



OPINION

Prepare To Make Your Thoughts Known

We come to the end of another year with the knowledge that we are blessed in this country despite all the negatives that circulate in the farm community. Maybe the most important thing we are free to do is change the way government operates if we don't like what they are doing. They can't do this in other countries.

Along these lines we compliment Gov. Tom Ridge for his follow-through on a campaign promise to make DER more friendly. This happened with the introduction of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). At a recent Ag Issues Forum, Lynn Langer, chief of the nutrient management program, said regulatory, educational, compliance assistance, and alternate use aspects are included in the new department's efforts. "DEP looks at nutrient management as putting the nutrients in manure back into production rather than in the groundwater or streams," Langer said. Of course, no farmer worthy of the name could disagree with this outlook.

Nevertheless, a whole new set of regulations are about to be put on farmers in Pennsylvania. The state, under the Ridge administration, is playing down the penalties for this new program. Officials say they want to put their effort into helping farmers comply rather than to "carry a big stick." That's commendable. But the new regulations will continue long after the Ridge administration is out of office. And a new administration may take a different view because of public pressure.

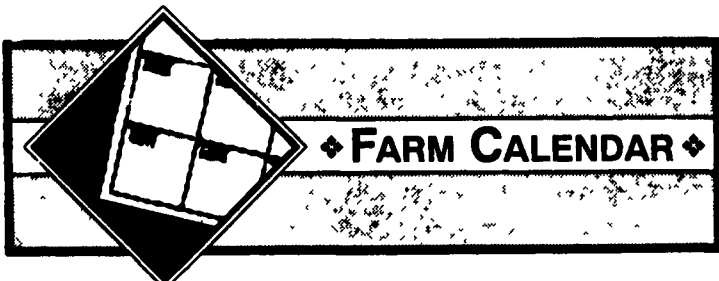
Already, environmental groups have expressed displeasure with this new attitude in Harrisburg. According to a recent release from the Associated Press, the number of environmental fines issued by the state has fallen quite noticeably. But the Sierra Club says this reduction in fines is not a sign of progress but an invitation for polluters to come to Pennsylvania.

James Seif, DEP secretary, disagrees. He says the department needs to be practical in its approach. Serious violators will be punished, but the state also needs to look for ways to correct problems without being heavy-handed and without spending too much time or money in court. "I don't think every non-compliance is an environmental insult to the planet or to the neighbors," Seif said. "We've got to recognize that."

On the farm, we expect the financial institutions will bring compliance with the new nutrient management laws by requiring management plans in conjunction with loan approval. In addition, disgruntled neighbors may want to count loads of manure taken to fields on the farm and report their findings to the DEP.

No question about it, nutrient management laws will change the way you farm, especially if you have a large number of livestock on a small number of acres. The blessing is that you will have a chance to provide testimony to the writers of these regulations during the first several months of the new year. A list of the times and places for these comments are included in a legal notice and an article in this issue. Now is the time to become informed about how these new regulations will affect you and prepare yourself to comment on the aspects that are not in line with practical farm operation.

Take advantage of your freedoms as a citizen of this country. Prepare to make your thoughts known about the new nutrient management regulations at the appropriate time and place.



FARM CALENDAR

- Saturday, December 30
- Sunday, December 31
- 1996
- Monday, January 1
Happy New Year!
Lancaster Farming office closed.
- Tuesday, January 2
Solanco Young Farmers meeting, Reproduction of the Future, Solanco High School.
Computerized Farm Financial Records Workshops, Centre County Extension, Bellefonte, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., also Jan. 4, 9, and 11.

- Lancaster County Tobacco Show, Farm and Home Center, youth 9 a.m., adult 10 a.m.
- 4-H Tractor Safety Program, Lebanon Valley Ag Center, 7 p.m.
- Wednesday, January 3
Berks County Dairy Day, extension office, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Dairy Managing For Success Program, Hoss's Steak and Sea House, Gettysburg, also Jan. 17.
- Water rights meeting, Lancaster Farm and Home Center.
- Thursday, January 4
Northeast Regional Tomato meet-



Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Pick Up Farmer's Tax Guide
The 1995 Farmer's Tax Guide has arrived at your local cooperative extension office. This Internal Revenue Service publication is distributed free through cooperative extension. This complete guide contains instructions on how to file your 1995 Income Tax Return. Even if you do not file your own taxes, you should pick up a copy of the tax guide and read it. You may learn of deductions or other tax savings your accountant may miss. Remember, you are the one most familiar with your operation. So take time now to pick up your 1995 Farmer's Tax Guide and read it for valuable financial information and tax saving ideas.

To Dress For Winter
This week officially marked the beginning of winter. We have already experienced cold weather and will probably see a lot more before spring. In extremely cold weather, Dr. Larry Kenney, Penn State associate professor of applied physiology, says it is extremely important to keep the head covered and to cover the face and mouth with a scarf to prevent heat loss from the body. It is important to remember that the extremities of the body will cool faster than the rest of the body. Thus, they must be protected with gloves, boots, and ear flaps to prevent frostbite. When you know you will be out in the cold, always overdress. It is easier to remove unneeded clo-

ing, Thompson's Dairy Bar, Newton.
Chester County Dairy Day, Oxford Fire Hall, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Dairy Managing For Success Program, Olde Country Buffet, Rt. 30, York, also Jan. 18.
Lancaster (Raleigh) DHIA record meeting, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 12:30 p.m.

