



OPINION

Environmentally-Minded Farmers

While pundits loudly debate the meaning and importance of "new" concepts like sustainable agriculture, American farmers are quietly embracing sustainable practices and have been for years.

Garfield Thomas, an official with Sandoz Agro, was one of the speakers at the recent National Association of County Agricultural Agents' annual convention in Baltimore. Thomas said agriculture has always changed, and the extension service has always helped farmers adapt and adopt new farming practices.

"If you read the general press," Thomas said, "you get the idea that sustainable agriculture is some revolutionary idea that hit American farming like a bolt of lightning. But I don't see a revolution. I see evolutionary change that comes from new knowledge, new attitudes and new tools.

"The bigger issue is not whether we support sustainable agriculture or low input sustainable agriculture or integrated pest management," Thomas said. "The bigger issue is that farming in the United States is changing, and we are part of that change."

Questions and concerns about the environment have been driving agriculture since the 1960's and continue to do so. In a recent Gallup poll, more than half of the farmers have increased their concern for the environment. In addition, the economic factor has made farmers "push the pencil" more.

But the fact remains that the chemicals and fertilizers that are on the market today are environmentally safe when used to soil test needs and when used according to label recommendation. As one very conservation-minded farmer told us, all the harmful chemicals have been removed from the market. "I have no problem using what is available," he said. "and I get good results.

The goal is to balance the needs of the crop with the needs of the environment. And farmers are reaching that goal better than any other segment of society that uses our natural resources.



NOW IS THE TIME

By John Schwartz
Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Consider Harvesting Soybeans For Silage

Using soybeans as a forage crop is not new. It was done up until the mid-1950s, according to Dr. Elwood Hatley, Penn State Agronomist.

According to Hatley, soybeans had been grown mostly in the south and used as a forage. In the 1950s, the production of soybeans moved to the Midwest, and soybeans became a grain crop. Early in the history of the crop, soybeans were grown as a hay crop and may still be used as a hay crop today.

Forage quality of soybeans is satisfactory when harvested at the correct time. Harvesting should begin when the lower leaves turn yellow and before too many drop from the plant. At this point, the pods should be filled but still green. The feeding value should be between 17 and 20 percent crude protein and about 62 percent TDN on a dry matter basis.

At this stage of maturity, the total plant moisture of soybeans should be about 75 percent. It is critical that the conditioner rolls be set so the pods are not removed from the plant.

Precaution should be taken to check the herbicide's label for those herbicides which were applied to the crop before harvesting. Some products may restrict the use of soybeans for a forage crop.

Dr. William Curran, Penn State extension weed specialist, lists the following products as having label restrictions: Assure, Basagran, Blazer, Classic, Cobra, Fusilade, Galaxy, Pinnacle, Post and Post Plus, Pursuit, Reflex, Scepter and Storm. To be safe, check the label of the herbicides you used to see what the restrictions are.

To Be Aware Of Prussic Acid

There are a number of feed plants which may have toxic amounts of prussic acid under the right conditions.

The major plants of concern are members of the sorghum family. These include sorghum, sorghum-Sudan crosses, and Johnsongrass.

Unionville, thru Oct. 9.
PSU Professional Landscape Management Program, Focus On Diseases of Ornamentals, Farm and Home Center, Lancaster, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., continues Oct. 14, 21, and 28.

Friday, October 8
National 4-H Week
Northeast 4-H Leaders Forum, Scanton Conference Center, Princeton, N.J., thru Oct. 11.
Choice Plus Club Calf Sale, Mercer Co. 4-H Park, Mercer, 7:30 p.m.

These plants may have toxic levels of prussic acid in new growth which follows either frost, a severe period of drought, a period of heavy trampling, or physical damage or abundant rainfall.

Prussic acid usually becomes a problem around the time of a killing frost. Poisoned animals show signs of nervousness, abnormal breathing, trembling or jerking muscles, blue coloration of the lining of the mouth, and respiratory failure followed by death.

Keep animals away from partially frosted material until all growth has been killed by frost. Then it should be safe to graze or feed animals.

To Be Aware

Of Acorn Poisoning

Speaking about animal poisoning, another area to be concerned about is acorn poisoning. Acorn poisoning generally deals its most severe blow in September and early October.

It seems cattle like newly fallen acorns the best. If you are grazing cattle in pastures with oak trees, take some precautions to keep

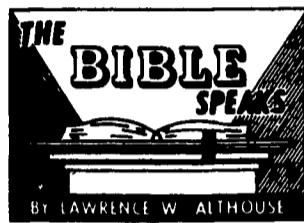
cattle from eating acorns. These include removing cattle from pastures with oak trees when acorns begin to fall or fence the cattle away from acorns.

Acorn poisoning will not occur until acorns start falling. Clinical signs are loss of appetite, listlessness, weakness, constipation early, followed by diarrhea which may be dark colored or bloody, and animals will appear bowed in the back.

Animals become weak and eventually go down. Affected animals may show yellow color, dehydration, and bloody urine. There are no specific treatments except rumen stimulant (mineral oil) and fluid for dehydration.

If possible, the removal of animals from the source of acorns will greatly reduce any loss and increase the success rate of treatment. The earlier the treatment begins, the greater the success rate of recovery.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a person's determination." — Tommy Lasorda.



The Rainbow Promise
Sept. 26, 1993

Background Scripture:
Genesis 3:14-24; 6:5-8, 11-27, 9:8-13.

