



OPINION

Get Your Well Water Tested

Many farm and ranch families have questions about testing the safety of their drinking water. Even if needed, testing can be expensive and might not give you the information you need unless it's done right.

If you get your water from a public water system, it is already checked for most common contaminants. But if you live in one of the 10.5 million rural households with a private well, you are responsible for testing and maintaining your drinking water quality.

Most county health departments can help you with routine water testing of common contaminants such as coliform (fecal) bacteria, nitrates, pH and total dissolved solids. Testing for the first two items is very important, for their presence can lead to health concerns. Unfortunately, they are the most frequently encountered contaminants in rural wells. Testing for the last two items is generally optional, since they don't usually add much information about the safety of water samples.

Annual testing for coliform bacteria is relatively inexpensive and a good idea.

You should be concerned if any fecal bacteria are detected in your well water. Bacteria of this type are most commonly found in older, shallow wells in porous soils near faulty septic systems or animal feedlots.

According to the Alliance For A Clean Rural Environment (ACRE), nitrate testing is important and relatively inexpensive, but generally isn't necessary to do annually unless initial testing finds nitrates from home or farm sources. Nitrates in concentrations above health standards are associated with health problems in infants and young farm animals.

Radon and pesticide testing can be important also, depending on where you live. Both tests can be expensive and may require special sampling procedures. The decision to conduct these tests will probably depend on your level of concern or indications that a problem may be developing. An elevated level of nitrate in your well water samples is a good indication that you may want to test for pesticides, too. You'll need to weigh the possible risks of their undetected presence against the cost of testing.

To be on the safe side, farmers should have their well and spring water tested.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin
Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Be Aware of a New Pasture Herbicide

DuPont has announced the registration of Ally herbicide for use on pastures, according to Robert Anderson, Extension Agronomy Agent. This herbicide has some important characteristics. Ally has no grazing restrictions. In other words, animals do not have to be removed following application. This material has had excellent results on spiny pigweed.

Ally is generally considered a post-emergence herbicide and will control emerged pigweed up to 4" in height, but it should also give limited amount of residual control of other pigweed species. Ally shows activity on the following weeds: Garlic - less than 12" ... Musk Thistle - in rosette stage ... Canada Thistle - 6" to 10" ... Multiflora Rose and Blackberry - full leaf. Always follow label directions when using any pesticide.

To Prepare For Soybean Planting

Soybeans should be planted in warm, moist soil. A thermometer will help you decide when is the best planting date. Special bayonet type thermometers work very well.

The ideal temperature is about 62° F. The reading should be taken at about 8:00 a.m. when the soil temperature is stabilized. The thermometer should be inserted at least two inches in the soil.

Many people planting soybeans will either end up with too many plants per acre or too few. This will happen because they will use the pounds per acre philosophy which won't work for soybeans. Because soybean seed differs greatly in size, this also means they differ greatly in number of seeds per pound. For example, one variety may average 2,100 seeds per pound while another variety averages 3,100 seeds per pound ...

a.m.-3 p.m.
Huntingdon Co. 4-H Food Booth Sportsman Show, Huntingdon Co. Fairgrounds, thru May 5.
Sunday, May 5
Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival, Howard Co. Fairgrounds,
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that's a difference of 1,000 seeds per pound. So, if you plant a bushel of seed with 85% germination, that's a difference of about 48,000 plants per acre.

The only way to plant beans is by seeds per foot of row. If a grain drill is used, three beans per foot of row is plenty. If a 30 inch com row is used 8 to 9 beans per foot is about right.

To Practice Pesticide Safety

Pesticides are very important to our highly efficient agriculture. When used as directed, they repay our growers with higher, better quality yields at minimal risk to our safety and health.

** It's important to choose the correct pesticide and application equipment for your particular problem.

** Be sure to read and follow the label directions. Make sure all co-workers do the same.

** Without fail, use the recommended personal protective equipment to prevent contact with chemicals.

** Mix accurately and careful-

ly. Clean up spills. Return unused materials to safe storage.

** Triple rinse and drain empty containers into spray tank.

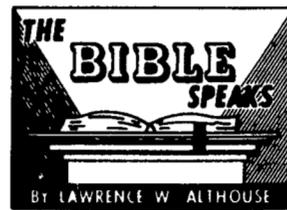
** Clean the equipment when you have finished. Don't smoke or eat until you have washed and changed clothing.

