



OPINION

The Whitetail Deer Problem

The whitetailed deer is commonwealth property, which means the state deer herd belongs to every resident of the state. And if everyone owns them, then everyone is liable and responsible for the damage caused by them.

In other words, crop-damaging deer are a problem for the entire state — not just hunters and not just farmers seeking to preserve crops.

It's time for the state to either start addressing the deer problem meaningfully, or start coughing up some dollars to pay for deer damage.

The state Game Commission has the responsibility for the propagation and management of game animals and birds (public property).

It does this through guidelines, which are law. The program is supported almost entirely through hunter's dollars.

However, the commission does not have full authority to do its job. It is not allowed the tools to fully manage public property (deer) on private property.

The failed attempts by the Game Commission to reduce problem deer herds by opening up special seasons and hunting areas reinforces the fact that the problem deer are untouchable — the fields of damaged crops are not where the deer spend most of their time. They hide-out, typically, on neighboring land which is posted against trespassing.

Posting is the problem.

If the public had proper access to its property (deer), there wouldn't be a problem with large populations of deer coming off of private property to eat a farmer's cultivated crops.

Therefore, the whole issue should be legally considered as a matter of private property rights conflicting with the public's right of access to public property.

Some possible solutions would be to:

- Identify those posted private lands which harbor nuisance deer herds and condemn the privacy to allow public access for deer hunting.

This is not a proposal to open up farmland where the deer are causing problems. Instead, it's a proposal to allow hunters to go onto those posted lands which surround the damaged farmland.

Private landowners whose properties harbor nuisance deer populations, as identified by the Game Commission, would have to allow hunters on their land, outside of safety zones, for the duration of deer hunting seasons.

Think of it this way: If someone's land is harboring large populations of disease-carrying, crop damaging rats, the state would come in and condemn the site for cleanup. Large populations of disease-carrying (ticks with Lyme disease, bovine tuberculosis, etc.) deer should be considered the same in these situations.

Or ...

- Allow, as the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association (PFA) requests, a permit system to allow those who suffer crop damage a way to reduce the damage.

PFA asks that the Game Commission provide farmers suffering crop damage with deer kill permits. The permits would then be given to friends or strangers who would harvest nuisance deer prior to the regular hunting season.

Stipulate that the deer damage must be authenticated by commission personnel; and that damaging deer populations must be migrating daily or seasonally from adjacent posted lands. If a landowner purposefully allows deer to be protected on his own land and they cause crop damage on his land, that landowner shouldn't have any relief.

As an incentive, personal injury liability should be released against private landowners who allow hunting. It could be done similarly to what the insurance companies do now with auto insurance — if the hunter would sign a waiver of his right to sue, he would be allowed on the property to hunt.

Or ...

- Make the private landowner liable for damages caused by not allowing the public to harvest its property (deer). In this case, financial retribution for deer damage would be levied against those private landowners whose posting allows deer numbers to grow unreasonably and ravage neighbor's crops.

When the bill for damages would come due, it would be interesting to see how many of those landowners (especially nonresidents and those who have created large private hunting preserves at farmers' expense) would continue to post their land against hunting deer.

No one wants to see private property rights abridged recklessly. However, something must be done.

The PFA permit proposal seems to be the most reasonable and acceptable method for control.



NOW IS THE TIME

By John Schwartz
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To Reduce Crack Eggs

Crack eggs are costing the egg producer money. Cracks reduce the number of Grade A eggs you produce.

This reduction in Grade A eggs will reduce or eliminate the bonus you receive from your contract.

To make egg production profitable, you need to be making your bonus payments. In addition, crack and broken eggs will increase the number of dirty eggs produced, increase your cleanup time, and cause a breeding area for flies and bacteria.

There are several easy things you may do to reduce cracks.

Slow down the egg packing equipment as the flock ages. As speed increases, the number of cracks increase.

Keep equipment adjusted on a daily basis. Do not wait until the equipment breaks before making adjustments and repairs.

Remove all dead birds from cages. A dead bird may cause an egg jam that will break eggs and place a lot of eggs in the pit.

By paying attention to details and handling eggs gently, you will be able to keep crack eggs to a minimum.

To Think Child Safety

Tuesday's front-page story in the USA Today was titled "Fields of Danger." It was an article on the number of children hurt or killed on farms.

As we start the spring and summer farm activities, we need to be constantly thinking safety.

A Purdue study found children from the ages of 2-4 were most at risk as bystanders and ages 12-15 were another high risk group as they begin to tackle farm chores.

As a father of two small children, the last thing I want to have happen is for them to be in a serious accident or killed. I also know they are very curious people and have no understanding of danger.