Friday, January 5
Bucks/Montgomery County Dairy Day, Family Heritage Restaurant, Franconia, 9:45 a.m.-2:45 p.m.
Farm Records Made Easy Workshops, beginning Jan. 5, York extension office, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., also Jan. 24 or 26, Jan. 31 or Feb. 2, and Feb. 7 or Feb. 9.

Saturday, January 6
Pennsylvania State Farm Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, thru Jan. 11.
Potter County Holstein annual meeting, Community Building, Ulysses, 8 p.m.

Sunday, January 7

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thing than it is to get warm when extra clothing is not available.

Wearing layers of clothing is well suited to staying warm. Being aware of the effect that wind has on temperatures is very important. Blowing winds make the temperature feel colder.

Thirty degrees will feel like minus two degrees when the wind is blowing at 30 miles per hour.

To Make New Year's Resolutions

It will soon be 1996. Now is the time of year to make our New Year's resolutions.

Some resolutions you might consider are:

- Attend winter meetings in 1996 to learn something new to be tried on your farm. Earn at least 6 pesticide credits so you will not be trying to earn them all at the last minute when your license expires.
- Attend at least one management seminar to learn more about financial or labor management.
- Develop a nutrient manage-


ment plan for your farm. Review and up date your soil conservation plan.

- Plan a family vacation. Spend at least two hours per week with each child.
- Clean up and organize one work area on the farm each month.
- Plant a wind break around confinement animal housing barns.
- Visit and get to know every neighbor before spring planting.
- Spend 10 hours every week on professional improvement (reading, attending meetings, visiting other farms and businesses, etc.).
- Do not work more than 3,000 hours and volunteer for more than 500 hours in a year.
- Develop a hobby.

These are just a few ideas. Create your own list. Remember, New Year's resolutions are designed to help us identify ways to live better, happier, and productive lives.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "The first step toward creating an improved future is developing the ability to envision it."

THE BIBLE SPEAKS



BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

RISE AND SHINE!
December 31, 1995

RISE AND SHINE! December 31, 1995

Background Scripture:

Isaiah 60 through 61

Devotional Reading:

Romans 15:15-21

I don't know how it is in your community, but in ours the Christmas lights are out, if not down by December 31. In fact, many of them disappear on the 26th. But, not at our house: we keep them up for the full Twelve Days of Christmas!

Twelfth Night is one of the most significant days in the Christian calendar, Epiphany. Although it is one of America's least known and observed holy days, in some countries Epiphany, January 6, is a legal holiday. Some years ago we observed Epiphany in Austria where it is called *Drei Koenige*. The "Three Kings," a reference to the wise men who came to Bethlehem to see the newborn "king of the Jews" (Matt. 2:1-15). Children dressed as the three kings went throughout the town, including the hotels, to tell the ancient story and spread the message of Epiphany.

In ancient times the winter solstice (when the days begin to get longer) occurred on January 6. Early Christians celebrated Christ's birth on January 6. But later, when the calendar was adjusted, the winter solstice fell on December 25. (A later adjustment moved winter solstice to December 21-22, where it is today, but Christmas remained on December 25.) Although some eastern orthodox Christians still celebrate Christmas on January 6, for most of the rest of Christendom it is observed as Epiphany, as Greek word meaning "manifestation" or "appearance" — a celebration of the visit of the wise men and Christ's manifestation to the whole world.

YOUR LIGHT HAS COME

A scripture passage often associated with Epiphany is Isaiah 60. Once again, as in Isaiah 9, the prophet uses the symbol of light:

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord

has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

Isaiah 60:1-3

The reference to "kings" in 60:3 and to "gold and frankincense" in 60:6b are sometimes regarded as prophetic predictions of the three wise men and the gifts they brought.

But most of all it is the symbol of light that makes epiphany so significant for the Christian life and mission. At Christmas we are called to see the light of Christ that shines in the darkness. But Epiphany takes that one step further and lays upon us the obligation to be the light for the world around us. Without epiphany the message of Christmas is incomplete. Epiphany challenges us to keep the Light of Christmas lit in the world long after the Christmas lights and decorations have been taken down.

NO DARKNESS

On the New Hebrides island of Nguna there is a little church with a picture of the missionary who founded it. Peter Milne. Under the picture is an inscription: "When he came there was no light; When he died there was no darkness."

Peter Milne's mission is the same one that Christ gives to each of us: to let his light shine through us and overcome the darkness. Henry P. Van Dusen, the late President of Union Theological Seminary in New York, wrote that the Church, "with all its weakness and its pettiness, its failures and its follies and its infidelities, is the bearer of the Light which cannot be overcome because it is lit from the Eternal Light of God himself ... That light, no man-made darkness can ever extinguish."

This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine! What about you?

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