



OPINION

Energy Tax Would Hurt Farmers

President Clinton's proposed energy tax will hit farmers especially hard because it will raise production costs, cut farm prices and the make U.S. farmers less competitive in world markets, the American Farm Bureau Federation told the president last week.

The proposed tax will cost farmers an estimated \$1 billion per year, about 2 percent of U.S. net farm income. Half the \$1 billion hit would come from direct fuel costs; the other half would come from indirect costs resulting from price hikes for inputs like fertilizer and pesticides.

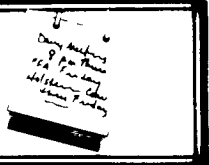
The president needs to remove the energy tax from his economic proposal because of its negative impact on efficiency, productivity and competitiveness.

Agricultural production is highly energy-dependent. The proposed BTU tax on the heat content of various fuels would result in tax increases of 7.5 cents per gallon for gasoline, 8.3 cents for diesel and 2.3 cents for propane. The new levies would affect all aspects of agricultural production, from running combines to heating barns and greenhouses and operating irrigation systems.

We believe this additional tax would prove to be especially detrimental to U.S. agricultural products in the highly competitive world market and, therefore, to farmers and ranchers.

In addition all rural residents, not just farmers and ranchers, will be hurt by the tax. The energy tax will disproportionately increase the cost of living for 65 million rural people who must drive further than urban and suburban residents to work, shop, get medical care and take children to school.

Farm Calendar



Saturday, April 24

Home Horticulture Seminar, Pan-sy Trial Day/Idea Garden Tour, Farm and Home Center, 9 a.m.-noon.
Windmill's Trade Fair, Trinity Acres, Federalsburg, Md.
Mifflinburg Young Farmers Toy Show and Winross Truck Sale, N.W. Pa. Polled Hereford Association Show and Sale, Mercer Co. 4-H Park, Mercer, show 2 p.m., sale 7 p.m.

Old Time Plow Boys Club Spring Plowing Show, Seidel Farm, Mertztown, thru April 25.

Arabian Horse Mini Fair, York Fairgrounds, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
45th annual A-Day, Delaware Valley College, Doylestown, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., thru April 25.

Sunday, April 25

Wissahickon Day Parade, Fairmount Park, Phila.

Monday, April 26

Tuesday, April 27

Delmarva Poultry Booster banquet, Wicomico Youth and Civic Center, Salisbury, Md.
Ephrata Area Young Farmers Ladies Night Program, Cloister Restaurant, 6:30 p.m.
York Co. Beekeepers meeting, extension office, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, April 28

Thursday, April 29

Berks Co. 4-H Supper Series, 6 p.m.-8:30 p.m.
Home Horticultural Seminar: Perennials, The Gardening Solution, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 7 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

Friday, April 30

Saturday, May 1

State College Lion Country Pony Club Ride-A-Thon, Grange Fairgrounds.

Sunday, May 2

Monday, May 3
Home Horticulture Seminar, Espaliers: The Mystery Explained, Farm and Home Center, Lancaster, 7 p.m.-9:30 p.m.
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Farm Forum

Editor,

I am writing to urge all farmland owners to write to their legislators urging them to pass legislation to remove all designated wetlands from the property tax roles.

It is grossly unfair and unjust to place such severe limitations upon the use of wetlands as to render them useless to a landowner and still require that landowner to pay taxes on that wetland.

According to a study done in Dutchess County, N.Y., the owner of farmland already subsidizes the residential property owner.

Their study found that a farmland owner receives in municipal services 21 cents for each dollar in taxes he pays, while the owner of residential property receives \$1.36 in services for each dollar of taxes collected.

A soon to be released study by Penn State University, done in Adams, Lebanon and Chester counties is expected to show quite similar results.

In a recent decision by U.S. Justice Anton Scalia, he wrote, "When . . . a regulation that declares all economically productive or beneficial uses of land goes beyond what the relative background principals would dictate, compensation must be paid to sustain it." Such was the majority



NOW IS THE TIME

By John Schwartz
Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Be Patient

The recent rains have placed spring work behind schedule. This delay seems worse when we compare it to the early springs of the past several years.

We need to be patient. By working soils too wet we will be doing long-lasting damage that will reduce yields for many years.

Also, we still have plenty of time to plant corn and soybeans. The normal planting time for corn in Pennsylvania is May 5 to June 20 and soybeans is May 20 to June 30. Depending on the growing degree days we receive this summer, we still could have excellent yields.

The current rains are replenishing the subsoil moisture we need for the summer dry periods. So be patient and wait till you have the right conditions to plant.