As a result, adults must take the time to minimize children's risks. First, make safety a high priority in your life and set a good example for your family. Provide safety equipment for your children, such as goggles, steel toed shoes, respir-

Farm Calendar

Saturday, May 23

Northwest Jr. Beef Classic Show, thru May 24.

Sunday, May 24

Monday, May 25

Memorial Day

Clearfield Co. Open Horse Show, Luthersburg.

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ators, etc.

Next, it is up to farm parents to decide when and where children should be involved in farm operations. For smaller children, child care may need to be more seriously considered. A group of farm families may want to consider forming a babysitting cooperative.

In the cooperative families, take turns watching each other children.

Farming is a dangerous occupation. By thinking and practicing safety, we will be able to reduce the number of accidents.

To Be Considerate Of Neighbors

This weekend marks the beginning of summer activities. Outside picnics, parties, and outdoor activities will be increasing.

As more homes are being built around our farms and fields, we need to be more sensitive to our neighbors' activities. This will require more time being spent on scheduling certain activities such as manure spreading and spraying.

Spending this extra time could avoid serious and costly problems

in the future.

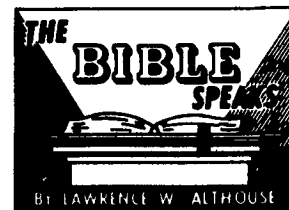
(This year I received a call about a farmer spreading liquid manure on a Saturday night with the mist drifting onto the neighbor's porch and dinner party. Needless to say, this person was not to happy.)

If we want to continue farming, we must become more aware of our neighbors. Take time and visit to become acquainted. Be interested in them as people. Discover their birthdays, anniversaries, hobbies, etc. Encourage them to tell you when they will be having outdoor activities. Also, tell them when you must do certain farming practices so they may plan their activities.

As one Delaware farmer told me, a weekend stay at a motel on him was a lot cheaper than legal fees he would have to pay to settle a neighbor's complaint on noise that happens several times a year.

By being a good neighbor and friend, and sensitive to neighbors' concerns, you should develop a good environment to farm in.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity." — Albert Einstein.



MAY I REMIND YOU
May 24, 1992

Background Scripture:

2 Peter 1:1-14.

Devotional Reading:

1 John 4:7-21.

In one of his books, Emmet Fox says that when people are offered a choice of a basic course in spiritual things or an advanced course, almost everyone wants the advanced course. No one likes to be thought of as being a beginner in spiritual things. But, actually, says Fox, in spiritual matters the advanced course is simply the application of the things we learn in the basic course.

I think he's right. In my own experience, what I so often seek to learn about advanced Christianity is nothing more than the application of what I already know. Contrary to what many people think, there is nothing mysterious or hidden about the basics of Christian discipleship. For many of us, the problem is not that we don't know enough, but that we don't apply enough of what we know.

Old Truth Applied

I wouldn't say that I never learn anything new in regard to Christian living, but that often what I "learn" is something I already know and have forgotten. If someone were to ask me, "Do you know such-and-such?", I'd reply, "Oh, sure, sure, I know that." But I tend to forget, even if just momentarily, some of the most basic principles.

So, very often Christian teaching and preaching is a matter, not of revealing new truth about the gospel, but of reminding people of what they already have heard. That's what Peter says in his second epistle: "Therefore I intend always to remind you of these things, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have... I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to arouse you by way of reminder." (1:12-14).

All of us have been taught that, if we want God to forgive us our sins, we must also forgive the sins

of others. Nevertheless, we often live as if our forgiveness was quite unrelated to the forgiveness of others. Often, when I pray the Lord's Prayer, the words, "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," strike me as if they were almost brand new.

Known or Done?

Maybe the reason we seem to forget these things is that we have grasped them only with the mind and not the will. They are ideas that we have entertained and thought about, but never really made a part of our daily living. Our minds can easily recall these ideas, but they have never been made operative in our lives. Once again, then, we see that the truth of the gospel is not so much a thing to be known as done. It is not a matter of knowing the right answers, but of experiencing the truth of them in our own lives. I believe the theologian Kierkegaard said of a certain preacher, that when God would call him home it would not be his sermons on which he would be judged, but his life.

Peter is reminding us of basically two things: (1) escape from the corruption of the world and (2) partake of "the divine nature" (1:4). Like his readers almost 2,000 years ago, we know both of those and, like them, we also need to be constantly reminded of them. It is so easy to become corrupted by the world's standards. Every day, perhaps every hour, we need to be reminded to live by the gospel, not the world.

Peter's second reminder is even easier to forget: that through Jesus Christ we can partake of the divine nature, experiencing the power and grace of God within. President Garfield once was asked why he nodded to a mere newspaper boy on the street. Replied the President: "Who knows what's buttoned-up inside that boy's overcoat!"

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