



OPINION

International Farm Labeling Proposal Raises Concerns

When dealing with exports, the United States needs to remain steadfast in its position that a product does not require additional labeling unless there are scientifically established issues of safety.

The background on this thought comes from the national farm organizations that have asked the Clinton administration not to give in to the European Union Commission's plan to label imports of genetically modified grain.

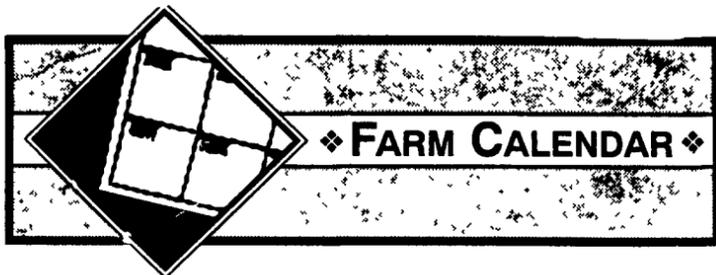
While details on how Europe's proposed labeling system would be developed and implemented are not known, officials of the farm groups said they are extremely concerned by the apparent change in policy direction the plan reflects. "If implemented, it appears the new system would institute a labeling regime based solely on production and process rather than a science and health-based approach, which could be misleading to consumers," the officials said.

According to the September 1 issue of Farm Bureau News, at issue are genetically engineered corn and soybean seeds, bred to withstand herbicide application and natural pest infestations. Both have been tested extensively and approved for planting and consumption in the United States by all relevant regulatory agencies. Despite this, European environmental and consumer groups have spoken out against imports of the products.

The United States and the EU both officially recognize that the use of bio-technology to produce a food or food product does not necessarily change its quality, safety, or nutritional composition. The EU had originally approved two genetically modified crops for importation with no labeling requirements based on a scientific review that determined they were substantially equivalent to products derived from non-genetically modified sources.

Farm exports are of such importance to both farm income and the national balance of trade that we agree with the national farm organizations. Labeling based on genetically modified organism content alone, and not on sound science, would likely raise unwarranted questions about the safety of these products among consumers.

On this issue, our national government leaders should not give in to international pressure that would base labeling of farm products on anything other than creditable scientific research.



Saturday, November 15
Nittany Lion Fall Classic Sale, Ag Arena, State College, 11 a.m.
Dauphin County DHIA and county Holstein annual banquet, Western Sizzlin Steak house, Harrisburg, 10:45 a.m.

Sunday, November 16

Monday, November 17
Watershed Workshop Meeting 3, Farm and Home Center, Lancaster, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.
Calf Raising, Reu-Hel Farms, Mohrsville, 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
Pesticide Training, Allegany County, Md. Extension, Cumberland, 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.
Octorara Young Farmers pesticide credit meeting, Octorara High School, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, November 18
Animal Housing Expo, Lebanon County Fairgrounds, thru Nov. 19.
Maryland Dairy Industry Association annual meeting, Holiday Inn Conference Center near Francis Scott Key Mall, 9 a.m.
Quality Forage Conference, Shadowbrook Inn, Tunkhannock, 9 a.m.-3:15 p.m.
Lancaster County Holstein Club

banquet, Farm and Home Center, Lancaster, 7 p.m.
Pa. Farm-City Week State Celebration, Pa. Dept. of Ag, Harrisburg, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Maryland Nutrient Management Training Program and Mid-Atlantic Crop Management School, Princess Royale Hotel, Ocean City, thru Nov. 20.

Wednesday, November 19
Landscape School, Luzerne County Community College Conference Center, Nanticoke, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Land O'Lakes Fall Regional Meeting, Holiday Inn Host Resort, Lancaster.

Thursday, November 20
Grazing Through the Seasons, Lehigh County Ag Center.
Pa. Holstein Association board meeting, Ramada Inn State College, 10:30 a.m.
Water Use Registration Meeting, Penn State Fruit Research and Extension Center, 10 a.m.
Bradford County Master Gardener Open House, Extension Office, Towanda, 7 p.m.

