



OPINION

Six Reasons To Feel Positive

We always thought that farmers are some of the best environmentalists, and now Ronald Hosteller, Penn State Extension, Edensburg sent us data to prove it.

In a national poll of farmers just released by the influential Gallup Organization, not only do farmers share the public's concern for the environment, they are also taking steps to further strengthen environmental stewardship on the farm. In fact, the poll, commissioned by Sandoz Agro, found six reasons to feel downright good about where agriculture is headed with respect to environmental issues.

1. Farmers' concern for the environment has increased. Three out of five farmers say they are more concerned about environmental issues associated with agriculture today than five years ago. They believe contamination of surface or ground water supplies by fertilizers and pesticides is the most serious environmental problem facing agriculture. In fact, water quality is mentioned more than twice as often as other problems. Nearly one-third of farmers rank this as their number-one concern.

2. Farmers are taking responsibility for environmental problems. While some 80% of farmers expect government involvement in farm environmental issues to increase, they would clearly rather regulate themselves. In fact, 39% think farmers themselves should have primary responsibility for fixing environmental problems associated with agriculture. This is almost three times the percentage of farmers placing responsibility with government and almost five times the percentage placing responsibility with agricultural manufacturers.

Farmers seem to be saying "the buck stops here," and that doesn't surprise me. I don't know a farmer who doesn't feel a strong sense of responsibility to leave the land in better shape than when he or she started farming it.

3. Farmers are making positive changes in their farming operations. Based on the results of the poll, farmers aren't sitting around waiting for someone to make decisions for them. Most already have made some changes as a result of public opinion, especially in the areas of conservation tillage and pesticide use.

They see even more changes in the years ahead: 92% say they are very or somewhat likely to use safer pesticides in the future; 80% are very or somewhat likely to recycle pesticide containers; and 71% are very or somewhat likely to use fewer pesticides.

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Farm Calendar

Saturday, March 27

Western Pa. Beekeeping Seminar, Zelenople.

Northeast Highland Cattle Assoc. annual meeting, Duration Farm, Millbury, Mass.

Pa. State Rabbit Breeders Assoc. board of directors meeting, The Inn, Reading, 3 p.m.

Bucks Co. Holstein Spring Tour to South Jersey, depart Cross Keys, 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 28

National 4-H Conference, thru April 3.

Monday, March 29

Berks Co. ASCS-Conservation District banquet, Kutztown Grange, 7 p.m.

The 1993 Northeast Dairy Conference, Hilton Hotel, Corning, N.Y., thru March 30.

Pa. Dairy Princess promotion meeting, N.E. district, Williamston Inn, Towanda, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Franklin Co. 4-H Pig Club organization meeting, Chambersburg extension office, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 30

Water Quality Clinic, Schaefferstown Fire Hall.

Pa. Dairy Princess promotion meeting, central district, Zimm's Family Restaurant,

State College, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Solanco Young Farmers spring tour, Solanco H.S., leaves 9 a.m., returns 3:30 p.m.

Central Md. Beef Management Short Course, Eldersberg Public Library, 7:30 p.m.-9:45 p.m.
Rally for New National Dairy Campaign, Logan Grange Hall, Pleasant Gap, 1 p.m.

Wednesday, March 31

Farm selling meeting, Montoursville Presbyterian Church, 7:30 p.m.

Home Hort Seminar, Landscaping With Herbs, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 7 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

Luzerne Co. Landscape-Lawn Care Clinic 1993, Holiday Inn, Dunmore.

Adams Co. Farmers' Assoc. annual spring meeting, Gettysburg Community Fire Hall.

Columbia Co. ag banquet, Bloomsburg U., 7 p.m.

Sullivan Co. Crop Day (rescheduled), St. Francis Hall, Mildred, 10 a.m.

Thursday, April 1

April Fool's Day

Gifford Pinchot FFA banquet, Northern York SHS, Dillsburg, 6:30 p.m.



NOW IS THE TIME

By John Schwartz
Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Install ROPS On Tractors

Each year an average of 132 American farmers are crushed to death as tractors overturn during operation.

Nearly all fatalities resulting from the overturning of a tractor could be prevented. The key to prevention is the presence of a rollover protection structure (ROPS) on every tractor.

Since 1967, 40 percent of the persons involved in tractor rollover accidents with a tractor not equipped with ROPS died while two percent of those persons having accidents with tractors equipped with rollover protection died. The two percent death rate was the result of one accident in which the operator was not using the seat belt.

ROPS may be either enclosed or open; however, a seat belt must be used in conjunction with rollover equipment to keep the operator inside the protective structure during a tractor rollover.

It is estimated that there are 4.61 million tractors in the United States. Of these, more than half are not equipped with ROPS or seat belts. At least on tractor manufacturer is offering ROPS at a reduced cost.

Regardless of the cost, your life is worth far more than the cost of ROPS and seat belt. Now is the time to install ROPS and seat belts on all possible tractors.

Greenhouse vegetable growers' meeting, Dauphin Co. Ag Center, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Cedar Crest Young Farmers awards banquet, Schaefferstown Fire Hall, 7 p.m.

