



OPINION

Dog License Regrets

There is more than a maximum \$300 penalty for not having dogs properly licensed in Pennsylvania, as a Pittsburgh-area farm family recently discovered.

According to Dick Hess, chief of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Bureau of Dog Law, a couple of stray dogs recently came onto a farm property near Pittsburgh and killed \$20,000 worth of emus (one of several commercial flightless bird species, called ratities, related to ostriches.).

When state dog law officials came to investigate the incident to follow up on the damages claim that could have been awarded for the livestock lost to stray dogs, they discovered that the farm owners' three dogs were unlicensed.

While that seems unrelated to the fact that two loose German Shepherd-looking dogs killed the farm's emus, it turns out that those who fail to license their own dogs can not collect on damages caused by other loose dogs.

Because the farmers failed to pay the \$5 annual dog license fee for each of their own three dogs, they became ineligible to collect the \$20,000 they would have otherwise received in compensation from the state.

It may not seem fair, and it may seem excessive punishment for not buying a dog license for a farm dog, but it is the law.

While we won't pretend to justify the situation the family faces (we are sympathetic to anyone's loss of earned money), it is what it is — an expensive lesson that those who scoff at state law and fail to properly license their dogs don't stand to reap state benefits from damages from other unlicensed dogs.

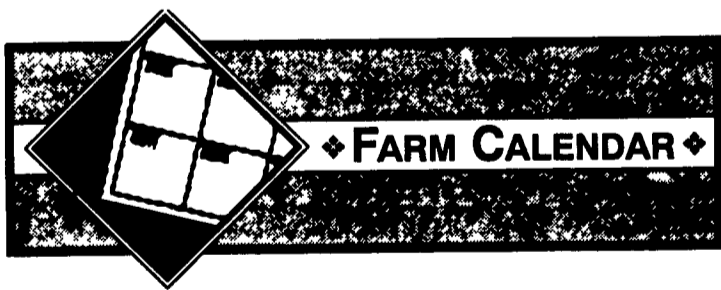
For the family that figured buying annual dog licenses too prohibitive at \$5 each, how can they justify the loss of \$20,000?

Their only apparent recourse now would seem to be to find the owner of the stray dogs that killed the emus and sue for damages (which means more money out of the pocket to hire an attorney); or to seek some political action by appealing to the general public's lack of understanding of the law, the public's general outrage at regulatory government, and the desire of some people to get re-elected.

But, for the rest of us, the real issue here is public safety and accountability.

There is a very real concern about rabies and other diseases easily spread to humans from stray dogs, and also there is real concern about the current prevalence of dog breeds that are known to attack humans.

Those people not registered as kennel owners, who own dogs, must license them not merely to generate funds to pay for dog law enforcement officers, that is part of it, but more so to make law enforcement effective and minimize the risk to public safety from dangerous, unclaimed dogs.



Saturday, April 13
Md. Holstein 26th Annual State Spring Show, Timonium.
Equine Garage Sale, Northampton County 4-H Center, Nazareth, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Pond Management Meeting, Northern Star Stable, Lake Winola, 9 a.m.-noon.
Forest Stewardship Landowners Workshop, Mansfield University, Mansfield, 9 a.m.
Little International, Ag Arena, Penn State.
Tioga County Ag Banquet, Tioga County Fairgrounds, Whitneyville, 7:30 p.m.
Sheep Field Day, Dave and Barb Lytle Farm, New London, 10 a.m.
John Deere Antique Tractor Plowing Demonstration by East Central Pa. Two-Cylinder Club, Inc., Ron Boyer Farm, Hereford, 9 a.m.
Income Opportunities For Rural Areas: Utilizing Your Natural

Resources, Everett Area Junior-Senior High School, Everett, 9 a.m.-3:45 p.m.
Sunday, April 14
National 4-H Conference, Chevy Chase, Md., thru April 20.
4-H Capitol Days, thru April 16.
Monday, April 15
Ideas For Income Opportunities For Rural Areas Workshop, Cumberland, Md., Extension Office, 7 p.m.-9:30 p.m.
Tuesday, April 16
Delmarva Poultry Booster Banquet, Wicomico Youth and Civic Center, Salisbury, Md.
Lancaster Co-Op Council Youth Institute Program, Herr's Snack Foods, Nottingham, 10 a.m.
Manure Spreader, Sprayer, and Planter Tune-Up Day, Lebanon Expo Center, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Ephrata Young Farmers meeting, private pesticide applicator license test, 7 p.m.
Wednesday, April 17
Statewide Forum On Food Safety,



Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Call Before You Dig

Are you planning some construction or spring plantings of trees or shrubs? If so, you need to find out if there are any underground utility lines in the path of your planned construction or plantings. To find out, call Pennsylvania One Call System (POCS) toll free at (800) 242-1776.

Pennsylvania law requires that anyone planning to do any excavation must call POCS at least three business days before digging. When the call is made, POCS notifies the utility companies so they can investigate and mark the location of any underground lines they have in the work area.

The system is designed to prevent injuries to workers, interruption of utility services, expensive environmental cleanup costs and local emergencies. So, before you dig, call POCS.

To Be Safe

When working outside this spring, look up before placing your aluminum ladder for overhead power lines. Stay away from electric lines when painting buildings, installing antennas, or

Harrisburg Hilton and Towers, Harrisburg, 9 a.m.-9:30 p.m.
Farm Law Issues meeting, Mountain View High School, Kingstley, 8 p.m.

