



## OPINION

### Saving Agriculture And The Bay

I was recently asked to address the Delmarva Advisory Council's Agriculture and the Chesapeake Bay Conference. The audience included over 300 farmers and key members of the region's farm bureaucracy. I welcomed the opportunity to address what I feel has been a very fortunate perception among some farmers and environmentalists, namely, that we are on opposite sides of the proverbial fence. I titled my talk, "Cooperation, Not Confrontation: The Key to Saving Agriculture and the Bay."

Make no mistake, farmland, like every other land use, certainly contributes its share of pollution to the Bay. Farmers can and must do more to reduce their impact, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) has been at the forefront of efforts to address agricultural pollution. We have pushed for incentives, education, consistent enforcement of existing regulations, and new laws where needed, just as we have done with industry, sewage treatment plants, developers, watermen, boaters and homeowners. But it is important to realize that farming, by definition, keeps the land porous, allowing rainwater to be absorbed if proper management practices are followed. Most other active uses of the land are more detrimental to the Bay. Developed land, for instance, is impervious, channeling stormwater and pollutants rapidly into the nearest water body.

We at CBF want farmland to remain in agriculture. Unfortunately, just the opposite is happening. Sprawling low-density residential and commercial development is rapidly converting farmland. What's worse, scattered development undercuts the infrastructure of agriculture. "Nuisance ordinances" are encouraged by those neighbors who may not like the noise or pungent aroma of nearby farms. Eventually, farm suppliers go out of business or change products to more suburban oriented needs. Local markets for crops disappear. And taxes go up because residential development never produces enough revenue to meet the new demand for schools, sewage treatment plants, landfills, police protection, etc. Farmers, hit hard financially, are often forced to sell off more land. The vicious cycle continues, while the community and the economy of farming decline.

Rural residents must retake control of their own destinies by planning for the future of their region. Counties must establish mechanisms to realistically assess how much growth is desired, where it is to be located, how to effectively protect sensitive areas, and where agriculture should remain as the predominant land use. Desired growth is accommodated, taxes are kept in check, the Bay and its tributaries are protected, and agriculture is at least given a fighting chance. If a system of purchased or transferable development rights is also established, farmers will have the opportunity to realize the equity in their land without losing ownership. In this scenario, everyone wins and no one loses.

Finally, it is important to realize that in addition to agriculture, sewage treatment plants are also a major source of nutrients to the Bay. Although compliance and even technology are still far from perfect, vast reductions in pollution have been achieved over the last few decades. The billions of dollars in cost for treatment plant construction and upgrades have been borne, appropriately, by the taxpayer.

The amount of public funds dedicated to reducing agricultural pollution, on the other hand, has been miniscule by comparison, perhaps one percent, at best. From a strict cost-benefit-analysis, wouldn't it make sense to rethink this allocation formula in the future?

Saving agriculture and protecting the Bay are compatible goals. Farmers and environmentalists can either learn to work together and have some chance of a better future, or we can fight with one another. Sadly, there are some strident voices in the land — extremists on both sides of the fence who feel their agenda is advanced by division rather than coalition. We at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation categorically condemn that approach. Quite simply, we need agriculture, and we believe farmers need us. Together we can achieve enormous progress. We are committed to working with farmers, not against them, in pursuit of our long-term common interests.

William C. Baker,  
President,  
Chesapeake Bay Foundation



**NOW IS  
THE TIME**  
By John Schwartz  
Lancaster County  
Agricultural Agent

#### To Set Dairy Investment Priorities

Dairy farming is a complex business that requires a large investment of labor and capital.

One of the goals of a dairy farmer is to show a good, quick return on the dollar, to build equity in the business rapidly, and to keep debt at a manageable level. To achieve this, investing in healthy, productive cows should be your first priority.

These cows will generate income quickly in the form of milk sales and later on as cattle sales. They also reproduce, and as the young stock mature, they increase in value.

The next priority should be to invest in good feed and good herd replacements. Minimize investments in land, buildings, and equipment until the herd is producing well and is paid for. Until then, it will be cheaper to rent facilities and land and purchase good used equipment.

In other words, grow into the business at an affordable rate. You should concentrate on becoming better before becoming bigger.

#### To Evaluate Composting Manure

Much has been written and said about composting manure. Let's take a look at some of the advantages and disadvantages.

Some of the advantages include:

- Composting shrinks the volume and weight of manure and reduces its moisture level.

- Nutrients become more stable and are less apt to leach.

- The composted material may be stored year-round and marketed or applied to fields at more appropriate times.

- You usually have fewer fly and odor problems.

Some disadvantages include:

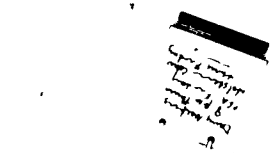
- Composting takes time.

- The process requires special knowledge and management.

