trend. Many homes are equipped with a fireplace or wood stove. This means the use of more firewood. Proper storage is important.

When storing your firewood, keep it outside since many insects may hibernate in the wood piles. If you keep it inside they'll think it's spring and wake up to become a pest in your home. If this happens, use an ant and roach aerosol for control. It's a lot easier just to keep the firewood in a cold garage or some outside shelter. The important thing is to keep it as dry as possible, even if it means covering it with a plastic tarp. Keep in mind that wet firewood takes a lot of heat just to dry it out.

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## STAR STATUS

December 3, 1989

Background Scripture:  
John 1:6-8, 9-17; 3:22-30.  
Devotional Reading:  
John 3:22-30.

"Too bad about John the Baptist!" exclaimed a youth in one of my catechetical classes some years ago. "You mean because he was beheaded?" I asked. "No," replied the youth, "because he lost his 'star status' when Jesus came along."

I'd never thought of it just that way, but, in a sense, that's what happened. After Jesus began his ministry, some of John's own disciples left him and joined the swelling crowds following Jesus and it wasn't long before John was imprisoned by Herod and finally beheaded. If, when the gospel narratives open, John's is a rising star on the religious horizon, it soon becomes a fallen and faded one. "POOR JOHN"

It doesn't seem that John the Baptist thought of himself as "poor John" or that he was resentful of the eclipse and eventual demise of his ministry. For John saw his ministry as having as its purpose to prepare the way for Jesus and his. John had enough popularity that he could easily build something more lasting for himself. When they asked him, "Who are you?" (John 1:19), he could have strung them along a

little. He didn't have to say "I am not the Christ." Nor did he need to deny being Elijah or even a prophet.

Furthermore, he need not have pointed people to Jesus. When they asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" (1:24). Why did he tell them: "...among you stands one whom you do not know... the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie" (1:27)? Why advertise the competition?

UNDIMINISHED  
But John did not see Jesus as "competition." Rather, he saw Jesus as the fulfillment of his own mission and, when he saw Jesus coming toward him, he proclaimed: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me' ... I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." It was shortly after that two of John's disciples left him and followed Jesus.

If John was not concerned about the loss of star status, his disciples were very upset: "Rabbi, he who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you bore witness, here he is, baptizing, and all are going to him" (3:26). John, however, puts the matter straight with these ambiguous words: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (3:30).

In "decreasing" so that Jesus might "increase," John was not diminished, but fulfilled. We need not think of him as "poor John," for in faithfully doing the work God gave him to do, John gained the highest satisfaction a person can know. And so can we.

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## Readers Write

Editor:

As a member of the Pennsylvania Association of Extension Home Economists, I received two communications awards in 1989, radio feature and radio spot. Your support in recognition of excellence in family living communications media is greatly appreciated by our association of professionals. Sponsorship of the media awards program adds a special note of importance to the competition and enhances the award.

Many thanks for supporting Extension Home Economists, our programs and our professional association.

Kay M. Hastings

## Farm Calendar

Saturday, December 2  
Mid-Atlantic Goat Seminar, Francis Scott Key High School, Union Bridge, Md., 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Berks County 4-H Horse Banquet, Berks County 4-H Center, Leesport, 6:30 p.m.  
National 4-H Club Congress, Chicago, Ill.

Monday, December 4  
Lancaster County DHIA awards banquet, Good & Plenty Restaurant, Smoketown, 11:30 a.m.

Octorara Young Farmers Association tax meeting, Octorara Ag Education room, Octorara, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 5  
Berks County DHIA awards banquet, Kutztown Grange, Kutztown, 7:15 p.m.

Insects, Diseases & Weeds of Trees & Shrubs meeting, Penn State Great Valley, Malvern; runs through December 7.

Wednesday, December 6  
Newspaper bedding meeting, Titus (Turn to Page A31)

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