

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Tax Reform Needed

With local tax reform a hot issue in the political debates now in progress we list several basic ideas that should be considered.

- School districts should be given the authority to impose a flat rate income tax and real property tax; should have the discretionary authority to decide the tax rate and the proportionate share of total tax revenues originating from income taxation and property taxation.

- The current statutory cap in the rate of earned income taxation should be eliminated, provided current real property tax revenues are reduced by any additional revenues from the higher rate.

- Nuisance taxes, including occupation taxes, should be eliminated.

- The county personal property tax should be eliminated.
- All taxing districts should be required to obtain prior approval by voter referendum to raise taxes or incur debt beyond a fixed percentage of the current tax base.

Although several bills in the hopper to reform the local taxation system, House Bill 2202 has received considerable attention and action. An amended version of H.B. 2202 passed House of Representatives. It authorizes municipalities, school districts and counties to adopt an optional local taxation form, authorized under current law. Taxing entities opting for the new taxation form can not have any intangible personal property tax, flat rate or assessed value occupation tax, occupational privilege tax, per capita tax, earned income tax or any current tax permissible under the Local Tax Enabling Act.

Counties could approve either a one-percent sales and use and hotel occupancy tax or a half percent personal income tax. A county that chooses a county personal income tax could not impose the county sales and use and hotel occupancy tax.

The one percent sales and use and hotel occupancy tax, if adopted by a county, would be collected like the state sales tax. The sales merchant would make payment to the Department of Revenue. These tax revenues would be distributed monthly to the county and to municipalities and school districts, adopting an ordinance in support of the county tax. The revenues would be divided on a formula of 50 percent to the county, 25 percent to municipalities and 25 percent to school districts.

Counties could not reap a windfall in revenues in the first year of a new sales and use tax and hotel occupancy tax. All new revenues exceeding 105 percent of the previous year's revenues, under the old taxation system, would be used to replace revenues lost by taxes eliminated and then to proportionately reduce county real property taxes. Municipalities and school districts, receiving county sales tax revenues, would be required to use the monies to replace revenues lost by taxes eliminated, and then to proportionately reduce real property taxes.

Municipalities and school districts would be authorized to impose a personal income tax at a rate of up to one percent for municipalities and up to two percent for school districts. Again revenues collected by a municipality or school district exceeding the 105 percent threshold would be distributed in the same manner as excess revenues from the county sales tax and the use and hotel occupancy tax.

A municipality would also have the option to impose a municipal services tax of up to \$10 on all persons employed within the municipality.

A county, municipality or school district, opting for the new authority, could not increase any local tax rates (including real property taxes) without voter approval in a referendum. There would be some exceptions to this rule. The tax rate can be increased in response to a state emergency declared by the Governor; to carry out a court decision; to pay interest on local indebtedness incurred under the Local Government Unit Debt Act; to meet pension fund requirements; and to respond to a municipality or school district found "distressed" under applicable laws.

Once a taxing body has this new taxing system in operation for at least three years, it may elect by voter referendum to revert to the taxing authority provided in the current Local Tax Enabling Act. This proposed legislation would authorize a taxing district to allow tax deferrals of real property tax increases on homestead property owned by low-income residents. The total deferral allowance could be up to 85 percent of the home's market value, if unencumbered, or 70 percent of market value, if it is encumbered. Taxing districts would be authorized to create local tax study commissions to make non-binding recommendations to the governing body.

Certainly a shift from property taxes to a system of taxes to be supported by the general population would be more acceptable to owners of family farms.



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

To Evaluate Starter Fertilizer

Many farmers are debating the benefits of starter fertilizer on corn.

Limestone soils which have been receiving regular applications of manure rarely see benefits of starter fertilizer in corn planted after May 1. No-till fields which are usually colder may benefit from a starter fertilizer.

The phosphorus level in the soil seems to be the key factor. If your phosphorus level is in the optimum or higher levels, you most likely will not need a starter fertilizer.

Also, if you are continually fertilizing your fields with manure, you should wait to early June to determine if you need additional nitrogen. By using the nitrogen soil test, you will be able to determine if additional nitrogen is needed.

By following these test procedures, you may reduce fertilizer costs, apply the nutrients when the crop may best use them, and protect water quality.

To Use Buffer Strips

A major chemical company is promoting a program called "Operation Greenstrip."

This program is designed to encourage the use of grass buffers along streams and waterways. These strips help prevent pesticides, fertilizers, and manure from entering streams and waterways.

Research has shown that a 16-foot-wide grass strip along the edge of fields prevents 80 percent of pesticides from reaching streams.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, May 7

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

Apple Blossom Festival, South Mountain Fairgrounds, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., 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.

