



OPINION

Nutrient Management Board Needs Support

The 15-members of the Nutrient Management Advisory Board to the State Conservation Commission should be commended for their work to assist in breaking new ground in the effort to put together a workable system of nutrient management in the state.

Despite a series of severe winter storms, the board has met in almost full attendance in Harrisburg since the board first formed last fall.

The only cancelation was in February, but it was not because board members could not attend — earlier and repeated weather-caused work closings prevented the staff that supports the board from getting all the information together to conduct a complete meeting. It was felt that it would be more efficient to be completely prepared for the the March meeting.

And they were.

Now, with the state Department of Agriculture accepting applications for interim certification, the reality of the program is starting to take shape.

The board members and the commission members are going to need a lot of support from the public as they struggle with bringing to reality the ideology of nutrient management.

In effect, they are entering a never-traveled area.

Perhaps it would be easier if the state were already operating on a watershed-to-watershed strategy with the management of water resources instead of being managed according to boundaries created by commercial and political interests.

Local water cycles drive a lot of the movement of nutrients. Understanding local water cycles would mean understanding differences in geologies, percolation rates, and, in general, much of the specific conditions which affect the cycling of water locally.

Overlaying a nutrient management strategy on top of a local water management plan would be a lot easier, because it would provide a foundation for planning.

That lack of such a foundation begs the question, "If there is no management of the local water cycles which help drive nutrient flows and cycles, then how can effective nutrient management be obtained?"

Perhaps it would be easier on the board, if the One-Plan Concept were more than a concept and the different agricultural agencies were already cooperating with a one-plan, one-farm system.

It would seem that planning nutrient flow on a farm would be less of a task if it could be overlaid on top of an already existing business plan.

Perhaps it would be easier, if American society was already truly concerned about what happened to their own nutrient laden waste once it was out of sight. That way when they saw manure being applied to a crop field, they would know that just because they can see and smell something doesn't mean that's all there is.

That doesn't look like it's going to happen.

Judging from the amount of discarded bottles, bags and wrappers which get tossed from bridges into streams, into pastures and generally anywhere convenience dictates, and the relatively few people with onlot septic systems who have any clue whether they work or not, there are many people who operate on the out-of-sight, out-of-mind principal.

Perhaps it would be easier for the board, if people spent 22 percent of their income on food rather than for taxes.

Perhaps if it truly was a business advantage for a livestock producer to find and use adequate areas of cultivated soils for properly utilizing excess nutrients, we wouldn't have found a need to create the Nutrient Management Act.

And, perhaps, if people would truly respect each other, themselves and their children, we also wouldn't have had a need to make yet another law.

If all these other things were in place, the job of the Nutrient Management Advisory Board and the State Conservation Commission would be much, much easier.

But, as we are without all those things, the board members need all the understanding, patience and support they can get to do the job well.



NOW IS THE TIME
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Cooperate With Burning Ordinances

This week I received a phone call from the county fire chief asking if farmers were exempt from local ordinances on burning.

This incidence was a result of many townships enacting a uniform fire code which includes no burning after sunset, notifying the local fire company before doing a control burning, etc.

The right to farm law, to the best of my understanding, is untested in this area. However, I hope we do not have to test this provision.

Talking with this fire chief, he was willing to let the farmer burn the items in question provided the farmer would notify him first.

The reason for this is to prevent the fire company from answering an unnecessary call in the middle of the night.

As populations increase in rural areas, farmers need to increase their good neighbor policies. By being good neighbors and talking with our neighbors we can eliminate a lot of problems. Develop and maintain a good relationship with your township officials and keep them informed on what you are doing.

To Reduce Neighbor Complaints

At our Nutrient Management Meeting this week, Don Robinson of the Lancaster County Conservation District presented a talk on "Simple and Inexpensive Ways to Keep The Public Off Your Back."

Some ideas he presented included keeping your farmstead looking clean and neat.

Outside appearance affects how the public views you. Keep things picked up and fixed up. Plant grass strips around fields and next to streams. This helps to keep soil and manure off the roads and from getting into the streams.

Plant trees around buildings especially evergreens. This helps to shield off the buildings while helping to control dust and odors.

Invite the neighbors over to an open house and tour. Serve refreshments and talk. Ask them to tell you in advance when they are planning a picnic or party so you may plan field activities and manure spreading according.

Give them dates when you need to spread manure so they will not plan outdoor activities then. Ask for vacation dates. When they are away would be a good time to spread manure, etc.

Knowing your neighbors and being friendly will go a long way in preventing problems.

Knox Fire Hall and Ferry's Tree Farm, Knox, 9:30 a.m.-3:15 p.m.

Dauphin County Conservation District Awards Banquet, Ag

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To Learn Lessons From The Winter of 94

The winter of 1994 will be long remembered. Some people are saying we will have similar ones for the rest of the decade. This weekend marks the anniversary of the blizzard of 1993.

