



OPINION

Homestead Exemption: Vote On Tuesday

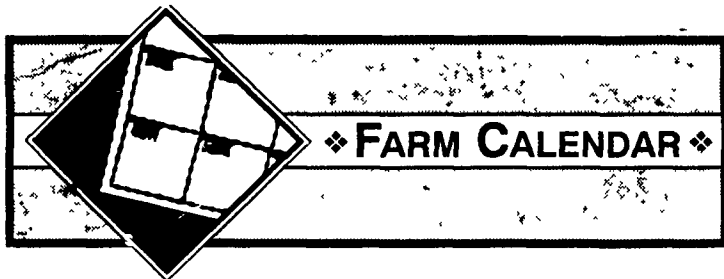
In the primary election this coming week, November 4, farmers have a real reason to vote. The stage is set for property tax reform, which is of special significance to farmers who have a great part of their equity tied up in their farmstead.

The Homestead Exemption will appear on Pennsylvania ballots as "Joint Resolution 1997-1," and according to Guy Donaldson, president of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, property tax reform will be a dead issue for a long time to come if this resolution is turned down.

If passed, it will amend the state constitution to permit enactment of legislation exempting a portion of a home's assessed property value from taxation. It would pave the way for townships, boroughs and cities, school districts, and counties, to reduce taxes on residential property. The exemption would not change a home's market value.

For farmers, passage of the Homestead Exemption is especially critical. It has been documented that farmers pay a disproportionate share of property taxes because of the land and buildings needed to operate their businesses. To make matters worse, property taxes keep increasing. They shot up an average of 108 percent in Pennsylvania from 1984 to 1994. While the proposed exemption would apply only to a taxpayer's home, we strongly believe it should be and will be expanded by the General Assembly to include buildings on the home farm. That would bring a large measure of tax relief to farmers.

If you want to see the opportunity for your property taxes to be lowered, you will need to go to the polls on Tuesday and vote. Without a "yes" vote, tax reform in Pennsylvania cannot begin. The issue is now up to you.



Saturday, November 1

Identifying Trees In Winter Workshop, Pa. College of Technology Earth Science Center, Montgomery, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Estate Planning Workshop For Farmers, Back Mountain Regional Land Trust, Shavertown, 1 p.m.

Sunday, November 2

Logs to Lumber Workshop, Scaun Farm, Columbia County, 2 p.m.

Monday, November 3

Wayne County Cooperative Extension Meeting, Joey C's, Seelyville, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, November 4

Election Day

Ag Science School for Pa. West, Meadville.

Dairy-MAP Consultant Workshop, Leola Family Restaurant, Leola, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., also Nov. 24.

Wednesday, November 5

Dairy Practices Council 1997 Annual Conference, Harrisburg East Holiday Inn, thru Nov. 7. Farm Construction and Facilities Symposium, Rockingham County Fairgrounds Exhibition Hall, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Annual Meeting of Pa. Association of County Agricultural Agents, Atherton, State College.

Md. and Va. Milk Producers Cooperative local district meeting, Fulton Grange Hall, Wakefield, noon.

Thursday, November 6

Berks County Farm-City Banquet, Sheraton Berkshire, 6 p.m.

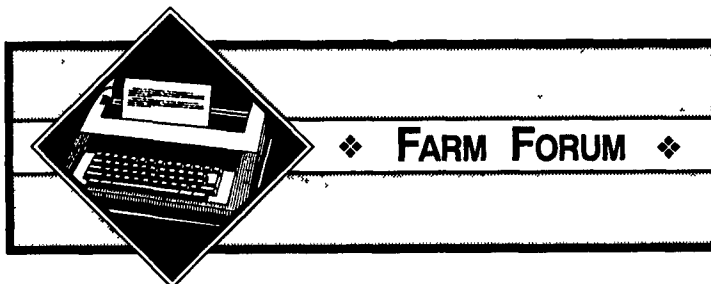
Bradford County Cooperative Extension meeting, East Smithfield Fire Hall, 7:45 p.m.

Friday, November 7

Lancaster Farmland Trust Banquet, Country Table Restaurant, Mount Joy, 6:30 p.m.

Wayne County Holstein Annual Meeting, Belmont Corners Fire Hall, Belmont, 7:45 p.m.

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Editor:

I recently read an article in the October 11, 1997 issue of your paper, written by Joyce Bupp. The article pertained to the "Steam-O-Rama" show held near Windsor, Pa. The lady stated that the "Sheppard" diesel tractor was the only one ever manufactured in York county. To start with, only about half of the tractor was actually built by Sheppard, mainly the engine, frame and maybe the steering mechanism. Other components were bought from companies located outside of York county. In the past the following companies built their entire tractor in York county: C.H.A. Dissinger & Bros. Co., Wrightsville, Pa.; A.B. Farquhar Co., York, Pa.; Flinchbaugh Mfg. Co., York, Pa.; Henry, Millard & Henry Co., York, Pa.

The readers of your fine paper are entitled to accurate informa-

Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Check Corn Harvesting Losses

Reducing harvesting losses is one sure way to improve profits, according to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent. Experts agree that no matter how well the combine is adjusted or operated, field losses will occur.

