



# OPINION

## Thank God For Water

A new report released this week by a leading international research organization warns that water scarcity will become one of the world's main obstacles to feeding the growing population unless urgently needed policy reforms are made. The report by the International Food Policy Research Institute states that water supplies are dwindling in country after country because of wasteful water use, ground water depletion, and pollution, while demand for water is increasing.

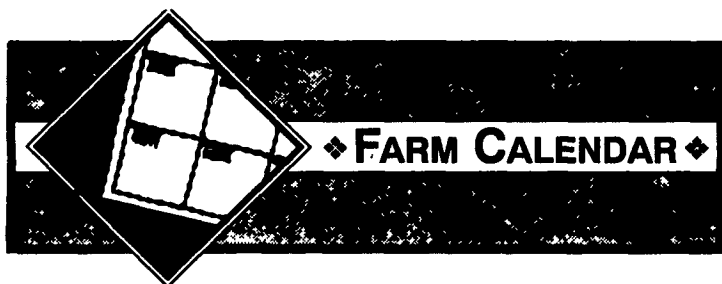
Between 1950 and 1990, water use increased by more than 100 percent in North and South America. In Africa the use increase was more than 300 percent and in Europe by almost 500 percent.

Man's concern for water resources is nothing new, especially as it relates to agricultural water use. In the environmental book entitled "Rich Land, Poor Land," published in 1936, author Stuart Chase writes: "The individual farmer is very important in head water strategy; his cooperation is essential. From raindrop to river mouth, two principles are paramount: hold the water! Release it slowly, using every gallon as it comes down. Wherever possible, hold water in the soil and natural reservoirs rather than by costly dams.

Modern conservation practices have their start in the early part of American history. Washington and Jefferson are credited with being good farmers and good conservationists because they checked erosion by contour plowing. Today, many farmers have switched to no-til or minimum-til farming, and conservation practices on erodible land is very common.

But often it is hard for farmers in the rainfall rich areas of Pennsylvania and neighboring states to comprehend what it is like to have polluted underground water supplies and massive amounts of untreated sewage carried down the local rivers and streams.

We just want to remind everyone again that our water supply is our most valuable natural resource. Let's not let so much of it go down the drain unused. Let's keep our livestock manure runoff out of our streams. Let's thank God for the blessings of water given to us.



### FARM CALENDAR

#### Saturday, April 5

Do-Si-Do Your Dog, Berks County 4-H Center, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Pa. Horse Farmers' Open House, Also April 6.

Blueberry Pruning and Management Meeting, Herrick Hill Huckleberry Farm, 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

#### Sunday, April 6

Monday, April 7  
Pa. 4-H Capitol Days, Harrisburg, thr April 8.

Berks County Conservation District Banquet, Kutztown Grange, 7 p.m.

Tulphocken Adult/Young Farmer Agribusiness Science Meeting, "Vaccination Programs," high school library, 7:30 p.m.

#### Tuesday, April 8

Teen-age Tractor Safety, Lehigh Ag Equipment, Chapmans, 5:30 p.m.

Dairyalea Regional Informational Meetings, Troy Veterans Club, 113 Prospect St., Troy, 7:30 p.m.

#### Wednesday, April 9

Comings and Goings: Smoothing Those Difficult Transitions, Lebanon County Extension Office, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.

Chester County Quality Assurance Meeting, Chester County Cooperative Extension, Room 370, 7 p.m. and Sat., April 12, Herr Farms Feedlot, 9 a.m.  
Precision Agricultural Meeting, York County Extension, 10 a.m.

Dairyalea Cooperative Regional Informational Meetings, Best Western Country Cupboard, Rte. 15 North, Lewisburg, 1 p.m., and Ramada Inn, Rtes. 6 and 11, Clarks Summit, 7:30 p.m.

#### Thursday, April 10

New Bottom Center Public Lecture: A Practical Approach to Pre-purchase Examination and Lameness Clinic, 7 p.m.

Farm Show Buyer Appreciation Banquet, Farm Show Complex cafeteria, 6:30 p.m.

FFA Banquet, Penn Manor High School, new cafeteria, 6:30 p.m.

Pesticide Certification Exams, Penn State Cooperative Extension Luzerne County office, Wilkes-Barre, 8 a.m.

#### Friday, April 11

Berks County 4-H Spring Kick-off, Berks County Agricultural Center, 6:15-9:30 p.m.

Mercer County Spring Spectacular, Fairgrounds, 7:30 p.m.

Dairyalea Cooperative Regional Informational Meetings, Four Points- Sheraton Hotel, Electronics Parkway, Liverpool, NY.

#### Saturday, April 12

Drying Flowers with Silica Gel, Carroll County Extension Service Office, Westminster, Maryland, 1 p.m.-5 p.m.

Garden Wise, Conference Center, Penn State York Campus, 7:45 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Forest Stewardship Landowners'



## Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

#### To Evaluate Alfalfa Fields

This winter had a high potential for damage to alfalfa fields, according to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County extension agronomy agent.

Extremely cold weather followed by mild weather may have severely weakened alfalfa fields which survived last summer's stresses of too much water and severe disease pressure. Any stress helps to reduce stands and yields but when several stresses are stacked one on the top of another, the survival rate of plants may be extremely low.

Alfalfa growers need to evaluate alfalfa fields very closely this spring to determine which fields will be able to produce acceptable yields and which fields should be rotated to another crop. With a shortage of alfalfa, annual forage crops may be a very important crop this year.

If annual forage crops are planted this spring, they could produce higher yields of forage than maintaining poor alfalfa stands which have gone by the wayside.

