



# OPINION

## Seasonal Farm Labor Act Could Do You In

In 1978, the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed the Seasonal Farm Labor Act-legislation. The Act mirrored federal law that stipulates housing and working conditions' standards for migrant farm workers, employed at a particular farm on a limited and temporary bases. According to the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau this act was approved to regulate working conditions for seasonal employees, not full-time employees on the farm.

The law functioned reasonably well until several court challenges brought by "social advocates" caused regulatory agencies to "revise" their interpretations of this legislation.

For example, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER) recently issued (Jan. '94) revised regulations that classify housing, provided by farmers to many of our year-round farm employees as "migrant labor camps" and subjects it to inspection by DER. These employees may have worked for the same farmer for ten years, living in the same house provided by the farmer-employer. However DER's new regulations now classify many homes of year-round farm employees as "migrant labor camps."

To make matters worse, the law makes it unlawful for anyone (including the farmer or any housing occupant) to interfere with or prohibit access of another person to this "migrant" housing. This is not just to DER inspectors, but to anyone that has an interest in the "health, safety, welfare, or dignity" of the occupants.

Many year-round employees of farmers now must deal with the fact that their homes have now been magically transformed by DER into "migrant labor camps." By law, or interpretation of it, has made it impossible for the occupant of these houses to legally control access to their own home.

In other areas under the law, so-called social advocates have split "regulatory hairs" to pressure farmers into paying monies to farm workers under the threat of lengthy and costly litigation. The privacy of farm workers is ignored and work on the farm disrupted by these social advocates. They gain access to farm workers under liberal and ambiguous interpretation of the law. Once in contact with workers they file charges on theoretical legal violations, causing havoc in the workers' life and in the daily operation of the farm.

Farmer-employers are considered guilty under these regulations and must prove themselves innocent. Unfortunately, the farmer would need a "Ross Perot" bankroll to fight these technical legal charges. There are few farmers willing or able to afford the prolonged legal process. The farmer is forced to make an economic decision, instead of defending his innocence. The farmer doesn't want to subject himself, his family and his business to spend months and even years in court fighting false charges. Thus, his only real road to legal freedom is to negotiate a settlement to get the charges dropped.

The harassers leave this farmer and impose the same form of torment on another farmer, who is caught in the identical legal web with the same guaranteed results. The law protects the rights of the harassers at the expense of the seasonal farm worker and the farmer-employer. We don't believe this was the intent of the General Assembly when it passed the Seasonal Farm Labor Act.

Legislation, S.B. 1255 introduced by Senator Patrick Stapleton, strikes a reasonable balance in the scope of regulation imposed under the Seasonal Farm Labor Act upon farmers employing and housing farm workers. You will want to contact your state legislator on this one.



**Now Is  
The Time**  
By John Schwartz  
Lancaster County  
Agricultural Agent

### To Be Prepared For Fires

Fires may erupt at anytime without warning. If they do occur, are you prepared to deal with them effectively and in a safe manner?

Some items you should consider:

- Do you have fire alarms and smoke detectors installed at strategic locations for early warning? Are they functional? Do you change the batteries twice a year?

- Do you have an evacuation plan for your family and farm animals? Is the plan rehearsed? Is there a place where family members are to assemble after evacuation so they may be accounted for?

- Are fire extinguishers installed in critical places around the home, barn, shop and equipment? Are they operational and serviced once a year? Do family members and workers know how to use them?

- Have you checked your home and farm to identify and eliminate all fire hazards?

### To Control Coccidiosis In Calves

Glenn Shirk, extension dairy agent, reminds us coccidia organisms may severely impair the health and vigor of calves starting at a very young age.

Coccidia oocysts may survive six months or more in the soil and fecal matter. Thus, reinfections are a continued threat to young cattle.

The organism may be killed by extreme temperatures and by prolonged exposure to hot, dry, sunny conditions. Therefore, it is no surprise that coccidiosis is more of a problem during periods when cool, wet, sloppy conditions prevail.

Moving calf hutches to new locations that have been exposed to clean, sunny conditions may help reduce the risk. Calves may be exposed to coccidia organisms soon after birth and for months thereafter.

Calves raised in close confinement and calves under stress are at greatest risk. Thus, it is recommended that calves be fed a coccidiostat in their milk replacer and calf starter and coccidial compounds be fed until cattle weigh 800 pounds.

Coccidiosis is not a problem in all herds. For additional advise and recommendations on coccidiosis, consult your veterinarian.

### To Count All Agricultural Jobs

Farming has changed a lot over the last 80 years. Today, many of the jobs performed on the farm at the beginning of the century are now performed off the farm.

Farm- and farm-related industries account for 23 million jobs in the United States. This represents about 17 percent of total employment.

Nearly 71 percent of all farm- and farm-related jobs are located in metropolitan counties. Agricultural wholesale and retail trade

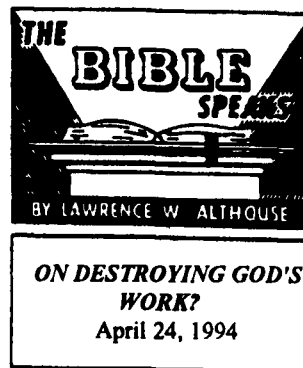
account for two thirds of these jobs or about 15 percent of total metropolitan employment.