Remember one of the lessons my grandfather taught me, "treat the soil right and the soil will treat you right."

To Look At Pastures

On many farms, pastures are one of the most underutilized crops. With minimal additional effort and expense, pastures could be made a lot more productive. Chances are, you may accom-

plish this without having to tear up and reseed your present pasture. Furthermore, the best time to reseed is in late summer, not in the spring.

Start off by encouraging the pasture species that are already present by liming and fertilizing. Mow pastures to encourage growth and to control weeds. Limit the amount of time cows have access to the pasture.

Also, keep them off the pasture when the soil is wet. In late summer, evaluate the pasture and establish new species by interseeding or reseeding as necessary.

To Manage Barnyards
Jeff Stoltzfus, extension agent/nutrient management, reminds us that barnyards are very busy places on most farms.

Over the years many farmers have increased the number of livestock to remain profitable. However, the size of the barnyards often has not increased with the number of livestock.

Unfortunately, this increased

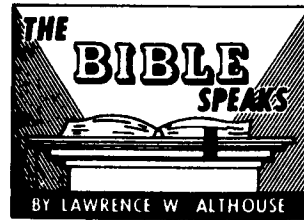
livestock activity may cause water quality and animal health problems if not managed properly.

Barnyard areas may be improved by utilizing some or all of the following methods:

- Direct manure and runoff into a manure storage area
- Direct clean water away from the barnyard
- Use rain gutters to direct roof runoff away from barnyards
- Terraces upslope of the buildings may direct runoff around barnyards
- If water needs to leave the barnyard area, allow it to pass through a grass filter strip before it reaches a stream, road ditch, or other waterway.

Barnyards are often the most visible part of any farm. A well-managed barnyard will go a long way toward improving the image of farmers with our non-farm neighbors.

Feather Prof's Footnote
"Some people dream of worthy accomplishments while others stay awake and do them"



NEVER HUNGRY
AGAIN
April 25, 1993

Background Scripture:

John 6.

Devotional Reading:

John 6: 22-29.

As I write, the 1993 Super Bowl is only a few hours away. By the time you read this, it will have become history. And I for one am tempted to say, "Thank God!"

I have always loved if not excelled at sports. When I was a junior in high school I was hired by the local daily newspaper to write a regular sports column and I partially worked my way through college and seminary writing sports. I was then and still am a sports fan and, more specifically, a Dallas Cowboys fan.

But this past week I have been tempted to say, Enough!: let's get this thing over with. It is, after all, just a game — a great game, perhaps, but still a game. On Monday, when the final score has been posted (in favor of the Cowboys, I hope!), there will be other headlines that will not have gone away by virtue of a Superbowl victory: there will still be war, famine and conflict.

THE SECOND COMING?

During these past few weeks the newspapers, radio and television have virtually identified the Superbowl with the Second Coming. It isn't. It wasn't. It never can be. Karl Marx defined religion as "the opiate of the people". He was wrong: in today's world sports, entertainment and material things are the opiate of the people. If one-fourth of the energy and attention given these last few weeks to the Superbowl had been devoted to solving some of the massive problems that face us, perhaps I wouldn't be feeling so frustrated.

The Bible is one long story of people looking to things to give them the peace and power that things — no matter how wonderful and beautiful — can never bestow. In the Old Testament it was the recurring fascination of Israel, first with idols and then with military hardware. Again and again, through his prophets, God called

his people to find their hungers and thirsts assuaged by the intangible things of the spirit. But even when they seemed to hear the message, they often settled for some *thing* less — and eventually felt unfulfilled.

Jesus knew we have certain physical needs and in his model prayer, he taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread". In John 6, when a multitude followed Jesus to the Sea of Galilee, he knew these people would have to be fed and the story of the feeding of the 5,000 is the meeting of that need. Getting, daily bread in those days was no small feat. Today, we'd probably sniff at a church luncheon of five barley loaves and few fish — and a local newspaper critic would probably give it a bad review, noting "the servings were small and the service was unprofessional!"

PERISHABLE FOOD
But Jesus is disturbed because people are focusing on the physical instead of spiritual dimensions. "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life" (6:27). Even the manna, which was given to Israel in the desert, although it came from God, could not satisfy the true human hunger. "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died... This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread..."

Once again, some of them misunderstood him literally: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?". Always looking for a material *thing*, they miss the spiritual reality. *Nothing* in this world brings us satisfaction or nourishment that lasts — not even the World Series and Super Bowls. We are meant to enjoy them but briefly. Only the bread which Christ offers us, Himself, can endure throughout this life and into eternity.

And now, if you'll excuse me, I've got to get ready for the Super Bowl.

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