(Turn to Page A26)

Today, several pesticides are not permitted to be applied within 66 feet of an area where water enters a stream. You may avoid stricter regulations and prevent a major fine by leaving buffer strips on your farm.

Farming in an urbanizing environment requires doing things differently. By practicing some simple and inexpensive practices now will create public goodwill and reduce the need for government regulation.

Remember, most government regulations are developed to correct a public concern or perception i.e. water quality, odor, eye sore, etc.

To Recycle Pesticide Containers

The American agricultural chemical industry is the first industry in the nation to be working for programs to reduce the amount of packaging material in the waste stream.

They estimate that in 1994, recycling programs in 25 states will collect more than 1.3 million

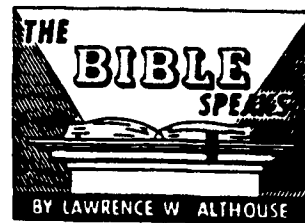
pounds of plastic containers at state-approved sites.

To find out if your county is participating in the program, contact your local county cooperative extension office.

The Agricultural Container Research Council (ACRC) is supporting recycling programs across the nation to collect empty containers and to find other uses for them. To date, because of the potential for residues in recycled materials, most of the plastic collected is being utilized in the generation of electricity. As research finds alternative uses and assesses the risk of residues, other uses of the plastic will be found.

To be acceptable for recycling, plastic containers must be empty, clean, inspected, uncapped, dry, with a label on the container. Containers cannot be smashed or cut up. An empty container is one that has been triple- or pressure-washed.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "It is impossible to be a total failure and it is impossible to succeed perfectly."



READ THE WILL!
May 8, 1994

Background Scripture:

Galatians 3:1 - 4:7

Devotional Reading:

1 Corinthians 12:11-33

The newspapers are full of stories of infamous crimes being committed in our neighborhoods: senseless drive-by shootings, a three-year-old girl murdered by her uncle, a vagrant set on fire by a gang of youths, a mother hiring someone to kill the ex-boyfriend of her jilted daughter, and so on. Each time I read of one of these tragic crimes I try to understand how the guilty persons could have brought themselves to do these things. Usually, I cannot.

And then, in inner dialogue I say to myself: "I suppose you'll still claim these people are also children of God?" Often that is very hard to affirm and I have to wrestle with it. But then I return to the conviction that yes, these murderers, despite their demonic behavior, are nevertheless children of God — but they don't know it! And, because they don't know it, they don't act like it. In fact, they act just the opposite, like sons and daughters of the Devil.

There is a temptation to believe that there are essentially two kinds of people in the world, the good people and the bad. The good people are people who do good things and the bad people similarly do bad things. In a sense, according to this belief, we are created differently and in our lives we just act out what we are. There was a time when many people assumed that this was just a matter of blood: good blood lines produced good people and bad blood lines produced bad people. Today, we might say that it is a matter of genetics.

ALL SINNERS!

But that is not the prevailing view of the Bible which clearly maintains that all of us are sinners, all of us fall short of the glory of God. All of us have the choice of good and evil virtually every day of our lives. And none of us go

through life making all the right choices. Far from it.

I do not pretend to understand the criminal mind, but I have had enough exposure to know that many of those "bad" people in our jails share the same opinion of themselves as we do: they also believe that they are "no good," doomed to live a life of failure and evil, unable to rise above their darkest impulses. And because they believe that, they live it out in their lives. They fulfill our prophecies and their own expectations.

Many of us who are somewhere in-between the righteous and the evil polarities, have the same problem. We, too, may feel that we were behind the door when the halos were passed out, that somehow, although we are not doomed to evil, neither are we destined to much good either. We think little of who we are and we fulfill our own negative prophecies.

ADOPTION BY GOD

So, all of us need to read and re-read the will to find out who we are: "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (4:4,5). All of us are created by God to be his sons and daughters, but if we do not know that, we do not live as his children and our relationship to God is like a birth certificate in the courthouse files and nothing more. The way we live destroys the natural relationship.

But the good news is that, regardless what we've done to that relationship, through the Sonship of Jesus Christ God is willing to adopt us as his children. "So through God you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son then an heir." There isn't a man, woman or child of us in this world who cannot be God's child if we know-it and respond in faith. We are all in the will. All we have to do is claim our inheritance. Have you?

Lancaster Farming

Established 1955

Published Every Saturday
Ephrata Review Building
1 E. Main St.
Ephrata, PA 17522

— by —

Lancaster Farming, Inc.

A Stehman Enterprise

Robert G. Campbell General Manager
Everett R. Newwanger Managing Editor

Copyright 1994 by Lancaster Farming