Thursday, April 18

Lecture On Equine Emergence Care At New Bolton Center, Kennett Square, 7:30 p.m.
Pesticide Certification Exam, Wayne County Extension, Courthouse, Honesdale, 8:30 a.m.-noon.

Friday, April 19

Beef Management meeting, Wyoming County Cooperative Extension, Pa. Dept. of Ag, Tunkhannock, 7:30 p.m.-9 p.m.; hands-on workshop April 20.

Saturday, April 20

Ohio Performance Tested Bull Sale, Ohio Ag Research and Development Center's Eastern Ohio Resource Development Center, Caldwell.

Delaware Valley College Dairy Judging and Livestock Judging Contest, Feldman Ag Building, 8 a.m.

Beef Management Meeting Hands-On Workshop, Walter Dana Farm, 9 a.m.-noon.
Penn State Dairy Exposition, Penn State Ag Arena, University Park, 8 a.m., awards banquet, Holiday Inn, 6 p.m.

U. of Del. Ag Day, Delaware College of Ag Science's Farm, Newark, Del., 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Sunday, April 21

3d Annual Central N.J. Sheep Demonstration, Concord Stud

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using roofing materials.

When trimming or spraying trees, be careful of overhead lines. Warn children never to climb trees which have power lines running through them or nearby. Keep all chemicals stored and locked when not in use. Carefully read the labels on chemicals before using in the barn and around the farm.

Install all master shields on tractor power take off (PTO) units before starting. Never adjust PTO units while they are operating. Use slow moving vehicle (SMV) emblem on all farm machinery when traveling public highways. You may also want to use a trail escort whenever possible.

Let's make this spring a safe one.

To Check Pastures

Winter can be extremely hard on

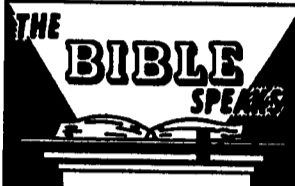
fences and other structures.

Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent, suggests you walk your pastures before grazing them. Spend a little time checking fences for any openings which would allow livestock to go through. In addition, check for any bottles, tires, etc. that passing motorists may have discarded.

Discarded trash may be hard on equipment and may become dangerous projectiles from rotary mowers. Broken glass may hurt livestock. Also, containers may contain toxic substances harmful to livestock if consumed.

Consider rotational grazing or establish an exercise lot with several well-managed paddocks of grass to increase feed and reduce soil erosion.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "Every person is the architect of his own future."



BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE
ON EATING WITH SINNERS
April 14, 1996

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Background Scripture

Luke 15:1-10

Devotional Reading:

Luke 15:11-24

There has been a lot of controversy in Dallas recently because a large downtown church had made its sanctuary available for several community choruses to present a concert—and then with drew the invitation when it was discovered that a majority of the members of the one chorus were homosexuals. Thereupon another large downtown church welcomed the choruses to present the program in their church.

The purpose of this column is not to explore the question of homosexuality and the Christian churches. That would require a lot more space and time than I have available to me. It is rather to raise the question of how far the Christian can afford to distance him or herself from those whom he or she judges to be "sinners." This was the issue involved in the illustration above. The first church regards homosexuality as a sin and believed that permitting the choruses to use their church would be tantamount to condoning it. The second church took the position that whether of not homosexuality is a sin, the church would not be compromising its faith by permitting the choruses to use their facilities.

This is also the issue that confronts Jesus and his disciples in Luke 15, where we are told, "Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the Scribes murmured, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them'" (15:1,2). Please note that Luke does not say that these people are "reformed" or "penitent" sinners, or that they have taken the pledge to sin no more. Luke calls them simply tax collectors and sinners."

NOT COMPROMISED
Apparently, Jesus, the Son of God, did not believe that his virtue or spirituality—nor that of his disciples—would be compromised by being with tax collectors and sinners. Eating with them was not a problem for him either. If indeed

these people are "sinners," Jesus doesn't even condemn or condone their sins.

I note this only to ask, if Jesus and his disciples did not shrink from civil intercourse with known sinners, why do we? Is our moral superiority of a higher order than his? If he treated these sinners with respect and kindness, why shouldn't we?

For one thing, Jesus understood that the branding of these people as "tax collectors and sinners" by the public at large—and even Luke—did not really put them in a level of morality lower than that of the Scribes and the Pharisees and even his disciples. You and I may judge someone to be on a lower moral order than we, but that doesn't make it so. The fact is, every one of us belongs in the category of sinner. Our sins may be more subtle or hidden—like dishonesty and pride—but that doesn't necessarily put us on a level where we can afford to judge other sinners.

WHICH SINNER?

I remember the story of a man who despised his neighbor. One day, this man, a man prominent in his church, cried out, "Oh, Lord, let your judgment be upon this sinner." Back came God's reply: "Which sinner?" The second principle is apparent in the two parables that follow the incident in Luke 15—the one lost sheep and the woman with the lost coin. God not only accepts the lost people of the world, he actively and perseveringly seeks to find them.

To the "lost," it is everlasting good news to know that there is "more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need repentance" (15:7). To the self-righteous judges of others, it is the worst news we will ever hear. So when the Scribes and the Pharisees murmur, "This man receives sinners and eats with them," we ought to say, "Thank God!"

The Althouses will lead a group to the Holy Land, Oct. 9 to Nov. 2, 1996. Space limited. For information, write them at 4412 Shenandoah Ave., Dallas, TX 75025.

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