#### To Check Alfalfa Fields

Robert Anderson, Lancaster County extension agronomy agent, states all alfalfa fields should be checked now to determine stand quality.

You need to determine the number of plants per square foot and the number of healthy plants per square foot. Also, you need to be looking for signs of crown damage due to heaving, compaction, insects or being frosted after starting to grow this spring.

Heaving is the most common and easiest type of damage to observe in alfalfa. Heaving pushes the root upward and out of the ground. Wet soils which alternately freeze and thaw increase the amount of heaving.

Crowns should be checked for their ability to survive. Healthy crowns are solid and white in color

Banquet, Allen Hall, Mansfield University, 9 a.m.

Blue Seal Feeds, Inc., Open House, Hagerstown, Md., 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

East Central Pa. Two-Cylinder Club, Inc., Ron Boyer Farm, Hereford, Pa., 9 a.m.-? Rain-date April 19.

"Income Opportunities for Rural Areas-Utilizing Your Natural Resources," James Rumsey Technical Center, Hedgesville, W.V.

#### Sunday, April 13

Show Series, Grazing Acres Farm, New London, Pa. and KA Equestrian Center, Cochranville, 8:30 a.m. Also June 15 and Sept. 7 at Grazing Acres and

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internally. Crowns which are starting to turn brown may not survive the growing season.

When more than 50 percent of the root tissue is discolored, chances of survival are very minimal. Remember, when a hay field fails in July, it is too late to plant to another crop to replace the feed lost. Several scouting trips over questionable fields is essential.

#### To Count Alfalfa Plants

In view of past summer's wetness and this open winter, Robert Anderson, Lancaster County extension agronomy agent, encourages every alfalfa grower to count the number of plants growing per square foot now.

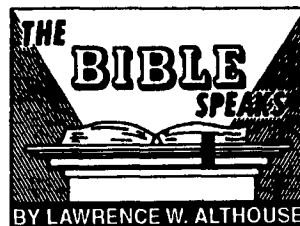
How many plants are enough plants to warrant keeping the field for another growing season? Fields which are one year old should have between 30 and 40 healthy plants per square foot if they are to continue producing for more than this

season. Two-year-old fields should have 12 to 20 healthy plants per square foot. Any field with less than five healthy plants per square foot should be planted to another crop.

The key is the number of healthy plants. Healthy plants which are simply pushed out of the ground may survive this summer and produce adequate yields providing other stresses are kept to a minimum. Seldom do heaved plants survive a second winter and growing season. Fields which show a lot of injury, but still have a sufficient number of plants, should be managed very carefully this year.

University researches suggest fields in this condition should be allowed to reach mid bloom or more before making the first cutting. Controlling insects and other stresses will be very important in the fields.

*Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "The future belongs to those who believe in their dreams."*



BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

#### FINDING YOUR KEYS

April 6, 1997

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Background Scripture:

Revelation 1

Devotional Reading:

Revelation 21:1-3

I had an interesting dream the other evening. I was working on a project with a friend of mine, but somewhere along the line in my dream my friend had become, without my realizing it at once, a pet cat that I once had.

Most dreams are like that fuzzy and ever-changing. That realization may help you when you read the Book of Revelation, because John's visions are not too unlike our dreams — the images and pictures constantly changing, hard to visualize.

Visions and dreams are very much alike in how they appear to us and in the Old Testament the same Hebrew word is usually used for 'dreams' and 'night visions.' In both the Old and New Testaments dreams are an important means by which God reveals himself to people. Unfortunately, today most of us don't take dreams, visions and voices very seriously. And, that too, makes it more difficult for us to understand Revelation.

#### LISTENING

In the play, The Lark, the Dauphin of France complains to Joan of Arc because the visions come to her, a peasant girl, rather than to him, the successor to the throne of France. "Why don't they speak to me?" he demands and she replies, "They do speak to you, but you don't listen."

Like the Dauphin, we may not receive revelation from God because we do not listen for his voice. To a large degree we've been educated to disbelieve or rationalize the messages that come from within ourselves. I am quite convinced that God has more to say to us than we ever heard, but the reason is not that he does not try.

About 10 years ago my wife Valere and I visited the island of Patmos, a small Greek island just off the coast of Turkey. Our purpose was to visit the shrine of the Revelation, a church marking the

place in which John experienced the visions and voices of which the Book of Revelation was composed when he was, as he writes, "in the Spirit on the Lords day" (1:10).

"In the Spirit" means that he was in an ecstatic mystical state or what we might call today an 'altered state of consciousness.' He was conscious, but not in the usual sense of the word — something or someone in an unusual way. But just because it is not our normal or usual experience doesn't mean that we should not be open to what God may say to us through it.

#### IN THE SPIRIT

Correspondingly, just because John's revelation comes to us in language that is hard to understand and lies outside our own experience doesn't mean that it has no message for us. The Book of Revelation has much to reveal to us, if we persevere and permit it to do so.

In this very first chapter of the book there is what I see as a message of cosmic continuity. In verse 8 John writes, "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." In verse 17 John writes again: "But he laid his right hand upon me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades."

Sometimes, when I am in the grip of perplexity or pain, I need to be reminded that I am in the hands of the one who is the beginning and ending of all things, someone who has died but is yet "alive evermore," someone who holds the key of Death and Hades. Stuck momentarily in the immediacy of a particular time, place and situation, I can find the keys that help me to realize that I am linked with the Eternal, Infinite God.

(In October, Rev. & Mrs. Althouse will lead a 14-day tour to Turkey to trace the footsteps of Paul and John. For information, write: 4412 Shenandoah Ave., Dallas, TX 75205).

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