



OPINION

Now The World Knows

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has completed its five-year National Survey of Pesticides in Drinking Water Wells (NPS). The results of the survey -- announced November 13 -- indicate that 89.6 percent of the nation's community water system (CWS) wells and rural domestic wells are pesticide free. And in the vast majority of wells estimated to contain at least one pesticide, quantities are considered too small to present any health hazard.

"The results of this survey are very encouraging," says Amy E. Brown, pesticide education coordinator for the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, University of Maryland System. "They suggest that although we should continue to be vigilant in our efforts to reduce our reliance on chemical pesticides and improve our application methods, there is no need for undue concern regarding the quality of well water in the United States."

A joint project of EPA's Office of Drinking Water and Office of Pesticide Programs, the survey provides a national assessment of the presence -- both frequency and concentration -- of pesticides and nitrate in drinking water wells. Results are based on a statistically relevant sample of more than 1,300 wells nationwide.

While the survey does not represent specific conditions at the local, county or state level, it does provide some tangible figures for those people who always want to blame agriculture for problems of national health. We know farmers are environmentalists. Now the world knows.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin
Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Check Barn Ventilation

Proper ventilation of all types of livestock and poultry buildings is very important during the winter months. When the warm, moisture-laden air is not moved out of the area, we usually see condensation on the windows, walls and ceilings. This is especially true with little or poor insulation. Exhaust fans will move air out, and protect the building. This time of year the barns are filled with livestock; these animals give off large amounts of body heat. When condensation occurs it is a sign that some attention is needed; in most cases it is a problem with ventilation or with insulation.

To Understand Biotechnology

The term, biotechnology, may be mysterious to some people, and if they don't understand it, they may actually have a fear of it, according to Glenn Shirk, extension dairy agent. Biotechnology is not new. For centuries biological organisms, such as yeast and bacteria have been used to bake bread and ferment foods, and more recently to produce human insulin and the enzyme (TPA) that is used to dissolve blood clots. Genetically, we have been able to improve plants and animals through the process of breeding and selection.

Today, scientists have refined biotech procedures to the point that they are able to isolate single genes that are responsible for a desirable trait, and transfer them into the cell of another bacteria or plant. Improvements that used to take 15 to 20 years to accomplish can now be done in 9 months, and done so much more precisely and with greater control. Already, scientists have found enzymes that can modify cholesterol and saturated fats to make them "safer" for consumption. Crops have been developed that are more resistant to insects, diseases and funguses, thereby reducing our reliance on chemical pesticides.

To Take Inventory

An area of our operation that is very important at this time of year is inventory. With the close of the year most of our farmers close out their records for the year. This means that if you are going to

have a Farm Analysis made you should take inventory of all your supplies. You'll need this to do any kind of farm analysis, because the amount of grain, hay and other supplies that are in storage will vary from year to year, and unless this is taken into consideration, you cannot have an accurate analysis of your year's operation. So, as accurately as possible, record the amount of hay, grain, feed, seeds and fertilizer that are on hand. This is the first step in an accurate farm analysis.

To Use A Real Tree For Christmas

This is the time of year that most people are considering the type of Christmas tree to buy. And, I hear objections to using real trees as being wasteful. So let's take a look at this situation. Actually, the Christmas tree

farmer is raising trees as a crop for a source of income. This is much the same as the farmer who raises wheat, corn or soybeans to sell or use on his own farm. Christmas trees are raised on land not suited for other crops -- not even pasture land. It's mostly rolling land and highly acid.

Also, remember that these Christmas tree farmers are putting this land to good use; by conserving the soil and providing an excellent watershed. Keep in mind that Christmas tree farmers have a very slow turnover in their capital -- from the time they plant the tree till it's ready for your living room can be 5 to 6 years for small trees and 10 to 15 years on the larger trees. Another fact to consider is there is nothing like the fresh aroma of a real tree in your home during the Christmas season.

The Bible Speaks

BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

Background Scripture: John 3:1-21.

Devotional Reading: John 3:18-21.

