



# OPINION

## Freedom To Farm

America's farming communities are coming alive with preparations for spring planting, and they reflect a spirit of optimism not seen in decades. Farmers have had a taste of freedom under the "Freedom to Farm" law, and they like it. This landmark measure — one year old this month — swept 60 years of government-mandated land idling programs such as annual acreage set-aside programs, and micro-management of America's farms.

Growers may now plant for dynamic U.S. and global markets — rather than a government program — and are reaping the benefits. Farm income and export sales both set record highs in 1996, and another strong year is forecast for 1997. Farmland values continue to rise, and the value of farm assets relative to farm debt is the best in years.

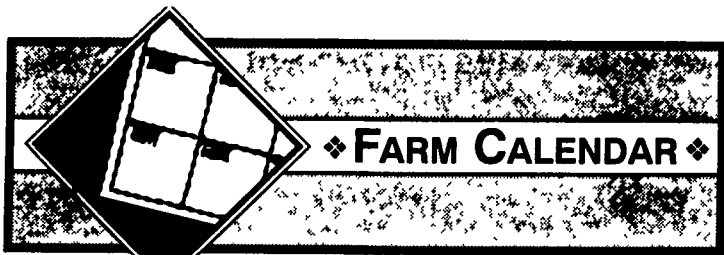
Communities and businesses that depend on a robust farm economy — from farm suppliers, crop handlers and transporters, and food processors, to rural Main Street businesses — are operating at higher levels of capacity and profitability. Food manufacturers and exporters, in particular, are now getting the crop varieties in the volumes they need to serve customers, and they are paying premium prices to growers.

The environment also benefits under the new law. Elimination of nearly all planting restrictions permits farmers to adopt more crop rotations, which cuts soil erosion and reduces the need for chemicals, while presenting opportunities for longer term gains in productivity.

And the general public benefits. Consumers can expect to pay a declining percentage of their disposable income on food now that the government is out of the business of manipulating farm commodity prices. The Agriculture Department plans to cut up to 20 percent of its vast work force that is no longer needed to administer programs, and taxpayers will no longer bear the uncontrollable expense of farm entitlements which have been replaced with capped, declining payments over seven years.

Paying farmers not to farm never did make much sense. The achievements of the new law make you wonder why it took so long to dump the old law.

Stuart Hardy  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce



### FARM CALENDAR

**Saturday, May 10**  
Problem or Unbroke Horse Clinic, Penn State University Ag Area, State College, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. thru May 11.

Western Pa. Sheep and Lamb Sale, Mercer 4-H Park.

Capital Area Beekeepers' Assoc. Short Course, Dauphin County Agricultural and Natural Resources Center, Dauphin, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

**Sunday, May 11**  
Mother's Day

**Monday, May 12**  
Developing A Drought-Proof Landscape, Fulton County Bank and Trust Theater Building, McConnellsburg, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.

**Tuesday, May 13**

**Wednesday, May 14**  
Eastern Region FFA Leadership Conference, Ephrata High School, Ephrata, 1 p.m.-8 p.m. Managing Your Septic System, Fulton County Bank and Trust Theater Building, McConnellsburg, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.

**Thursday, May 15**  
New Bolton Center Lecture: Introduction to the Llama, New Bolton Center, Kennett Square, 7 p.m.

Pa. Fair at Phila. Park, Bensalem,

thru May 26.  
Strawberry Twilight Tour, Wye Research and Education Center, 6 p.m.

**Friday, May 16**

**Saturday, May 17**  
Children: A Kaleidoscope of Opportunity, Lebanon Career and Technology Center, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Mercer County 4-H Market Lamb Weigh-In, Mercer 4-H Park.

Idlewild Ruritan Plow and Field Day, Bridgeville, Del., 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; raindate May 24.

Pa. Emu Farmers Association Annual Spring Seminar, Farm and Home Center, Lancaster, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Mastersonville Volunteer Fire Company All You Can Eat Breakfast, Fire Company, Mannheim, 6 a.m.-until ?

**Sunday, May 18**

**Monday, May 19**  
Using Green Cleaners In The Home, Fulton County National Bank and Trust Theater Building, McConnellsburg, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.

Lancaster County Honey Producers Association meeting, home of Barbara and Dale Beiler, Strasburg, open hives 6:30 p.m., meeting 7:30 p.m.



## Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County  
Agricultural Agent

### To Tighten Up Biosecurity

The Avian Influenza (AI) virus is still circulating in the area.

This past week we had another confirmed case on a commercial poultry farm.

We need to raise our level of biosecurity. This includes limiting access to poultry houses to only care takers and necessary service people. All other people, including children, neighbors and relatives, should not be entering poultry houses.

Keep out dogs, cats, and wild animals. Make sure all equipment is washed and disinfected before being used on the farm. Try not to share equipment, tractors, manure spreaders, etc. between farms.

Keep all poultry houses locked at all times. Develop and keep a daily log of people entering your farm recording date, time, purpose of visit and their most recent visit or stop before your farm.

This virus should be easy to control if we limit the people traffic. By practicing excellent biosecurity practices now, you could be preventing a large economic loss tomorrow.

### To Call Before You Dig

According to Columbia Gas, you should call Pennsylvania's One Call service before you build, landscape (planting a tree, shrub, etc.) or dig.

