



# OPINION

## Keep Integrity In The Wetland Issue

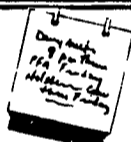
Private property rights are the backbone of farming and they must be protected. Although compensation for government seizure of property is guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution, recent confiscations of private property for environmental reasons has caused numerous financial hardships and headaches for farmers. The procedures for taking land for eminent domain should also apply to the retiring of wetlands into the public trust.

"Ownership and use of property are the cornerstones of the most economically successful nation in the world," said Dean Kleckner, president, American Farm Bureau. He was addressing the House Agriculture subcommittee. The cost of increased government regulations on private property is having a negative impact on all farmers and ranchers.

Legislative and regulatory threats can easily be written to take away water rights, change production techniques and devastate land values. Today's farmers need to be as alert to threats against private property rights as the threat posed by drought or insects.

In all these issues we need standard definitions that are consistently applied. Often farmers must deal with several government agencies that have conflicting regulations. It's very important, for example, that wetlands be classified according to real usefulness to the environment. Not all wetlands are created equally. When true wetlands are found and must be put under government control for the public good, then the public, the recipient of the land, must pay the private owner full value for the farmland at the time it was taken. This is the only way to maintain integrity in the wetland issue.

## Farm Calendar



- Saturday, December 18**  
Delmarva Meat Goat Conference, U. of Md. Eastern Shore, Princess Anne, Md., 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Sunday, December 19**
- Monday, December 20**
- Tuesday, December 21**  
Breeding Priorities for the Commercial Dairyman, Franklin Co. Human Services Building, 10 a.m.-noon.
- Swine meeting, Country Table Restaurant, Mount Joy, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.**
- Alternative Field Crops Seminar, Hegins Fire Company Hall, Hegins, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.**
- Wednesday, December 22**  
Wayne County pesticide certification exam, Courthouse, Honesdale, 8:30 a.m.-noon.
- Thursday, December 23**
- Friday, December 24**
- Saturday, December 25**  
Merry Christmas!
- Sunday, December 26**
- Monday, December 27**
- Tuesday, December 28**
- Wednesday, December 29**
- Thursday, December 30**
- Friday, December 31**

- Wednesday, January 5**  
Lancaster County Conservation District annual meeting, Stock Yard Inn, 6 p.m.
- Bucks/Montgomery Dairy Day, Family Heritage Restaurant, Franconia, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.**
- Franklin County Dairy Day, Kauffman's Community Center, Chambersburg, 9:30 a.m.-2:40 p.m.**
- Milk Marketing Board Sunshine Meeting, Pa. Dept. of Ag, Harrisburg.**
- Thursday, January 6**  
Pa. State Farm Show, judging only.
- Mercer County pesticide meeting, Elder Sales and Service, Stoneboro, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.**
- Financial Management Workshop, Schuylkill Campus, Schuylkill Haven, continues Jan. 13 and 27.**
- Friday, January 7**  
Pa. State Farm Show, judging only.
- Saturday, January 8**  
Pa. State Farm Show, thru Jan. 13.
- Pa. Rabbit Breeders Association annual meeting, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg.**
- Sunday, January 9**



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

**To Vote On Referendum**  
On February 9, 1994, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service will conduct a national referendum to determine whether soybean producers favor the continuation of a national Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Program.

The registration and voting will take place at your county Cooperative Extension office. County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) offices will determine eligibility of challenged voters, count ballots and report referendum results.

All producers who produced soybeans between September 1, 1991 and December 1, 1993 are eligible to vote in the referendum. A simple majority vote will determine if the soybean promotion program will stay in effect.

In the referendum, producers will decide if they want to continue to pay the current assessment of half a percent of the net market price of soybeans they sell.

Mark your calendars now and plan to vote on Feb. 9.

### To Prevent Poisoning of Children

Children under the age of five are the most frequent victims of accidental poisoning. Infants and toddlers are a very high risk group. Common household items such as medicines, make up, cleaners, and plants are responsible for most home poisoning.

Children who live on farms also come in contact with fertilizers, industrial cleaners (milk pipeline cleaners and washing compounds), and pesticides.

Parents should be ready to react if they find that a child has accidentally ingested a poisonous substance. Write down the phone number of the closest Poison Control Center and keep it next to your phone.

