



# OPINION

## Celebrate The Grange

This week has been celebrated as national Grange Week and state Gov. Tom Ridge officially proclaimed the recognition for Pennsylvania.

With expectations of perhaps an even more corporate environment for agriculture because of the new Farm Bill, free market agriculture without government subsidization, and cooperative mergers, some may question the value of the 125-year-old Pennsylvania State Grange.

There are, after all, many other business and professional organizations that formed in support of the agricultural sector since the Pennsylvania State Grange was formed.

The Grange is important however and can be expected to continue in rural Pennsylvania by providing a voice about legislative issues for more than the fewer than 2 percent of the population that still live on farms.

The Grange is about providing service for all rural families and communities. It has a niche that can be expected to continue.

Not only is the Grange an organization that seeks to protect agricultural interests, it provides members with competitive services such as insurances and a credit union, and opportunities to work together for the betterment of their own communities.

The Grange has three main aspects — legislation, member service, and community service — none more important than the other.

Also Grange members don't have to own a farm or raise crops or animals to join.

The Grange also means different things to different communities, but mostly is means improving the quality of life for rural Americans.

The Pennsylvania State Grange and its subordinate organizations conduct educational training in such things as farm rescues (for which it won a national award) and sign language, roadside cleanups, maintaining parks, providing forums for meeting political candidates, and raising funds for worthwhile efforts through making and selling crafts and foods.

Their recipe books are common, but they also make quilts, blankets and comforters for at-risk babies, and they provide stuffed toys for hospitals, ambulances and Ronald McDonald Houses to help hurt and injured children to be comforted.

To find out more about the organization call the state office at 1-800-552-3865.



## Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County  
Agricultural Agent

### To Evaluate Spring Planting Of Alfalfa

This year's spring weather has been anything but helpful in getting crops planted on time.

Normally by the beginning of May, nearly all the seedings of alfalfa are done. As we move later into what would be considered the normal growing season, the question is, "Was the optimum planting time for a particular crop missed?"

Alfalfa may be planted through the month of May with good results. However, plantings which have been delayed will be under a lot more pressure from weeds if a herbicide is not used.

Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent, states there are many things that should be considered when deciding whether to plant alfalfa this late or plant corn or another crop. It may be worth saving an old alfalfa field until next year and planting another crop this year.

If a short season corn is planted for silage, it may be possible to plant a fall seeding of alfalfa. Careful selection of corn herbicides is necessary with this plan.

### To Evaluate Planting A Nurse Crop

A good method of controlling weeds in alfalfa is the use of a nurse crop.

The most common crop used is oats. Companion crops offer several advantages. Because oats gets off to a quick start, they will help to control weeds and reduce erosion during early season storms when the alfalfa is small.

Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent, reminds us there are also some disadvantages. First, fields which have a nurse crop never seem to be harvested at the proper time. If the oats are harvested at the proper stage of growth, the alfalfa is harvested too young. This early harvesting can be hard on a new seeding. If the alfalfa is harvested at the proper stage, the oats are too mature and makes poor quality feed.

Second, many farmers do not

spray for leafhoppers when oats are seeded with the alfalfa. Usually leafhoppers do a lot of damage to these new seedings.

Recent research at Wisconsin and Minnesota found the highest yields and feed quality were obtained with alfalfa planted with oats, when the oats was removed during early growth using a post-emergent grass herbicide. In the study, they found the oats should be killed when it is six to eight inches tall. Growing inexpensive oats worked as well as using a more expensive seed.

### To Look At Weed Control

Robert Anderson, extension agronomy agent, notes that in recent years a segment of the American population has been asking if society benefits from the agricultural use of pesticides.

Pressure to reduce the amount of herbicides used for weed control is

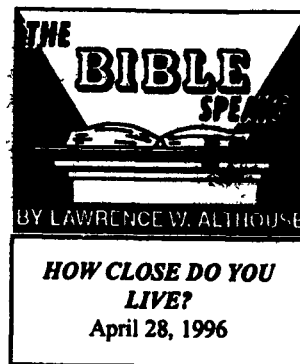
being applied by these groups. They suggest that the use of herbicides is not profitable.

However, the development of technologies which can monitor yields "on the go" during harvest have farmers expressing surprise regarding the loss in crop yield from a seemingly low population of weeds.

How much weed control is enough? The level of weed control you should strive for is dependent on several factors. These include crop price, crop yield, weed species, weed seed bank, harvest problems caused by weeds, poisonous seeds, and losses in crop quality.

It could be very important to achieve the highest level of weed control possible to avoid future production losses and feeding problems.

*Feather Prof's Footnote: "A commitment to excellence will turn any enterprise into a success."*



### HOW CLOSE DO YOU LIVE? April 28, 1996

Background Scripture:

John 15:1-17

Devotional Reading:

John 15:18-27

I confess that I have never fully appreciated John 15 until just now. It always seemed to be going in circles, repeating over and over the same words. I do prefer writing that goes directly from point-A to point-B without making detours along the way.

