



## OPINION

### Need Sound Food Policy

"Maintaining a sound food and agricultural policy is vital not only for producers and consumers alike, but also the economic well-being of the U.S.," said Wayne Boutwell, president of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, testifying before the Senate Agriculture Committee recently.

Boutwell was speaking on behalf of the Alliance for Sound Food and Agricultural Policy, whose members include a broad cross-section of organizations representing farmers, ranchers, cooperatives, the Farm Credit System, and the state departments of agriculture.

"In the U.S., food accounts for only about eight percent of total consumer expenditures, the lowest of any country in the world—even adding in the cost of farm programs," Boutwell said. "In Europe, where government spending on agriculture is three times higher than the U.S., consumer expenditures on food range from 11 to 20 percent. Japanese consumers spend 19 percent.

Over the past 20 years, U.S. retail food prices increased on average about 4.5 percent annually, compared with an average of six percent of the non-food sector. Had retail food prices increased at the same rate as other sectors of the economy, American consumers would have spent on average \$60 billion more annually for the same food purchases. This would have been felt by every American household, but especially those at the lower end of the income scale.

All of this has been achieved at a cost less than one percent of the entire federal budget, Boutwell noted. Agriculture spending, he pointed out, has declined sharply in recent years as a result of the 1990 Farm Bill and related legislation. According to the Congressional Budget Office, spending will continue to decline by approximately 20 percent over the next 5 years to an average of \$8 billion annually under current policies.

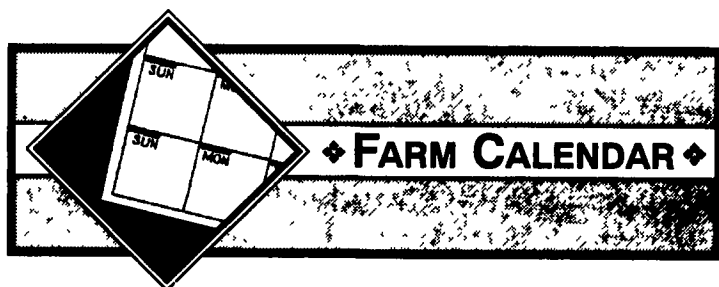
It has not been the increasing cost of farm programs that has contributed to the federal budget deficit.

The European Union, which over the past five years outspent the U.S. by six to one in terms of export subsidies, will be able to more than maintain its historical advantage under GATT. Along with other foreign competitors, it can be expected to continue to aggressively seek to maintain and expand its share of the world market.

"This is the real world of competition," Boutwell emphasized. "Without a similar commitment, U.S. agriculture will be at a significant disadvantage. To the extent that agriculture spending is unfairly singled out for reductions that go beyond our commitments under GATT," he said, "would be tantamount to unilateral disarmament."

The impact, he pointed out, would be felt throughout the economy. This is because U.S. agriculture is the nation's largest single industry, accounting for nearly one in six jobs. Nearly one million jobs, he said, are dependent on U.S. agricultural exports alone. Such exports currently amount to approximately \$43 billion, generate nearly \$100 billion in related economic activity, and contribute to a positive trade balance of nearly \$20 billion.

In concluding his remarks, Boutwell said, "Mr. Chairman, you have set the stage for this hearing by asking the question—'Farm Programs: Are Americans Getting What They Pay For?' On behalf of the Alliance, we believe the answer is a resounding 'YES.'"



**Saturday, April 8**  
77th Little International Livestock Expo, Penn State Ag Arena.  
Maryland Holstein 25th annual State Spring Show, Timonium.  
Southwest Pa. Equine Symposium, David Lawrence Convention Center, Pittsburgh.  
Income Opportunities For Rural Areas Workshop, Garrett Community College, McHenry, Md.  
6th Annual Forest Stewardship Landowners' Workshop, Mansfield U., 9:30 a.m.

**Sunday, April 9**  
Palm Sunday  
**Monday, April 10**  
**Tuesday, April 11**  
**Wednesday, April 12**  
Pasture Management Program, Frederick County CES, Frederick, Md., also April 19 and 26.  
No-Till Field Day, Leroy and Scott Aldrich Farm, Eastern Bridge-water Township, 1 p.m.  
(Turn to Page A31)



### Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz  
Lancaster County  
Agricultural Agent

#### To Prepare For Tax Reassessment

Lancaster County is entering the final stages of the court-ordered reassessment. The new tax notices should be mailed by May 1.

With the last reassessment being done in 1962, property values will be a lot higher. Based on United States agricultural census data, the average farm value in Lancaster County has increased from \$33,660 in 1959 to \$427,332 in 1992—about 11.7 times. The estimated total real estate value increase in the county will be 5.5 times.

Just because the assessed value of your property has increased does not mean your taxes will increase. Since everyone's values are increased, some people will find their taxes going down, some staying the same, and others will increase.

Reassessment reestablishes a fair playing field. Thus, everyone will be paying their fair share of taxes based on current market values. If the value of your property increases more than 5.5 times, there is a good chance your taxes will increase. This means your property was underassessed and has been receiving a tax break. Since many farms will have reassessed values greater than 5.5 times their previous assessment, there will be increased taxes due in 1996.

However, farmers may take advantage of Act 319 or Clean and Green to reduce their taxes.

#### To Learn About Act 319

Act 319 or Clean and Green was enacted to help protect farmland. It allows agricultural land to be assessed based on its income-producing ability instead of its fair market value.

