



OPINION

Stewards Of Life

Year-in, year-out, farmers are constantly reminded that they are stewards of the land.

Sometimes it's difficult to listen to that statement.

Sometimes it's irritating, especially when it's being shouted, or used tauntingly, or sarcastically, by those whose goal is to force their agenda upon farmers.

There are times when the whole of the world seems to be putting responsibility for the condition of the environment upon the farmer — finger-wagging, and repeating, "You are the stewards of the land!"

Then, along comes spring.

Spring reminds us that it is not just the land to which the living are bound to provide stewardship.

The living are bound to be the stewards of life.

That is the covenant: living beings must make a good environment for living beings yet to come.

And this is true for all, not just the farmers.

Spring also helps renew the basic understanding that life exists at the interface of air, water, soil and sun.

Science has broken each of these "elements" down into sub-groups and sub-elements, but in the world in which we live, understanding where life occurs is as simple as knowing that it requires those basic things — all at the same time, and at the same place.

It was made that way. Science attempts to understand it.

Spring is when the grasses, trees and shrubs of the mountains and bottomlands blush in pastels of pink, green and white buds; when the hue and texture of the fields and cover crops change to a darker fuzzier green; when the sheep lamb, and cows freshen; when the aquatic plants in healthy streams begin to regrow and waterfowl and other birds nest.

Most of this can readily be seen on farms.

But look elsewhere. Who are the stewards?

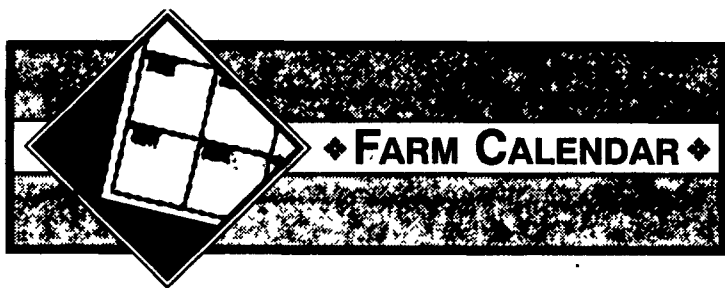
And who is to take responsibility for creating places where life cannot exist or is imperiled — the farmer who can consider himself a "steward of life?"

No, the sterilization of parts of the world doesn't come from those who are stewards of life.

Rather, it comes from those consumed with the desire to be powerful among men; those who want to possess the time, interest and possessions of other men; and those ignorant enough to believe that cooperation and complacency with the greedy will provide fulfillment, happiness or health.

Though not a reason to acquiesce to the desires of greed or sloth, there can be great comfort in knowing that every man-made sterility on Earth can never stand forever, or even long, against the life-making works of God.

There is no time better than spring to use the senses we were given to listen to it, see it, speak it ... and help it along, if we can.



FARM CALENDAR

Saturday, March 22

New York Pasture Association Statewide Annual Meeting, Grazing Conference and Trade Show, Holiday Inn, Waterloo, NY, 9 a.m.

Chesapeake Llama and Alpaca Expo, Davidsonville, Maryland, thru March 23.

Berks County Holstein Tour leaves Fleetwood Grange Hall 7:15 a.m. and Bethel Public Library 8 a.m.

Pa. Young Farmers meeting to host 1995 National Young Farmers Education Institute, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, 5 p.m.

Eastern National Livestock Show Fund-raiser Barbecue and Auction, Carroll County Agricultural Center, Westminster, Md., 12:30 p.m.

Maryland Dept. of Agriculture Open House, 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

PSU 4-H Dairy Judging Contest, Ag Arena, State College, 9 a.m.

Sunday, March 23

Palm Sunday

Planting and Care of Roses, Carroll County Extension Office, Westminster, Md., 2-4 p.m.

Monday, March 24

Blair County Holstein Association Annual Meeting, Memorial Park, Martinsburg, 7:15 p.m. Managing Feed Cattle Workshops, Frederick County Extension Office, Maryland.

Tuesday, March 25

Teen-age Tractor Safety, Lehigh County Agricultural Center, Allentown, 7:30 p.m.

Cat Flower Production and Marketing, Western Maryland Research and Education Center, Reedsyville, Maryland, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Eastern Cattlemen's Symposium, Weaver's Market, Adamstown, 8 a.m.

Christmas Tree Meeting, Human



Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Prevent Electrical Fires

Recently a high rise cage laying house experienced extensive damage as a result of an electrical fire. Fortunately, only a few laying hens were killed.

The cause of the fire was an arching connection between the back of a circuit breaker and the main buss bar in the electrical panel.

The resulting heat melted through the back of the electrical panel and ignited the frame of the building. The bad connection was a result of condensation inside the panel caused by cold air being drawn into the warm panel through the pipes leading to the attic. The moisture also corroded the breaker so it could not trip.

If you are experiencing sweating inside or around your electrical boxes you may be the next fire. Contact your electrician to remedy the problem either by sealing the pipes leading to unheated areas or by rerouting wires.

Remember, electricity and moisture do not mix. It is just a matter of time until something goes wrong.

To Follow Steps

To Higher Crop Yields

According to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension agronomy agent, regardless of what crop you grow, there are several basic practices that, if followed, will increase yields.