Never give emergency treatment without contacting the Poison Control Center first. Take the

- Saturday, January 1**  
Happy New Year!
- Sunday, January 2**
- Monday, January 3**
- Tuesday, January 4**  
Mercer County DHI annual meeting.

child and the container of the substance which the child swallowed, if possible, to the phone when making the call.

Remember, the best treatment is prevention. Do a safety survey. Place all medicines and chemicals out of reach of children and if possible under lock and key.

Teach children as soon as possible not to drink or eat anything other than what is given to them by adults.

### To Understand Beef Pricing

Though a T-bone steak may cost \$5 per pound at the supermarket, the farmer probably received only 75 cents per pound for the steer from which the steak came. Why does the seemingly large gap of \$4.25 per pound exist?

Many costs and product weight losses occur in transforming the steer into packaged steaks and other cuts. An average steer weighing 1,150 pounds is sent to a meat packer where it is dressed out to a 724-pound carcass, now worth \$1.19 per pound.

Removing bone and fat along with some moisture and meat loss

leaves about 478.4 pounds of salable meat, worth about \$1.62 per pound.

Price per pound increases so far reflect only the loss of inedible weight. Implicit labor costs include about 14 cents for slaughter and boxing, 4 cents for transportation, and 19 cents for warehousing and store delivery.

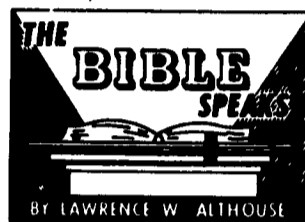
Other costs of 86 cents include packaging materials, advertising, refrigeration, firm overhead, cutting, and merchandising costs.

This gives us a cost of \$2.85 per pound.

Only about 18.4 pounds of salable meat is T-bone steak. The other 460 pounds are mostly cuts that sell at lower prices.

Calculating a weighted average of the T-bone at \$5 per pound, ground beef at \$1.55, and the other cuts at their average prices leads to an average value of \$2.85. (Source: USDA Economic Research Service).

*Feather Prof's Footnote: "Reflect upon your present blessings, of which every man has plenty; not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some." — Charles Dickens*



**SOME CAREER!**  
December 19, 1993

### Background Scripture:

Luke 2:1-20

Devotional Reading:

Isaiah 9:1-7

Born in a stable—died on a cross! Some career!

An anonymous author once wrote:

*Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village. He worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office.*

*He never owned a home. He never set foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He had no credentials but Himself.*

Obviously, there's either something wrong with his life—or with ours! By our standards today and even then, this man was a failure. That is one thing that has remained the same over the centuries: the way we determine success and failure, power and weakness, importance and obscurity. Still, the anonymous author writes:

*I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that were ever built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as that One Solitary Life.*

### WHO'S WRONG

Either that anonymous writer is wrong or the world is. Either the world's standards are in error or the gospel is. No matter how much we have housebroken the gospel, blurred the distinctions between Christ and culture, or tried to demonstrate that you can have your cake and eat it, too, the gospel and especially the Christmas story tell us quite plainly that God's ways and values are not

those of the world. And, no matter how long they have endured, ours are not ultimate.

One of the things, then, that Christmas ought to say to us anew is that fundamentally the truth of God and the truth of the world are often diametrically opposed. These are not the elements of a success story—God coming into the world in the human flesh of a helpless infant, born of a peasant girl in an obscure village of an unimportant country, born into a family so obscure that there was no room for them in the inn, an event so unimportant that only a few misguided shepherds observed it.

It is interesting that the only witnesses to the first Christmas were shepherds, for respectable Jews tended to look down on them. Because of the demands of their work, they were not able to keep the various strictures of the ceremonial law. Their flocks demanded their constant attention. They were simple people, unlearned, out of step with the rest of their society.

Do you think it was by chance that God chose these men to hear the heavenly throng announce Messiah's birth? Not I. Once again God is telling us that he sees things differently than we do. His son is given not to the powerful, but to the simple, unappreciated people. The shepherds may not have been "religious" according to orthodox standards, but they were receptive.

Someone has said that people are seldom open to learning what they think they already know. We think we know what Christmas means, so perhaps we no longer ponder its meaning. "But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart." Let this Christmas be a time for us once again to meditate in our hearts on the meaning of the birth and career of Jesus of Nazareth.

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