



OPINION

Respect Slow-Moving Farm Vehicles

In the Lehigh Valley, within several weeks' time, three grain combines were struck on the highway. In one case, it was a hit-and-run accident.

According to Robert Leiby and David Dunbar, extension agents, most farmers are familiar with the slow-moving vehicle (SMV) signs developed by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers and required by the motor vehicle codes. But perhaps some drivers on the highways are not aware of their meaning and importance.

What does the law say? The SMV emblem must be visible from the rear of any farm tractor, tractor-towed vehicle or implement, or self-propelled "implement of husbandry" that is operated on a highway at 25 miles per hour or less. The emblem is a fluorescent yellow-orange triangle with a dark red reflective boarder. It's about 14 inches tall and it should be mounted with base at bottom and point at top, two to six feet above the road surface. It must be completely visible to vehicle drivers approaching from the rear. The SMV emblem does not replace other warning devices such as tail lamps, flashing lights, or reflectors.

Our urban and city drivers should be taught that a slow-moving vehicle is not much different from a stationary object. The SMV emblem, by itself, won't prevent farm vehicles from being "rear ended". Driver attitudes and skills reflecting good judgement, concern for safety, and courtesy are needed. And of course the drivers need to be sober and alert when they are at the wheel.

Combines are operated from mid-June until Thanksgiving. But other farm machinery is moved on the road anytime of the year. If our non-farm neighbors want to continue to enjoy life in or near the country and if they want to keep open space by preserving farmland, they need to drive country roads in ways that allow farmers to move their equipment safely.

Farm Forum

Editor:

Now that the dust has settled and the cheap shots have been taken, I think it is appropriate to add a sense of balance to the sense of ire expressed across this state regarding the recently passed budget and tax increase.

My association, the Tobacco and Candy Distributors, along with our customers, took one whale of a hit on the cigarette taxes. And, my members were also hit in the business tax category, too.

Having said that, I think it is

important to reflect on the fact that our legislators were loathe to raise taxes. Our Executive Director and I talked to scores of legislators and one thing became evident: the State was in a mess, regardless of who caused it, and the legislature had to fix it, even if it meant jeopardizing their legislative careers.

I was struck by the courage and resolve of these men and women as I saw them, over the months, wrestle with their consciences over whether to do what was politically correct or what was morally correct or what was morally

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Farm Calendar

Saturday, August 17

Rough and Tumble Reunion, Kinzers.
Central Championship Show, Huntingdon, 6:30 p.m.
N.E. District Horse Show, West End Fairgrounds, Gilbert.
Northeast 4-H Junior Dairy Show, Potter Co. Fairgrounds, Millport.

Warren Co. Holstein Sale, Fairgrounds, noon.

McKean Co. Fair, thru Aug. 18.
Huntingdon Co. Fair, Huntingdon.
Washington Co. Fair, thru Aug. 18.

Armstrong Co.-Dayton Fair, Dayton.

N.E. 4-H District Dairy Show, Potter Co. Fairgrounds, Millport.



NOW IS THE TIME

By John Schwartz
Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Consider Emergency Pastures

The recent dry weather is causing livestock farmers to consider ways to produce more feed.

One possibility is an emergency pasture consisting of brassicas. The brassicas are a family of plants that include rape, kale, turnip, and swede.

They contain high levels of crude protein and digestible energy. The fiber content of brassicas is very low. This means animals being fed brassicas as forage should receive supplemental hay so that the brassicas do not make up over two-thirds of the animal's diet.

Brassicas may be seeded in August for fall or early winter grazing or green chopping. Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent, offers the following planting recommendations: Seed in well-drained fields and do not seed deeper than 1/2 inch. In sod, a herbicide that will suppress the sod is desirable and apply 75 pounds of nitrogen per acre to stimulate growth.

To Be Cautious When Selling To New Customers

I have received reports where some farmers are having trouble collecting money from farmers and brokers after selling crops.

When doing business with someone new, take time and check them out before delivering them your crops. As a business doing business with another business, you should ask for several credit references, some business references, and a bank reference.

Ask these references how promptly are bills paid, how they would rate this person as a client, and if there has been a problem with bad checks.

When selling anything, make sure payment terms are discussed and written down. Send bills out immediately and state on the bill

thru Aug. 18.

Lehigh Co. 4-H Roundup, Neffs Union Church and Grove, 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, August 18

Westmoreland Co. Fair, Greensburg, thru Aug. 25.

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the balance is due in so many days and a set interest charge will be added on any unpaid balances after 30 days.