First, know your soil type and match crops to the soils.

Drainage, fertility, acidity are only a few of the soil characteristics which must be matched to the crop being grown.

Second, use quality seeds from high performing varieties based on comparison trials.

Third, plant sufficient seeds to have optimum plant population.

Limiting the number of plants will limit yields. However, too many plants will also reduce yields.

Knowing the optimum plant population for the variety you are planting and the soil type you have will help make the decision easier.

Fourth, tend to soil fertility needs. Adequate levels of lime and fertilizer are needed to meet crop needs. Use a soil test to determine these levels.

Service Building, Franklin Farm Lane, Chambersburg, 7 p.m.-10 p.m.

Pa. Young Farmers Association Leadership Workshop, Embers Conference Center, Carlisle, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Wednesday, March 26

Forest Issues Conference, Penn State, thru March 27.

Eastern Cattlemen's Symposium, Susquehanna Valley Country (Turn to Page A27)

And fifth, control pests. Weeds, insects and diseases all reduce yields when present in high numbers.

It is important to monitor fields and treat the problem when an economic threshold is met.

To Plan For Forage Quality

Quality forages are important in the ration of high producing cows, according to Glenn Shirk, Lancaster County Extension dairy agent.

Forage quality starts with selecting crops that fit into the feed program. You need to be selecting hybrids and varieties with high nutrient content and that are highly digestible.

Corn silage hybrids should be selected for uniform ear and stalk dry down. This may be less crucial if corn is rolled at harvest time to improve the digestibility of over-mature hard kernels.

In choosing hybrids for

improved digestibility, farmers may have to make a trade-off between lower yields, reduced standability and lower resistance to diseases and insects with a possible increase in mold invasion.

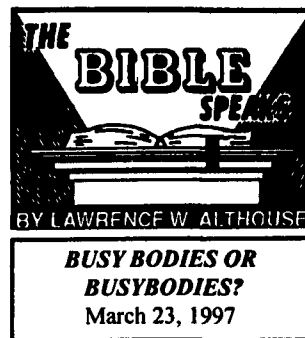
If silage harvest takes place over an extended period of time or if custom harvesting schedules are unpredictable, consider selecting hybrids of varying maturities.

Also, consider varying the planting dates to provide a wider window of time and greater flexibility for harvesting.

Another option is to increase plant population in an effort to improve tonnage and digestibility.

Unfortunately, there is not a lot of research that has been done in these areas. Thus, farmers are advised to discuss these concerns with their seed representatives.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "Every obstacle is a stepping stone to your success."



Background Scripture:

2 Thessalonians 3

Devotional Reading:

Ephesians 4:25-32

There was a problem in the Church at Thessalonika that is hard for us to understand today.

In his second letter, Paul says, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is living in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, we did not eat any one's bread without paying, that with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not burden any of you" (3:6-8).

Actually, this was not a new problem for the Thessalonians; in Paul's first letter (1Thess. 5:14), Paul asked the church to admonish the idlers. Now, in the name of Christ he is commanding them to keep away from these people. One wonders why Paul has changed or added to his original command.

I must confess that I find 1 Thess. 3 confusing and troubling. Paul's advice seems contradictory. On the other hand, they shall shun idlers (3:6, 14), but "Do not look on him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother" (3:15). I would like Paul to explain how one shuns a brother. Admonishment I understand; shunning I do not. Growing up in the Pennsylvania Dutch (German) country of Pennsylvania, I observed "shunning" of "erring" members by some denominations of "plain people." It always seemed an unchristian means to a desired Christian end.

Most of the congregational problems of which I have read in the New Testament, I have also found to have parallels in congregational life today. But not this one: idleness, an unwillingness to work and earn a living.

MERE BUSYBODIES

But, as Paul carries this one step further, I find a problem I have encountered and not infrequently: "For we hear that some of you are

living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work" (3:11). Lazy parishioners I have never known; busybodies, yes.

It has been suggested by some scholars that the reason for the idleness of some Thessalonian Christians may have been their expectation that the return of Christ in glory was immanent. Paul's letters to the Thessalonians seem to corroborate this expectation. Assuming that Christ was coming soon, they may have decided there was little point in pursuing their vocations.

BUSY ABOUT WHAT?

Although we will never know why these Thessalonians were idle, we can see very clearly what the effect was: some of them became busybodies. Instead of tending their own business — their own growth in discipleship — they tended the business of everyone else. Is that a serious sin? Paul seemed to think so. It is one thing to be concerned about other people, but something else to insinuate ourselves uninvited into their lives. It is like those whom Jesus admonished: "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye" (Matt. 7:5).

Actually, these "idle" Thessalonians were not really idle; they were quite busy — attempting to tell others how to lead their lives. If they had used the same amount of energy in helping others instead of judging them — for that is what this is all about: judging Christian brothers and sisters — the work of the gospel would be greatly enhanced.

That has always been my observation, too. If, in the church, we spent our time and efforts in helping others instead of judging them and trying to get them to do what we want, how much better the life of the church would be. This doesn't mean that we should not be concerned about the speck in our neighbor's eye, but that we should first deal with the log in our own.

The Lord needs busy bodies, but not busybodies.

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