** Store pesticides in their original labeled container in a locked cabinet.

Let's have a safe growing and harvesting season this year.

To Check Farm Ponds

Many ponds are showing both algae and weed infestation build-up and as the weather warms up, these pond plants will begin to grow. Permits are needed in order to use the proper material, and to protect livestock downstream from the pond. Before any ponds are treated in Pennsylvania with any chemical or fertilizer, the owner should obtain a permit from the Pennsylvania Fish Commission. Application for the permit is available from the Pennsylvania Waterway Patrol Office or from your Penn State Cooperative Extension Office.



MAKING SUFFERING WORK FOR YOU!
April 28, 1991

Background Scripture: 2 Corinthians 1:1-11.

Devotional Reading: Ephesians 4:25-32.

Christianity has sometimes been accused by critics of being obsessed with suffering. I will acknowledge that some cathedrals and churches I have visited do seem rather morbid and some expressions of Christianity do tend to focus on the gloomy side of life.

Actually, despite those exceptions, I believe the gospel of Jesus Christ is much more about victory than it is about suffering. To be sure, it is often victory in spite of suffering or victory through suffering. But the emphasis of the gospels, I believe, is on the victory.

Christianity deals with suffering, not because it cherishes, but because suffering is part of everyone's life to some degree. No one ultimately or entirely escapes this experience. So Christianity has traditionally dealt with the question not of whether we shall suffer, but how. There is something distinctive about the Christian experience of suffering.

This is what Paul is concerned with in his second letter to the church at Corinth. Apparently Paul has been in some affliction which is well known to his readers — although not to us. He did not go seeking this trouble, but it came to him because he remained faithful to his God-given mission.

Yet, even though he didn't seek this affliction, he learned something from it.

I have never believed that God sends us suffering so that we might grow in grace, as some suggest. Nevertheless, I think that God can often use our experience of suffering to help us grow in love and faith. I know a man whose son has been in one mental hospital or jail after another throughout almost all his life. I don't believe God caused this state of affairs so that the man would grow in grace. But, I do believe that God has been able to teach this man much in the midst of this painful experience so that he has been able to minister to others.

That's what Paul is saying in his letter to Corinth, speaking of the "God who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (1:4). One thing positive that can come out of our own suffering is the experience of God's comfort. Paul says, "Why, we felt that we had received the sentence of death; but that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead" (1:9).

So, we can learn faith in the midst of suffering. Teilhard de Chardin, the paleontologist-priest, experienced this and wrote, "I knew with a unique experiential certainty that I would never again rely for support on anything save your own divine stability". Suffering can bring us face to face with God. And from the encounter with the living God we can move out to bring comfort to others. Suffering causes us pain, anxiety, despair, frustration, humiliation and much more. But, by the grace of God, our lemons can be turned into lemonade.

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Farm Calendar

Saturday, April 27

Lehigh Co. Small-Scale Farming, field trip, Ag Center.

Annual Sheep Shearing Day, Spring Valley Farm, Glenville, 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

Elk Co./Burkes Home Center Horticulture Day, Burkes, St. Marys, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

York Co. Dairy Princess Pageant, 4-H Center, 8 p.m.

Small Beef Herd Management Workshop, Woodruff Farm, Washington Co., 9 a.m.

Penn State Dairy Expo, Ag Arena, University Park, 8:30 a.m.

Maryland Pork Expo, Howard Co. Fairgrounds.

Sunday, April 28

Carroll Co., Md. Tractor and Truck Pull, Ag Center, 9:30 a.m. (rain date May 5).

Monday, April 29

Pa. Sheep and Wool Growers

Association Wool Sale, Penn State, 10 a.m.

Tuesday, April 30

Bradford Co. Tractor Certification Program, extension office, 7 p.m.

Huntingdon Co. 4-H Countywide Dairy Club meeting, Huntingdon Middle School, 7:45 p.m.

Wednesday, May 1

Thursday, May 2

Bradford Co. Tractor Certification Program, extension office, 7 p.m.

Friday, May 3

Saturday, May 4

Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival, Howard Co. Fairgrounds, West Friendship, Md., thru May 5.

Sheep Field Day, Delaware Valley College, Doylestown, 9:30

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