Your call will alert utilities to look for and notify you of underground utility lines or facilities. The Utility and Coordination Council has a uniform color code. This code alerts contractors and excavators to utilities in the work area.

The color code is:  
• Red — electric lines, cables, conduit and lighting cables.  
• Yellow — gas, oil, steam, petroleum or gaseous materials.  
• Orange — communication, alarm or signal lines, cable or conduit.

Farm Financial Standards Seminar, Carroll Community College, Westminster.

**Tuesday, May 20**  
Pa. Shorthorn Breeders Association Spring Sale, Mercer 4-H Park.

**Wednesday, May 21**  
Water Conservation Wellhead Protection Seminar, Fulton County National Bank and Trust Theater Building, McConnellsburg, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.

**Thursday, May 22**

**Friday, May 23**  
Northwest Junior Beef Classic, Butler Fairgrounds, also May 24.

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- Blue — water, irrigation and slurry lines.
- Green — sewers and drain lines.
- White — proposed excavation.

If you or your contractor hits any of these lines, the results can be very costly to you. In Pennsylvania, call 1-800-242-1776.

Remember, costly problems can be avoided with One Call.

### To Control Flies

Glenn Shirk, Lancaster County extension dairy agent, states for best fly control results, implement prevention and control measures early before flies become a serious problem.

Once fly populations build up, they can be very difficult to control.

The best prevention is to eliminate their breeding sites. Keep areas clean, dry and sanitary. Clean up feed spills. Prevent buildups of manure in pens and in the

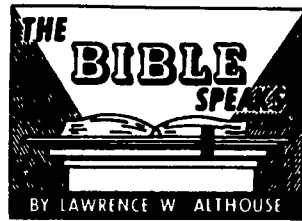
corners of alleys and cow lanes.

Flies cannot breed in dry or wet manure. They do breed in damp manure packs and in the damp interface layers where manure crusts meet the liquid phase. Periodic agitation of manure pits may help prevent the formation of damp interface layers.

Good ventilation helps to keep manure packs drier. Once flies arrive, use a variety of control measures. These include livestock sprays and dusts, oral larvicides, residual sprays, quick knock down barn misters, baits, sticky tapes, traps, parasitic wasps, etc. When using insecticides, comply with label instructions.

Because flies may build up resistance, use insecticides judiciously. Be sure to alternate between different types of materials.

*Feather Prof's Footnote: "Attack every problem with enthusiasm... as if your survival depended upon it."*



### AT THE END OF THE ROAD

May 11, 1997

Background Scripture: Revelation 7  
Devotional Reading: Hebrews 9:7-14

What is at the end of life's road?

That's a question we all ask in one way or another. Essentially there are only two possible answers. From our own personal perspective, either death is the end of our existence or just the beginning of life. To put it in a broader frame of reference, either God's will prevails or chaos and destruction await the universe.

That is also the perspective of the Book of Revelation.

Just as John or Revelation sees a scroll of seven seals, so, as each seal is broken, he views a succession of fearful visions and tribulations. By the end of chapter six, six seals have been broken and six tribulations have been foreseen.

But, before the seventh and final seal is broken, there is a kind of intermission during which the four winds of destruction are halted momentarily before the seventh and final drama of the world's destiny. During this intermission 144,000 people are sealed or marked for protection against the demonic powers to be unleashed with the seventh seal.

### A SYMBOLIC NUMBER

Once again, I advise you to take John's testimony as a vision and not an eye-witness report of the end of time. Revelation is filled with symbols, not statistics. Even the number of the redeemed, 144,000, is a symbolic number. Like 7, the number 12 stands for completeness. That is why there were twelve tribes of Israel and twelve apostles.

In the vision there are sealed 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Thus, the number 144,000 signifies not that there will be only that number redeemed by the Lord, but that none of the redeemed will be excluded or forgotten.

That the number 144,000 is to be taken symbolically rather than literally is indicated in the fact that John's listing of the twelve tribes is different from other listings of

them in the Old Testament — substituting Manasseh, Joseph's son, for Judah, his brother. (One scholar says that there are twenty different listings of the twelve tribes in the Bible.)

### WHITE ROBES

So, before the redeemed get to the end of their road, they are assured of God's salvation, even though they must yet endure the tribulation that comes with the breaking of the seventh and last seal. "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and whence have they come?" asks one of the elders. And the answer: "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:13,14).

What possible relevance do John's vision have for us? Although I believe John had in mind a particular historical tribulation, nevertheless we can identify with those in his vision who are attired in white robes and hold palm branches. Like them, we have not reached the end of the road. Like them we face our own tribulations, our own temptations to despair and surrender. Like them, we cannot see to the end of the scroll that promises us, along with them, that we will stand "before the throne of God" serving him, that we "shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more," that we "shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more," that the Lamb will be our shepherd and guide us "to springs of living water" (7:15-17).

Yet, we, too, can share in the promise that, at the end of the road, stands the God who will "wipe away every tear from their eyes." And, although the seventh seal remains to be broken, we can go on down the road knowing that what lies at the end of it is good.

*(The Alhouses will walk in the footsteps of Paul and John of Revelation, leading a tour to Turkey next Oct. 17-Nov. 2. For information: "Turkish Delight," 4412 Shenandoah Ave., Dallas, TX 75205(214) 521-2522.)*

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