



OPINION

Every Day Earth Day

The leader of New York State's leading farm and rural advocacy group says that for American farmers every day is Earth Day. He further notes that farmers are working harder and smarter than ever to protect the environment.

According to Charles Wille, president of the 23,000 member New York Farm Bureau, "The sheer fact that New York farmers own over eight million acres of land makes them common sense environmentalists. We depend on the land and water to make our living. It would be foolish to destroy the very resources that are responsible for our livelihood. In addition, our land is the same land that came from our ancestors; it is the land we hope to pass on to the next generation. It is in our best interest to be good stewards."

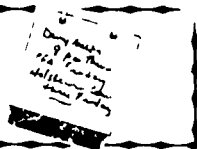
Wille said that farmers do a number of things that are 'environment friendly.' "Many farmers control insects and fungus through a program known as Integrated Pest Management. Better known as IPM, this program has helped farmers cut pesticide use by incorporating non-chemical pest control strategies, like insect pheromone traps and crop rotation, with the time-sensitive use of agricultural chemicals. In addition to IPM, farmers are working to reduce fuel usage, implement a variety of soil conservation techniques, and plant trees as windbreaks," said Wille.

Wille said the large tracts of land owned by farmers serve as a source of wetlands and a big source of habitat and food for wildlife, as well as the location of many of the trees, water and open space. He added, "Interestingly, I know one Western New York farmer who annually floods his corn fields with water after the harvest--thus providing food for waterfowl."

Wille went on to say that for non-farmers Earth Day has been celebrated for over 20 years. Farmers, on the other hand, have been working to be good caretakers of the land and water since man has been farming-- in other words, thousands of years.

Last week the average citizen celebrated Earth Day. Farmers did too, as they also are doing this week and next week and every following week.

Farm Calendar



Saturday, April 30
New York Guernsey Breeders Association annual meeting, Cortland, N.Y.
Delaware Valley A-Day, Delaware Valley College, thru May 1.

Sunday, May 1
Delaware Valley Milk Goat Association meeting, Pottstown, (610) 326-9475.

Monday, May 2
DER public meeting on Draft Nutrient Management Strategy, Centerville Middle School, Lancaster, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 3
DER public meeting on Draft Nutrient Management Strategy, Market Street State Office Building, Harrisburg, 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 4
Greenhouse Vegetable Growers' meeting, Days Inn, Shamokin Dam, 9:15 a.m.-4 p.m.
Nutrient Management Advisory Board meeting, 2301 N. Cameron St., Harrisburg, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Twilight Growers Meeting, John Brubaker Farm, Kutztown, 6 p.m.
Groundwater Protection Satellite Seminar, Penn State Allentown Campus, Fogelsville, 2 p.m.
Good-Bye Reception In Honor of Mae B. Hostetter, Dauphin County Ag and Natural Resources Center, 6 p.m.-8 p.m.
Groundwater Protection Teleconference, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 2 p.m.-4 p.m.

Thursday, May 5
Changes Needed In Animal Agriculture To Meet Real World

Needs, Holiday Inn, College Park, Md.
DER public meeting on Draft Nutrient Management Strategy, Penn State Wilkes-Barre Campus Technical Center, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, May 6

Saturday, May 7
Md. Sheep and Wool Festival, Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, Md., thru May 8.

Sunday, May 8
Happy Mother's Day!

Monday, May 9
Poultry Management and Health Seminar, Days Inn, Shamokin Dam, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 10

Wednesday, May 11
Pa. Veterinary Nutrition Forum monthly meeting, Days Inn Airport Hotel, Harrisburg, 7 p.m.
South Jersey Twilight Meeting, A.J. Gaventa & Sons Cedarville Farms, Repaupo, N.J., 6:15 p.m.
Total Quality Management Seminar, Holiday Inn, Lionville.

Thursday, May 12

Friday, May 13

Saturday, May 14

Sunday, May 15
Berks County 4-H Horse Council Open Horse Show, Berks 4-H Center, 9 a.m.

Monday, May 16
Nutrient Management Conference, Atlanta Airport Hilton

Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Work Safely Around Manure Pits
Deaths occur virtually every year from people and animals breathing hydrogen sulfide gas from liquid manure storages.

Hydrogen sulfide is a gas that stays below the surface of liquid manure pits until it is released by stirring or pumping.

University of Iowa research has found that more than half of all liquid manure storage facilities are capable of producing dangerous amounts of hydrogen sulfide.

A reminder of this potential danger to all family members and employees could prevent a tragedy.

Make sure all people are out of buildings and air movement is maximized before starting to agitate or empty storage facilities, especially for buildings with animals over pits. Agitate pits as slowly as possible so hydrogen sulfide dissipates before it reaches dangerous levels.

Never enter a liquid manure storage facility without a source of fresh air and a planned method of escape.

To Use Lawn Mowers Safely
With spring finally arriving, grass is growing rapidly. Bruce Hellerick, extension horticultural agent, offers the following lawn mowing safety tips:

Hotel, Atlanta, Ga., thru May 18.