As a boy, I was always skeptical about this verse: "And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). Because I was somewhat afraid of the dark, I couldn't imagine anyone loving it. Today, of course, I realize that, strange as it may seem, people often do choose darkness instead of light because, for some perverse reason, they love the darkness more. That is the supposition that underlies the newspaper business today: they focus on human darkness -- crime, corruption, decay, tragedy, and anything that is essentially negative. "Bad news" sells newspapers, books, and television advertising time. If your daily newspaper were to focus on "good news" instead of "bad," people wouldn't buy it.

NEGATIVELY TUNED

Unfortunately, many of us are tuned in to negativity. If we are ill, we can describe our feelings in great detail. But if we are well, we are hardly aware of our wellness at all. If someone has a "juicy" story about someone we know, perhaps even a friend, we are much more likely to listen to it. Even our prayer lives may be dominated by negativity: how much of your prayer time is devoted to asking and how much to thanking? Some people even practice a Christianity that is negatively oriented: seeing

and expecting the worst in people and the world. Still others are attracted to satanic religious practices that seem to glory in the darkness and lowest elements in our human nature.

When Nicodemus, a member of Sanhedrin, the Jewish religious council, came to Jesus he came by night because he didn't want anyone to see him in the presence of the Nazarene. He also chose darkness, but in this case he chose darkness to hide, not his sin, but his virtue. The reason, of course, is that his society saw sin as virtue and virtue as sin. Associating with Jesus would threaten his "virtuous" religious standing in the community. So, he chose darkness.

PLAYING "DUMB"

We don't know what he expected Jesus to say to him, but he was obviously perplexed when Jesus said, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (3:3). Did Nicodemus really not know what Jesus was saying, or was he simply playing "dumb" because he didn't want to deal with it? I suspect the latter, because it is a lot easier to discuss being born physically than it is to be spiritually reborn. If the first seems impossible, the other must seem highly undesirable to others.

The fact is that all of us need to be transformed so that we will seek the light rather than the darkness.

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Farm Calendar

Saturday, December 8

Keystone Shepherds' Symposium, Lancaster Sheraton, thru Dec. 9.

Sunday, December 9

Keystone Shepherds' Symposium, Lancaster Sheraton.

Monday, December 10

Fifth regional meeting on biosecurity for poultry, reducing risks, Clayton Hall, U. of Del., 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

MACE Poultry Biosecurity Conference, Clayton Hall, U. of Del.

Octorara Young Farmers Assoc., "Water Quality On The Farm," Octorara H.S., Ag Ed Room, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 11

Lancaster Co. Milking Parlor Design Seminar, Harvest Drive Restaurant, Intercourse, 9:30 a.m.-3:15 p.m.

Adams Co. Dairy Feeding Meeting and Crops Show, Vo-Ag Shop, Gettysburg High School, 7:30 p.m.

Adams Co. Milking Center Design and Automation, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Wednesday, December 12

Mid-Atlantic Conservation Tillage Conference, Penn Harris Convention Center, Camp Hill, 8:30 a.m.-3:40 p.m.

TV teleconference, Mid-Atlantic Conservation Tillage Conference, Penn Harris Convention Center, Camp Hill, 8:30 a.m.-3:40 p.m.

Milk Marketing Inc. annual delegate meeting, Fawcett Center for Tomorrow, The Ohio State

University, Columbus, Ohio.

Thursday, December 13

Dairymen, Inc. annual corporate meeting, Nashville, TN, thru Dec. 14.

Grounds Managers' Seminar, Warrington Motor Lodge, Warrington, 9 a.m.-3:45 p.m.

Friday, December 14

Dairy Seminar, Country Table Restaurant, Mount Joy, 8:15 a.m.

Pa. Egg Marketing Association annual Christmas dinner, Olde Hickory Inn, Lancaster, 7 p.m.

Pennsylvania Seedsmen's Association annual meeting, Eden Resort Inn and Conference Center, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Saturday, December 15

Sunday, December 16

Monday, December 17

Pesticide application recertification training, Clayton Hall, U. of Del., 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Berks Co. Ag Elections, Community and County Convention, Ag Center, 11 a.m.

Tuesday, December 18

Milk Equipment and Mastitis Workshop, Susquehanna, Wyoming, and Lackawanna counties.

Wednesday, December 19

Susquehanna Co. Milking Equipment and Mastitis Workshop, The Mountain View Restaurant, Clifford, 9:45 a.m.-3 p.m.

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