Venango County Sheep and Wool Growers annual meeting, Venango extension office, 6:30 p.m.

ADC District 11 meeting, West Fallowfield Christian Day School, 7 p.m.

Friday, April 2

Pa. Holstein Western Pa. Spring Spectacular Sale, Mercer Fairgrounds, 7:30 p.m.

Pa. Ayshire Breeders Assoc. meeting, Williamston Inn, Towanda, thru April 3.

Lancaster County Sheep Shearing School, Bill Longenecker Farm, Mount Joy, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., thru April 3.

Pa. Tobacco Growers Association informational meeting, Tobacco Auction Barn, Paradise, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Ohio Veal Association annual meeting and trade show, Hilton Inn, Quaker Square, Akron, Ohio, thru April 3.

Saturday, April 3

Schuylkill Co. Fair Spring Consignment Auction.

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To Control Thistles

Biennial thistles are a common problem in many pastures throughout the area.

According to Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent, the best time to control these pest weeds is in the spring prior to elongation of the flower stalk. Bull thistle may be effectively controlled with 2,4-D. A combination of 2,4-D and Banvel is more effective against the musk thistle.

Ally and Crossbow will also control these problem thistles. Although mowing may help prevent seed production, most thistles will produce a secondary flower stalk after mowing and if not mowed a second time will produce seeds.

When spraying a herbicide on a pasture, it is important to read and follow all directions including grazing restrictions for livestock. Grazing restrictions may range from 0 to 60 days depending on the product, rate of application, and type of livestock being grazed.

To Evaluate Small Grain Fields

Most of the small grains went

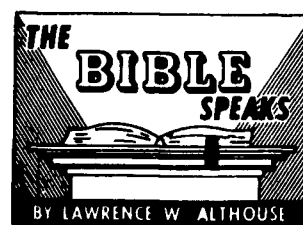
into this past winter in fairly good shape. However, some fields do show damage because of winter growing conditions and herbicide carryover.

Before fields put on too much new growth, it may be worth spending a little time evaluating them. Fields with low numbers of plants will have reduced yields at harvest time. If the stand looks thin, spend time counting the number of plants at several representative sites in each field. This may require that you get down on your hands and knees so that individual plants, not stems and tillers, are counted.

Using a 10-foot tape or string, count the number of plants at 7 to 8 locations. After the counts have been made, calculate the average number of plants per foot by adding the number of plants at each location and dividing by the total number of feet that the plants were counted in.

Depending on row spacing, the minimum number of plants needed to produce an acceptable yield are 6 inch row spacing — 7 plants, 7 inch — 8 plants, and 10 inch — 12 plants.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "Safety starts with you."



DON'T YOU CARE, GOD?
March 28, 1993

Background Scripture:

John 11:1-44.

Devotional Reading:

John 11:45-54.

Many of us at some points in our lives have either asked that question or wanted to: "Don't you care, God?"

Probably much more of the latter than the former, for most of us feel that doubts and complaints to God are not to be felt, if possible, and, if felt, not to be acknowledged. When we feel those questions rising from within us, many of us do our best to push them back down into the unconscious.

One of the places we do NOT get that impression is the Bible. There are lots of people in the Bible who dare to question and even argue with God and he does not appear to think the less of them for it. In fact: some of the best things that happen there are those that result from wrestling spiritually with God — like Jacob, like Job, like some of the prophets and sometimes like the psalmists.

QUESTIONS & COMPLAINTS

John 11, the story of the raising of Lazarus is another example. Here, some of the hardest questions and complaints are raised. Some of the bystanders who saw Jesus come to Lazarus' tomb ask, "Come not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" (11:37) Mary and Martha change the question into an accusation: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (11:21, 32). Note that Jesus' failure to arrive in Bethany before Lazarus died was not because of a miscalculation on his part or some mishap or delay along the way. "Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead; and for your sake I am

glad that I was not there, so that you may believe'" (11:14). He had previously hinted to them that "This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it" (11:4).

What Jesus is saying here is that he does love Lazarus and is concerned about him, but because there is a higher purpose to be served, the glory of God, he will not hasten to his friend's bedside as everyone wants him to do. Having almost 2,000 years of hindsight in our favor, we understand very well why Jesus did not respond to the request immediately. I believe there are times in our lives today when it seems God is not responding to our earnest prayers and we must remember that there may be a higher purpose to God's seeming non-response, a purpose that seeks our good in a way that is beyond our immediate comprehension.

A HIGHER PURPOSE

But that doesn't mean we should not ask our hard questions of God or even let him know when we are disturbed at his delay. Jesus was reproached by both Mary and Martha, yet he did not reproach them in turn. He understood why they said what they said and valued their sincerity much more than any pious deception. We need to remember that, too.

There are many times in life when we will be discouraged, hurt, and even resentful. When that happens, don't hesitate to share your true feelings with the Lord and ask "why?" and "why not?" But when you have asked your questions and made your complaints, remember that Jesus is "the resurrection and the life" with the power to command on both sides of the grave, "Unbind him, and let him go!" (11:44)

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