This wholesale and retail trade segment is the fastest growing segment of agricultural employment. These jobs are located in metropolitan areas because they depend on the size and growth of consumer markets, according to Alan Strock, extension farm management agent.

Thus, we need to rethink who is a farmer and count these farm-related jobs as agriculture. As number of jobs decline in production agriculture, farmers need to expand their thinking to build political coalitions with people in jobs related to farming and small independent business owners.

By including these people who have similar concerns, farmers regain the numbers necessary to have influence in public policy.

*Feather Prof's Footnote:* "Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence and determination." — Calvin Coolidge



**Background Scripture**  
Romans 14  
**Devotional Reading**  
Romans 15: 1-17

If I had the power to do so, I would decree that every Christian congregation read publicly the 14th chapter of Romans every Sunday for the next year. For Romans 14 has a lesson for Christendom that is not being heard and obeyed: "Do not . . . destroy the work of God" (14:20).

The reason that the message does not get through to many of us is that we think of ourselves as advancing, rather than destroying, the work of God. Destroying the work of God, we think, means denying the gospel. Speaking against Jesus Christ, committing heresy, blocking the churches in their efforts. I'm sure that all of the above can be harmful to the work of God, but none so destructive as passing judgment on others.

In Romans 14 Paul repeatedly draws our attention to this destructive behavior. "Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another?" Paul asks (14:4). "Why do you pass judgment on your brother?" (14:10). And: "Then let us no more pass judgment on one another . . ." (14:13). That should be sufficient repetition to get our attention, but apparently it isn't, for often people standing outside the Christian faith frequently conclude that judging other Christians is what Christianity is all about. For many of us, it is what we seem to do best.

### IN GOD'S PLACE

Having stated and restated his admonition, Paul goes on to show us why judging one another is destructive to God's work. For one thing, it puts us in the place where only the Lord himself should be. Judgment belongs to God, not us. He is master of us all, including those whom we think are as wrong as they can be. That's why he asks "Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another?" Are we the master of others? "It is before his own master that he stands or

falls." What he's really saying is 'Do you think you are God?' When we presume to judge another person we are consciously or unconsciously trying to take God's place. Even an idiot should be able to realize how dangerous that is for our own souls.

Secondly, we endanger ourselves because, despite our own perceptions, we all stand on the same ground before our divine Judge. "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God" (14:10). Each of us has enough to be concerned with our own security in the face of God's judgment. "So each of us shall give account of himself to God." That is why in the Lord's prayer, Jesus counsels us to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Judgment of others is probably the riskiest, most self-destructive thing a Christian can do.

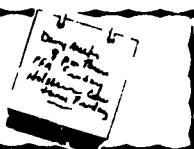
### STUMBLING BLOCKS

Third, our purpose as Christians is to help our brothers, not to judge or otherwise injure them. . . . rather decide never to put a stumbling block in the way of a brother (14:13). If you have any doubt as to whether your behavior is judgmental or not, just ask yourself: "Am I putting a stumbling-block in someone else's way?" If the answer is "yes" or even "maybe," you've got a spiritual problem that, should you ignore it, could be monumental in its consequences.

And then, if you still have doubts, measure yourself and your attitudes toward others against Paul's rule-of-thumb: "For the kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit . . . Let us then pursue what makes for peace and mutual upbuilding" (14:19).

If your attitude and actions toward others, particularly those you think wrong, "makes for peace and mutual upbuilding," then you won't have to worry about destroying the work of God.

## Farm Calendar



### Saturday, April 23

Clever Clovers 4-H Central N.J. Sheep Demonstration, Concorde Stud Farm, 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Guernsey Breeders Association Pennsylvania Blue Halter Sale, Bedford.  
Old Time Plow Boys Club Annual Spring Plowing Show, Pa. German Heritage Center, Kutztown University, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., thru April 24.  
Llama and Aplaca Festival, Tolland Agricultural Center, Ver-

non, Conn., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Penn State Dairy Expo, Ag Arena, University Park.  
Northwest All-Breed Calf Sale, Crawford County Fairgrounds, Meadville, 11:30 a.m.  
Tractor and Truck Pull, Carroll County Ag Center, Westminster, Md.

### Tuesday, April 26

Delmarva Poultry Booster Banquet, Wicomico Youth and Civic Center, Salisbury, Md.  
DER public meeting on Draft (Turn to Page A11)

## Farm Forum

Editor,

Your newspaper is always full of great things to do with agricultural business. From 4-H news to advertising fertilizer. Everything is positive. You try to report the good and bad points of life, the highs and lows. Well it is, my opinion it's time for the readers to wake up and admit there is a problem! Yes a Problem! We as dairy farmers are not getting enough money for our milk! There I said it. Some of us selling our milk to Co-ops own the Co-ops. We pay for every one of our employees from general manager to milk (Turn to Page A27)

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