In Lancaster County the fair market value of agricultural land will be around \$3,500 per acre. Clean and Green values will probably be between \$50 and \$1,300 per acre. These values are based on the soil's ability to produce corn.

Act 319 recognizes that a lot of farmers own land primarily to produce crops and animals. These farmers are also interested in passing the farm to the next generation instead of owning land as an investment like stocks. Thus, the land is being valued for its use—farming rather than for investment.

If use changes from farming to some other use, then the person who changes the use must pay seven years of back taxes and interest. There are provisions for selling a small portion of the land for a residence and various rules concerning the rollback taxes.

To take advantage of the reduced taxes in 1996, applications for Clean and Green must be

filed by June 1, 1995 in the County Assessors office. Applications must be notarized and filing fees must accompany the application.

For many farmers, Clean and Green will represent at least \$40 per acre in tax savings. With the average size farm in the county being 85 acres, this is a savings of \$3,400.

For more information on Clean and Green, contact the County Assessors office or Lancaster County Cooperative Extension at 717-394-6851.

Remember, you will only have a short time to file for Clean and Green. Do not wait until the last minute.

#### To Stand Up For Agriculture

With the rapid urbanization of farmland in southeast Pennsylvania, farmers need to decide how serious they are about keeping their farms in agriculture.

If we want to maintain land in farms, farmers need to be more

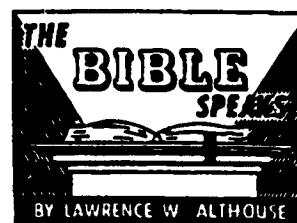
active in local planning commission meetings and take an active participation in public policy debate.

Farmers should have the say on how land is used in agricultural security areas and land-zoned agriculture. Farms in these areas should be allowed to farm and expand livestock and poultry operations without urban neighbor interference as long as the farms meet current laws and ordinances.

Farmers also need to oppose development in agricultural areas for the same reason agriculture, industrial, and retail development is opposed in urban areas. These include increased traffic, which impedes your farm operation and safety, increased trash to be collected from fields, crop and animal damage, and increased taxes.

If we are to preserve farms, we must start now to insure enough land stays in farms and farmers are allowed to adapt new technology and expand in order to stay compe-

(Turn to Page A31)



TOO GOOD NOT TO BE  
TRUE  
April 16, 1995

#### TOO GOOD NOT TO BE TRUE

April 16, 1995

**Background Scripture:**  
Luke 24:1-11; I Corinthians 15  
**Devotional Reading:**  
Philippians 2:1-11

Some years ago I was at a local church conducting a seminar on what the Bible teaches about life after death. After the sessions, one of the staff ministers took me aside and said, "I wish I could believe all that, but I can't." "What do you believe?" I asked. "When we die, that's it," he said, "the end." He paused a moment and then said, "Life after death, that's too good to be true."

I wondered how he could continue in the ministry if he felt that way. There may be some options for Christians of various persuasions—how to pray, the manner of taking communion, and so forth—but I have always believed that Christ's and my resurrection are at the heart of the "Good News" of Jesus Christ. Otherwise, the gospel is bad news.

Paul acknowledges this in I Corinthians 15. "For I delivered unto you as of first importance...that Christ died for our sins...was buried...raised...and that he appeared to Cephas, to the twelve...to more than five hundred...to James, then to all the apostles... (and) 'Last of all...he appeared also to me' (I Cor. 15:1-8).

#### FIRST IMPORTANCE

This is of "first importance" for, if Christ was not raised, then "your faith is in vain" (15:14). The "Good News" of Jesus Christ is founded on the bedrock of his resurrection. Why? Because if Christ was not raised, how can we hope to conquer death? Our survival is dependent upon his. And if he did not survive then we do not, and life would be futile and vain. "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied" (15:19). The teachings of Jesus Christ are founded upon the presumption that there is something for us be-

yond the grave.

I know there are those who disagree, who say to me that this life on earth is enough. But not for me. It is the promise of a life beyond that empowers the teachings of Jesus. Otherwise, as Paul suggests, "If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die'" (15:33). What we believe about our eternal destiny—life with God or the silence of the grave—has a direct bearing upon how and why I live here and now.

Then Paul goes on to raise the eternal question: "But...How are the dead raised?" (15:35). Note that Paul has switched over from Christ being raised to our being raised. Eternity hinges not just on whether Jesus was victorious over the grave, but whether we will be too. But the question we all want answered is: what does being "raised" mean?

#### BODY/SPIRIT

Tough question, for when we look to the gospels for help, we're left with answers that lead to more questions. Some suggest that Jesus is raised as a physical body; others as a spirit; and still others a combination of both. Paul cannot answer except to assure us that Jesus was not raised with a physical body. When we speak of the resurrection of the dead, we are not expecting to get these old bodies back, nor even new physical bodies. Paul uses the term "spiritual body," a contradiction in terms. It is difficult for us to envision a form that is not physical. The best we can conclude is that we will be raised, not with a physical body, but in a form that permits us to have recognizable individuality.

Ultimately, how we are raised is not important. What is? Paul says: "Therefore my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (15:58). That is good news that is too good not to be true!

**Lancaster Farming**  
Established 1955  
Published Every Saturday  
Ephrata Review Building  
1 E. Main St.  
Ephrata, PA 17522  
—by—  
**Lancaster Farming, Inc.**  
A Steinman Enterprise  
Robert G. Campbell General Manager  
Everett R. Newswanger Managing Editor  
Copyright 1995 by Lancaster Farming