But, having just read John 15 again I am surprised to find that it so clearly and plainly sets forth what God wants from us. If you reduce Christian discipleship to a few key concepts, they are all found in this 15th chapter of John. What he expects of us is not successful churches, rituals or dogmas, but first of all, to abide in him.

I counted no fewer than eight items in John 15:1-17 that he uses the term "abide" and maybe there was an "abide" or some that I missed. "Abide in me," he invites us (15:4). "If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will ..." (15:7). To "abide" with Christ means simply to live as close to him as we can. It is from this close relationship with Christ that we derive our power to serve him. How close do you live to Jesus Christ?

### TO BEAR FRUIT

The second admonition in John 15 is the bear fruit. I count eight places in John 15:1-17 where the word fruit is mentioned almost always of bearing fruit. "Every life is intended and expected to be fruitful, to produce positive and constructive results. The emphasis is not upon our words, but our deeds. In Matthew 7:20 Jesus said, "By their fruits you shall know them." What Christ expects of us are tangible evidences of our devotion to him. How fruitful is your life?

What is fruitfulness? Jesus says, "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my father's commandments and abide in his love." The evidence of our abiding in Christ is in the keeping of his

commandments. Keeping his commandments keeps us close to him and his love, creates an empowering friendship. "You are my friends if you do what I command you" (15:14).

So, what are these commandments that we are to obey. You can hunt through the four gospels and list them one by one, but there's another, simpler way. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (15:12). Add all of Jesus' commandments together and the sum total is love, love for one another, love that is epitomized as: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (15:13).

### HOARDING LIFE

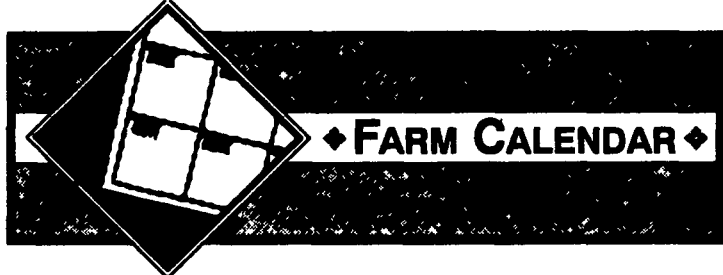
This is the example that Jesus has set before us. He laid down his life for his friends. If Christianity ends there, in Jesus' own self-sacrifice, it withers on the vine. What he expects of us is that we will also be willing to do the same for each other.

Why do we hesitate laying down our lives for others? Like our material possessions, we are afraid that if we give of what we have, there won't be enough left over for us. Life itself is even more fragile than things. It can be over in an unguarded moment. It can slip away when we least expect it to do so. It is understandable that we should want to hoard and protect our minutes, hours and days of our lives.

But, just as we can only have back what we are willing to give away, so we can save our lives only by being willing to give it away. That's too hard for most, if not all, of us. There is not enough faith or strength to lay down our lives for others. The power to do so, however, comes not from ourselves, but from God. If we live close to him, we will have all the power we need.

So, how close to him do you live?

*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.*



### Saturday, April 27

Mid-Atlantic Brown Swiss Calf Sale, Frederick Fairgrounds, Frederick, Md., 10:30 a.m.

17th Annual Pa. Blue Halter Sale, Bedford, 1 p.m.

71st Annual Agriculture Day, U. of Md. College Park, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Farm Safety Day Camp, Raber Farms, Orefield, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Delaware Valley College Annual A-Day, Doylestown, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., thru April 28.

### Sunday, April 28

### Monday, April 29

Kent County, Md. Beef Marketing Roundtable, Easton Hospital Education Center, 7 p.m.

Grange Week Legislative Workshops and Banquet, Sheraton Inn-East, Harrisburg. Workshops 1 p.m.-5 p.m., reception 5 p.m., dinner 6:15 p.m.

PFB FARMER Political Action Committee banquet and tribute to Keith Eckel, Hotel Hershey, Hershey, 5:30 p.m. reception, 6:30 p.m. dinner.

### Tuesday, April 30

Sheep Shearing School, Hidden Meadow Farm, Souderton, 5 p.m.-8:30 p.m., thru May 1.

Lamb Merchandising Workshop,

Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 7:30 p.m.

### Wednesday, May 1

Kent County, Md. Pond Management Meeting, Rising Sun Library, 7 p.m.-10 p.m.

Beaver-Lawrence County dairy princess tea, home of Beth Marshall, 7:30 p.m.

### Thursday, May 2

### Friday, May 3

### Saturday, May 4

Adams County Apple Blossom (Turn to Page A30)



Editor, This letter is regarding getting an emu program available for kids for a 4-H project.

This idea started out last Sept. 95 at the Annual South Mountain Fair.

I bought a \$5 ticket on a chance

at winning a female emu. "You know a shot in the dark." This was Sat. morning. Came home Sat. afternoon and Sunday evening. No phone calls. The kids were upset.

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