What have we learned from all this?

It reminded us that snow will slide off roofs with crushing force. A fact that should dictate how we attach extensions to existing buildings.

Heavy accumulations of snow, water and ice can collapse roofs and push out supporting walls. We may need to increase our snow loading requirements for new buildings.

Also, many people found out they did not have the insurance coverage they needed for snow damage. Examine your policies now and make necessary changes.

(Do not forget flood insurance!)

Cold weather, snow and ice may disrupt deliveries, communications and services. Keep your inventories of food, feed, medications, fuel and essential supplies well stocked.

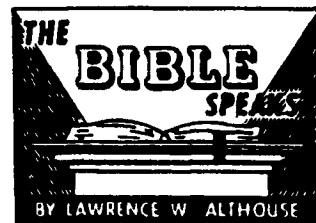
What happens when water, fuel lines, feeds, manure and equipment freeze up or when the power goes off?

Can you prevent these problems or do you have alternative plans of action?

Do you have extra storage for milk, manure and other items? In the event of a emergency, can you get help, can you summon help and can help get to you?

Some planning and action now could prevent a major problem later.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "Excellence may be attained if you expect more than others think is possible."



THE CAUSE OR THE RESULT?
March 13, 1994

Background Scripture:
Romans 3:21 thru 4:25
Devotional Reading:
Romans 2:4b-16

I was on jury duty this past week and was selected for a jury to hear a civil case between two drivers who were involved in a collision on a Dallas throughway. A woman driver, whose car was rear-ended by a man, was suing him for negligence. According to the judge, the burden of proof was on the woman, the plaintiff, and the case was decided against her because the jury did not believe that her lawyer had presented sufficient evidence.

I got the impression that many of the jurors, like myself, were sympathetic to the woman and would have liked to have seen her awarded something for her extensive hospital bills and damage to her car. But we were not there to be sympathetic; the case was to be decided upon law and legal procedure and accordingly she lost out. A court's main business is justice and equity, not compassion.

THE LEGAL MODEL

Paul's approach to the question of salvation, especially in Romans, seems essentially a legalistic one. People are called to live by the law and, when they break the law, they are pardoned only because Jesus Christ has already paid the price of their offense. Like a plea bargain, they have only to accept his offer of pardon. So Paul uses the language of the courtroom and temple sacrifice, both legalistic systems: "law", "justified", "redemption", "righteousness", and "reckoned". When we sin, we end up with either a debt to be paid or an offense for which we are to be punished. In the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, says Paul, the debt is paid for us and the offense is blotted from our record — if we accept it.

My problem with this approach is not so much Paul's language itself, but the way in which Christians have subsequently made of it a legalistic system, a kind of transactional salvation. So there have been times in the history of Christianity when Christians have

argued bitterly over whether, once a person had accepted the grace of God, he or she can fall again into sin. If, on Jesus' account, God pardons us, can we continue to sin and retain our redeemed status? And, if I say, yes, I accept the grace of God's forgiveness, doesn't my believing get me off the hook?

That's where the legalistic model fails us. Salvation is not so much a transaction, a contract to which each of the parties must live up to, but a relationship. Receiving the grace of God is not a matter of saying, "Yes, I receive it," but in living in dependence upon God's faithfulness. The "faith" that was "reckoned to Abraham as righteousness" was not a belief, much less a verbal affirmation, but a life that was founded upon the grace of God.

GRACE, NOT WORKS

Although Paul is speaking out of a legalistic model, the answer he is proposing, the grace of God, is a move from a legal system to an experience of grace, the unmerited gift. On legalistic grounds, none of us could stand acquitted before God's judgment. None of us can totally live up to the law or be good enough to earn God's forgiveness. What saves us is not a legal system, but the free, loving gift of God. It is ironic that Christians who intellectually accept that we are saved by grace instead of works, use the acceptance of that grace as the work that saves them.

How, then, do we accept the grace of God? As Abraham did, living his life in steadfast trust of God's promises. Living that way was his faith. It was not what Abraham said about his faith, but what he did about it that Paul is holding up for us. Like Abraham, none of us can ever be good enough to earn God's love. None of us can ever have that love by accepting the idea of salvation by grace through faith. But we can have it by living every day as if we are dependent upon that love.

Paul isn't trying to get rid of works, but he wants to put them in their proper place. Instead of being the cause of God's love, they are instead the result of it.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, March 12

York County Pork Producers Association annual meeting and banquet, Country House Restaurant, Glen Rock, 7 p.m.
Tioga County Holstein Association annual meeting, Whitney-

ville Fairgrounds, Whitneyville, 7:30 p.m.
South Central N.Y. RC&D Grasslands Expo, Howard Johnson's (Fred's Inn), Norwich, N.Y., 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Forest Owner Seminar and Tour,

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