Devotional Reading:
Psalms 36: 1-4, 7-9; 62:1,2

A TV program recently told of yet another expedition to Turkey to find Noah's ark on the slopes of Mt. Ararat. At a time when the world so desperately needs to rediscover the meaning of the story the flood and Noah's ark, I cannot help but wonder why anyone would spend so much time, effort and money on finding the ark itself.

For, even if this expedition were to find the remains of a 5,000 year old sailing vessel on the slopes of Ararat, it would prove nothing and it would benefit no one. What we need is the message behind the ark, not the ark itself. This story, like some of the other stories in Genesis, is one whose truth is not historical so much as it is eternal.

Not that I do not believe the great flood actually took place. There are stories of this sort throughout much of the world, as far away as Australia and the Amazon. In the Middle East there are epics of a great flood that pre-date Genesis. There are striking similarities between some of them, but the story in Genesis is the only one with a specific message from God to human kind.

IN MAN'S IMAGE

So, there may be a historical reality behind it, but the story in Genesis is not history. It is more like the stories that Jesus told. They had an important truth, but not everything in the stories was to be taken literally.

In the story of Noah this is particularly true in the writer's portrayal of God. We are told that "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth...And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth" (6:5,6). If you take that to be a literalLY, you must conclude that God realized that he had made a mistake in creating humanity. Humans make mistakes and regret

what they have done, but not the all-wise, all-knowing Creator.

Voltaire who once said that if God made man in his image, man had certainly returned the compliment. It is typical for human beings to project their own humanity on to their God, but that doesn't mean that God is like us with ups or downs, regrets and remorse, and changes of mind. Nor does he have to be reminded of his purpose. All of these are human traits, not divine. When the flood story indicates that God originally intended to destroy all humanity, but was persuaded to change his mind and save Noah and his ark, I cannot help conclude that we are looking inside the mind of a human being, not the God of the Universe.

SIN & REDEMPTION

What, then, is the message of this story? Essentially, it is a story about the consequences of sin and the promise of redemption. Whether a wooden ark rests on Ararat or not, that is truth now, always has been, and always will be.

In the story of Adam and Eve we saw that there were consequences to their disobedience. They lost the garden of Eden and their existence would be a lot harder and demanding because of it. There is a cause and effect relationship; God says: "Because you have done this..." It is true also in the story of the flood. Genesis tells us, "Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence..." Therefore, there would be great destruction. Sin always exacts a terrible price.

But the end of the story of Noah is one of redemption. Despite the staggering evil of human behavior, God holds out to us his redemption — not because we deserve it, but because he desires to do so out of love. Although humanity has tried to deface the divine image within and scuttle his great plan, he offers us the rainbow promise of his saving love.

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Farm Calendar

Saturday, September 25
Eastern National Livestock Show, Timonium, Md.
Bloomsburg Fair, Bloomsburg, thru Oct. 2.

Sunday, September 26

Monday, September 27
Clarion Co. dinner meeting, Holiday Inn, Clarion, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, September 28
Northeast Poultry Show, Lancaster Host Resort, thru Sept. 30.
Morrison Cove Community Fair, Martinsburg, thru Oct. 1.
Eastern Milk Producers Co-Op Association, Inc. annual meeting, Sheraton University Inn and Conference Center, Syracuse, N.Y., 1 p.m.-4:30 p.m.
Successful Retirement Seminar, Walgreen Co., Lehigh Valley Distribution Center, Bethlehem, continues Oct. 5 and 12, 7 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

Wednesday, September 29
Northeast Poultry Show, Lancaster Host Resort, thru Sept. 30.
New Holland Farmers Fair, New Holland, thru Oct. 2.

Thursday, September 30
Keystone Livestock Exposition, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, thru Oct. 4.
Tri-Valley Community Fair, Hegin, thru Oct. 3.
S.E. Pa. Dairy Pasture Walk, Lee and Gail Reinford Farm, Skip-pack, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
Somerset County Farmers' Association annual meeting, Berlin Community Building, 7 p.m.
Ephrata Area Young Farmers Fall Alfalfa Management Seminar, meet at Oregon Dairy Restaurant, 10:30 a.m.

Friday, October 1
Simmental Breeding Cattle Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, 12:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 2
Pa. Capitol Futurity, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, 12:30 p.m.

Sunday, October 3
National 4-H Week

Junior Breeding Cattle Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, 8 a.m.
Solanco Young Farmers annual family picnic, Brenneman Farm.

Schuylkill Co. Farm-City Day.
Monday, October 4
National 4-H Week
Holidaysburg Community Fair, Holidaysburg, thru Oct. 7.

Manheim Community Farm Show, Manheim, thru Oct. 8.
First annual Fore FFA Golf Tournament, Hawk Valley Club, Denver.

Agribusiness Leaders Forum, Rutter's Family Restaurant, Mt. Zion Rd., York, 7:30 a.m.-8:45 a.m.

Tuesday, October 5
National 4-H Week
Successful Retirement Seminar, Walgreen Co., Lehigh Valley Distribution Center, 7 p.m.-9:30 p.m., continues Oct. 12.

Wednesday, October 6
National 4-H Week
Berks Co. 4-H Market Swine Show and Sale, Leesport Farmers' Market, show 9 a.m., sale 6 p.m.

Thursday, October 7
National 4-H Week
Unionville Community Fair,