Tuesday, May 17
National Dairy Promotion and Research Board 10th annual meeting, Park Hyatt, Washington, D.C., thru May 19.

Wednesday, May 18

Thursday, May 19
Pa. Fair at Philadelphia Park, Bensalem, thru May 30.
Poultry Education and Research Center Dedication, Penn State University Park, 11 a.m.
Christmas Tree meeting, Conifer Ridge Farm, Purcell, 6 p.m.

Friday, May 20

Saturday, May 21
York County Dairy Princess Pageant, 4-H Center, 8 p.m.

Sunday, May 22

Monday, May 23

Tuesday, May 24

Wednesday, May 25

Thursday, May 26

Friday, May 27
Atlantic National Angus Show, Timonium, Md., thru May 30.

- Know the proper way to start and operate the mower. Read the manual before operating.
- Do not permit children or others unfamiliar with the mower to operate it.
- Never leave the mower running unattended.
- Know how to stop the engine quickly.
- Do not attempt to adjust or clean the mower when it is running.
- Do not refuel a gasoline engine while it is running.
- Never attempt to work on a mower until the spark plug is disconnected.
- Keep hands and feet away from all moving parts.

To Do Soil Tests

Farmers have two good reasons to soil test, according to Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent.

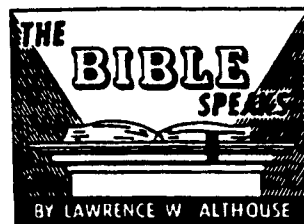
First, soil tests save money. Second, they help save the environment. Soil tests tell the farmer what the nutrient level of phosphorous and potassium are in the

field and how much fertilizer is needed to reach the desired level without overapplying fertilizer. Traditionally, soil tests do not test for nitrogen in a preplanting situation because nitrogen is a very mobile nutrient. Soil tests for nitrogen are available for use later in the growing season to determine the need for sidedress nitrogen. Fields should be tested every three to five years or when a different crop will be grown. Soil tests provide the farmer with pH, phosphorus, and potassium information, along with recommendations for the amount of lime and fertilizer needed to reach the desired yield goal.

Farmers who add manure to the soil before planting are provided information on valuing the manure against any fertilizer recommended.

By soil testing and following the recommendations, farmers may reduce costs and keep nutrients in balance for maximum yields while protecting the environment.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "If you want to truly understand something, try to change it."



EATING WITH THE GENTILES
May 1, 1994

Background Scripture:

Galatians 1 through 2

Devotional Reading:

1 Timothy 1:12-17

It may be difficult for many of us to understand why this question of eating with Gentiles was so important in Paul's time — so important that he made a public condemnation of Simon Peter for refusing to sit at table with Gentiles who had been won to Christ.

Of course, we're on Paul's side. It seems idiotic to us that Peter should shrink from sharing a meal with Gentile Christians. Hadn't he himself had that life-changing experience at the house of Cornelius in Joppa? Did not Peter say, as a result of that experience, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit any one of another nation; but God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:27-29).

Yet, in order to understand the importance of this conflict, we have to realize why this was so important to the Jewish Christians. Originally, there was a good reason for this practice. Throughout most of their history the Jews were surrounded by paganism. The Old Testament gives us continual evidence of the vulnerability of the Hebrews to the influences of paganism.

Something Special

The people of Israel were called to be God's special people and there were certain practices and life-style features that were designed to keep them untainted by the pagan world. Circumcision was to be a mark of their specialness. So was the way they conducted themselves at the table. As one commentator, Raymond T. Stamm, puts it: "Begun with the joyful thanks-giving and sanctified by conversation concerning God, a common meal became God's table, and the Jewish Christians were unwilling to risk spiritual contamination by eating with those who did not share it."

As to why Peter weakened on this matter, we must realize that he knew how sensitive the Jewish Christians were on this subject. Peter didn't want to alienate these people. If a whole segment of the church became upset, how would the gospel benefit from that? In changing his stance on this, was he not simply doing what his constituents wanted him to do? If he had put it to a vote, certainly they would have overwhelmingly voted against this kind of liberalism.

Subverting The Gospel

So, the prohibition of eating with non-Jews was meant to preserve the sanctity of the Jewish tradition. As such, it was well-intentioned. Yet, as so often with us, despite the good intentions, the prohibition had its pitfalls, too. And these pitfalls were subtle, for they tempted sincere Jews to pride and self-righteousness. Yes, the traditions kept them different, but they let this difference subvert the true nature of their specialness.

Now, the point for us in May, 1994 has little to do with whom we sit at table. But that doesn't mean that what happened between Paul and Peter at Antioch is irrelevant to us. Even though the circumstances may be different, all of us have our "eating with Gentiles" problems today, too. Can we share Holy Communion with Christians whose beliefs may not be the same as ours? Should we share our churches with people whose life-styles make us uncomfortable? In order to avoid being stained by the pagan world, don't we also have to keep ourselves pure and unsullied by others?

It is in the midst of questions such as these that Paul says to us, as he did to the Galatians, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel..." From a gospel of grace to a gospel of works. And that is not a gospel.

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