An acceptable loss is considered to be three per cent. An average of 5 kernels per square foot with a 120 bushel per acre yield or 8 kernels per square foot with a 175 bushel per acre yield would be equal to a three per cent field loss. On average, 15 kernels per square foot is equal to one bushel per acre loss.

Take a walk through your fields now and determine what the average kernels per square foot is. This should be done across the entire width of one combine pass at several locations in the field. Then determine the reason for the losses and make corrections for next year.

To Control Rodents

Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent, reminds us mice and other rodents take a heavy toll on corn stored as ear corn in wooden and metal corn cribs.

The corn crib provides an ideal habitat for these rodents. It provides sheltered nesting areas out of the cold winter weather along with an endless food supply. The control of mice and rats under these conditions is very difficult. How-

ever, there are several things you can do to help keep rodent populations down. First, traps may be used to monitor the extent of the problem. Trapping alone will do little to eliminate the problem.

Second, screening where ever possible to exclude rodents will also help to keep numbers in control. When a severe problem exists, the commercial use of tracking powder has been the most effective means of eradication. Make sure you read and follow all the label directions when using pesticides.

To Care For Older Horses

If you own older horses, make sure they are in good physical condition before winter sets in, according to Chester Hughes, Lancaster County Extension Livestock Agent. Older horses are not efficient as they once were in digesting food. During cold weather, these horses need extra energy to

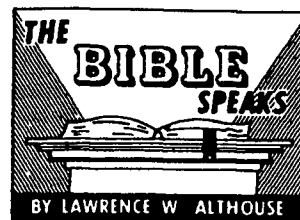
keep warm. So, have them gain weight and get in good condition before winter.

A horse is in good condition when you cannot see its ribs and have to apply slight pressure to feel the ribs as you move your hand over them.

Older horses need high quality, soft hay. Legume hays are better than grass hays because they provide more energy, protein, vitamins and minerals. If your older horse is not in good condition feed it three to six pounds of grain or commercial feed daily.

If the horse is too thin, you may need to feed it greater amounts. If you feed more than six pounds of grain, feed twice a day. A pellet feed may help if the horse has a chewing problem. A vitamin and mineral supplement also may help an aged horse.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote
"Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your mind off your goals."



WHAT, ME CELEBRATE?

November 2, 1997

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Background Scripture:

Ezra 6

Devotional Reading:

Psalms 126:1-6

I truly regret that, with all that I have learned about following Jesus Christ over these many years, I have still not learned to celebrate as much or as deeply as is justified by God's providence and necessary for my own well-being. I'm learning, but it is not easy for me.

I understand the reasons for my difficulty in learning to celebrate. In my childhood and youth, the concept of "celebration" was rarely, if ever, mentioned in connection with worship. Worship tended to be somber and serious. Even if we sang celebratory hymns, we often managed to sing them with as little joy as possible. Somehow or other I got the idea that sobriety was worshipful; joy was not — no matter what the Bible said.

I was also raised in a culture where people practiced a tight control over their emotions, particularly the most positive ones. I hope I am not unfairly depicting the Pennsylvania "Dutch" (Germans) as essentially somber people. It was as if they permitted themselves too much joy, life would come and snatch it away. A hearty laugh seemed an invitation to disaster.

EXCESS/OVERCONTROL

Later, when I saw some people give themselves over to abandon during their services, I was utterly frightened and revolted. I remember hearing people speak of these people as "getting happy" and the suggestion was that we couldn't have that. Their emotional excesses seemed to justify my emotional overcontrol.

All of this talk about my struggle with celebration is for the purpose of encouraging you to take a good look at your own life. Is joyous celebration a part of your spirituality? If so, good for you! And, if not, or if not and much as you

think it ought to be, then why not?

And that brings me to another reason why some of us do not celebrate very much in our Christian discipleship. Lack of celebration, I have come to believe, is the result of a wrong focus of our spiritual consciousness. When we focus on ourselves exclusively, we cannot help but become somber in the light of our failures, sins, disappointments and obstacles. But, when we spend a sufficient amount of our attention, not on our problems but God's graces — what God is doing in and around us — we cannot help but celebrate. I would celebrate more often and more deeply if I concentrated less on my own needs and wants and more on the love and mercy of God. How about you?

TIME TO CELEBRATE

The exiled people of Judah had a terrible experience. Carried far away from their homeland, their monarchy destroyed and their temple in ruins, the people were aliens in a strange land. One could understand if the predominant key of their religion had become a somber one. But, now the temple was rebuilt; everything had come together to fulfill the prophecies that had seemed so fanciful. It was a time for a celebration and the celebration needed to be no less deep and wide as the sorrow had been.

"And the people of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the returned exiles, celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy" (6:16). The time of sad songs and desperate prayers was over. Even their observance of the Passover was a celebration. "And they kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy; for the Lord had made them joyful..." (6:22).

Life is an experience of both the solemn and the joyful. Like everything else, our spiritual lives and particularly our worship must strike a healthy balance. For me, that means taking more time to celebrate.

And you?

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