- For good composting, piles must contain a proper balance of materials.

- The piles need to be turned or aerated regularly. Turning the piles requires extra stack areas, so piles may be transferred from one area to another, or the pile may be mixed and aerated with the aid of expensive machinery and equipment.

## Farm Calendar



Saturday, January 23  
Wyoming/Lackawanna Holstein  
Association annual meeting,  
Meshoppen United Methodist  
Church, Meshoppen, 7:45 p.m.  
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- Runoff from composting sites must be contained and managed properly.

- Markets need to be developed.
- Permits and record-keeping requirements might be needed.

Composting will not magically solve a farmer's nutrient management problems. Consider the costs, advantages, and disadvantages carefully when determining if composting manure will fit into your farming operation.

#### To Become Politically Active

A new administration has taken office in Washington D.C. and a new legislature has begun its work in Harrisburg. These new governments will be dealing with legislation that will be affecting agriculture.

To develop good laws, your representatives need to hear from you. These government officials need to be educated about farming. Many of them have had no contact with agriculture or understand the reasons for agriculture's success. The only way to maintain

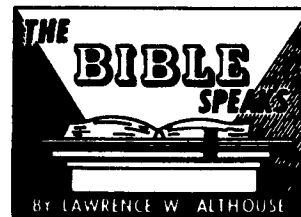
important agricultural programs is to fight for them. You need to inform the legislators of the importance of agricultural research, education through cooperative extension, uniform grading standards for effective marketing, need for strong animal disease diagnostic laboratories, and plant and animal disease prevention programs.

As food safety and environmental legislation is being developed, take an active role in offering workable ideas to address the issues. The more people involved in the development of laws and rules and regulations, the better they will be.

Do not depend on your neighbor or agribusiness to express your opinion. Do it yourself. A simple letter telling who you are, where you live, the size of your farm, and your ideas is all that is required.

Become involved in the political process and work to keep agriculture a growing industry.

*Feather Prof's Footnote: "The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a man's determination."*



**HOW MANY  
DIVISIONS DOES  
CHRIST HAVE?  
January 24, 1993**

#### Background Scripture:

1 Corinthians 1:1 through 2:13.

#### Devotional Reading:

1 Corinthians 2:1-13.

If I remember this story correctly, it was during one of their World War II meetings that Winston Churchill was speaking of the influence of the pope. With a sardonic smile, Stalin asked: "How many divisions has the pope?"

Of course, Stalin was a devotee of "godless Communism", so we can understand that he was contemptuous of the power of religion. But his dismissal of spiritual power is shared by many who profess to be Christian. The fact is that, regardless of what most people may profess about the supremacy of spiritual values, most of us live as if we shared Stalin's disdain for them. When it comes to getting something done in what we perceive as "the real world", we too want to know "How many divisions has the pope?"

It's not that we dismiss spiritual power completely; we know that it works — sometimes, if we're willing to wait long enough. But, in business, in politics, in community life, and in the world at large — and sometimes even in the church — secular power seems to get the job done faster, more surely and more obviously — if not everlastingly.

#### TEMPORAL POWER

And that's the rub, isn't it? Secular power, for all of its immediate and visible success, does not last and in the long run does not get the job done. Stalin's divisions, as well as those of Churchill and Roosevelt, won World War II. But the armies of the Allies did not win the peace, nor even solve the problems that caused the war in the first place. In the long run, the power of armies, governments, and material might does not prevail.

In Jesus' day, the Jews looked for temporal power, a messiah to lead them in military revolt against the might of Rome. That's why Jesus was such a disappointment to so many, for the cross was

a symbol of weakness and defeat. This is what Paul meant when he wrote, "For Jews demand signs . . . but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to the Jews . . ." (1:22, 23).

If the Jews looked for power, the Greeks looked for wisdom. Not just wisdom per se, but wisdom to reveal the meaning and purpose of life. With their philosophy, the Greeks sought the enlightenment of the intellect. Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus and others sought to unlock life's mysteries. And that is why so many of them found Jesus Christ such a disappointment, for the cross seemed no explanation at all. The Gospel was downright foolishness.

#### THE POWER OF THE CROSS

But Paul knows that, just as in the long run the power of the world turns out to be ineffectual, so the wisdom of the world is its real foolishness. As Paul puts it ". . . the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1:25) and "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise" and "what is weak in the world to shame the strong" (1:27). Our secular concepts of what is powerful and wise, for all their attractiveness, turn out to be a total disappointment in the long run.

The key is the cross of Christ: ". . . to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1:24). Human power and human wisdom, no matter how great and compelling, fail in the long run. What works, what delivers the goods, is the wisdom and power of God: "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1:18). In the cross of Jesus Christ we see the only power and the only wisdom that ultimately work and endure: the gracious, self-sacrificing love of God in Christ.

Stalin and his kind have never understood that. Do we?

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