These terms must be stated on the first bill. By doing some advance checking on new customers, you could prevent a lot of problems in the future trying to collect an unpaid bill.

To Clean Fan Louvers

As many times as we talk about the importance of keeping fan louvers clean and open, especially in hot weather, I am amazed to find many farmers are not doing this.

The past week I visited three poultry farms where fan louvers were not clean and were not reducing the amount of air the fans could move. On one farm, we increased the amount of air each fan was moving by 100 percent. This translated into the birds receiving 5 cubic feet of air per minute (cfm) per bird instead of 2.5 cfm per bird.

As we use larger fans with a higher cfm rating, the importance of clean louvers becomes more important. A 15 percent reduction

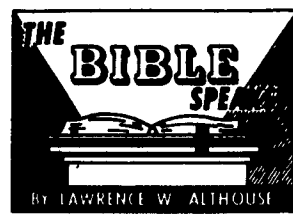
in fan efficiency on a 10,000 cfm rated fan is 1,500 cfm, while on a 20,000 cfm fan the reduction is 3,000 cfm.

Improperly maintained fan louvers are decreasing fan efficiency by at least 15 percent. With 20 to 30 fans per house, this is a sizable reduction in the amount of air being moved.

On extremely hot days, clean fan louvers is the difference between losing animal performance and animals and not. During hot weather, fan louvers should be cleaned at least twice a week. If you are unable to do this, you might want to consider switching your gravity shutter louvers to power louvers.

Reports I have received from poultry producers showed that those who had clean louvers and were providing 5 to 6 cfm per bird did not experience any additional mortality and saw very little drop in bird performance.

With the hot days of August before us, take time and clean and repair your fan louvers so you will receive the maximum performance from your fans and animals.



PROMISES,
PROMISES!
August 18, 1991

Background Scripture: Nehemiah 9:38; 10:28-39.

Devotional Reading: Deuteronomy 30:15-20.

I once had a parishoner who told me he had never joined the church because he didn't believe in making commitments that he wasn't sure he could keep. It was ironical because he was a faithful participant in my church, though he never actually joined. He came regularly to church school and worship, gave liberally, pitched in wherever he was needed, loved God and witnesses to what God had done for him.

Lots of Christians, I've found, resist tooth and nail the challenge to make commitments. I'm not thinking of just commitments to the church's budget — although that is certainly a prime example — but any kinds of commitments or promises. I have known people who haven't wanted to have their children baptized because the parents regarded the baptismal vows as "too demanding."

THE UNCOMMITTED LIFE

I'm sure this is hardly a new phenomenon, but in our own era it is a growing problem. Since the 1960's, many pursue the uncommitted lifestyle. This is the reason for the decline of marriage and the home.

I don't know of anything that can long survive without commitment, including a society which tolerates those who want to be uncommitted. Nations, schools, cultural institutions and churches

simply cannot survive without people making and keeping promises. This is particularly true of the Judao-Christian religious tradition. Judaism first and Christianity after it began as religions of commitment.

In its earliest form, the covenant that God made with Abraham and his descendants was that he would be their God and they would be his people. Later, Moses and his successors added the laws to this covenant relationship. Whenever God wanted to remind the people of what he had done for them, he would speak about their covenant. Unfortunately it was a rather one-sided covenant: God always kept his promises, but the people frequently failed to keep theirs.

IN, BUT NOT OF

In Nehemiah 10 we see the people amplifying the covenant with the Lord. They make certain promises to buttress their side of the agreement. They promise to avoid mixed marriages with the non-Jews who live in the land. Apparently they believed that mixed marriages would bring pagan influences and practices into their homes and communities. They wanted to keep free of these.

This is one of the biggest problems that face us today — how to be in the world without becoming of the world. How to maintain our Christian spiritual values in the midst of a culture that is blatantly materialistic. How to keep the church unstained by godless values and lifestyles. It isn't easy and sometimes we lose this battle.

(If you question that, ask yourself how much secular values predominate in the way we run our churches: what's the "best church"? The "biggest church," of course! Who's the "most successful minister"? The one with the "biggest church," to be sure!)

Breaking our promises to God is an offense against him. Failing to make promises is probably an even greater one.

UNCLE OTIS, I'M GOING TO BE JUDGING CATTLE AT THE COUNTY FAIR THIS YEAR, AND SINCE THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER JUDGE, IS THERE ANY ADVICE YOU COULD GIVE ME?



DAVE CARPENTER..

WELL, JUST WATCH YOUR STEP!



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