Friday, November 21
Clarion/Venango Holstein annual meeting, Salem Community

Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Do Soil Testing
Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent, reminds us soil testing is a very important activity. A regular program of testing farm fields is a must in today's regulatory environment. After a few years of regular testing to establish a base line information on fields, it is not necessary to test every field each year.

Anderson suggests the field should be tested every time the crop to be grown changes. If crops are not being rotated, then the field should be tested every third or fourth year. This allows you to monitor the nutrient levels in the soil.

If the level of nutrients increases over time, fertilizer applications may be reduced. If nutrient levels are falling, additional fertilizer may be needed to keep soils productive.

When taking soil samples, send them to the same lab each year. This gives you more accurate data to look at soil fertility trends over years. Pennsylvania farmers should consider sending their samples to the Penn State lab. Fertilizer recommendations made by Penn State are based on research done in Pennsylvania under Pennsylvania growing conditions.

To Clean Sprayer
A job which should be done as soon as the crop sprayer has been used for the last time for the season is cleaning and winterization, according to Robert Anderson,

Building, Lamartine, 7:30 p.m.
Northampton County Holstein annual meeting, Stockertown Memorial Hall, Stockertown, 7 p.m.

Saturday, November 22
Susquehanna County Farm-City Feast, Mt. View H.S., 7:30 p.m.
Pa. Sheep and Wool Growers Association meeting, Grange Hall, Centre Hall, 10 a.m.
Hunterdon County, N.J. Board of Agriculture Annual Dinner Meeting, Quakertown Firehouse, Quakertown, N.J., 7 p.m.

Sunday, November 23
Monday, November 24
Milk Marketing Inc. Cooperative Annual Meeting, Doubletree Hotel, Pittsburgh, thru Nov. 25.

Tuesday, November 25
Agri-Industry Banquet, Lancaster Holiday Inn Host, 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, November 26
Northwest Pa. Show, Sale, and Election Meeting, Howard Johnson's, Mercer, 10:30 a.m.
Thursday, November 27
Happy Thanksgiving!
Lancaster Farming office closed.

Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent.

To clean a sprayer, mix a sudsy detergent solution using about one quarter pound of powder or equivalent amount of liquid detergent for each 25 gallons of water. Run this solution through the sprayer washing all internal parts. This should remove the residues of most pesticides with the exception of the hormone type herbicides like 2,4-D, banvel, etc.

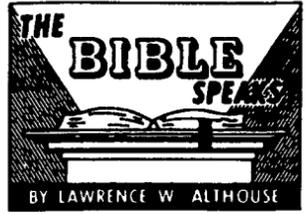
If these materials were used, add one quart of ammonia for each 25 gallons of water. Another material you could use is one half pound of activated charcoal for each 25 gallons.

To Protect Sprayer From Freezing
After cleaning the sprayer, it

will need to be protected from freezing. An easy way to do this is by adding an RV type antifreeze solution to the sprayer. The RV type antifreeze is non-toxic and easy to dispose of in the spring.

Alfalfa growers waiting until the winter annual weed control program is done before cleaning their sprayer should protect sprayer parts from freezing. A gallon or two of RV antifreeze will do an excellent job at a reasonable cost. Automotive types of antifreeze will do the job but they may cause environmental problems if spilled or when beginning to use the sprayer next spring.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "At any given place on any given day at any given time something magical may happen."



HOW TO STRENGTHEN YOUR HAND
November 16, 1997

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Background Scripture:
Nehemiah 1 through 2
Devotional Reading:
Psalms 146:1-10

I wonder whether Nehemiah thought of himself as a leader? You might answer, "Of course, he thought of himself as a leader, why else would he do what he did?"

We tend to think that way because (1) we think that leaders are born, not made and (2) we weren't born to be leaders. We fail to realize that many people who assume roles of leadership do so, not because they necessarily want to or feel qualified, but because there is a job to do and they realize someone must take the initiative.

When I was in my first pastorate just outside Harrisburg, Pa., I was on my way to the Polyclinic Hospital one day to visit a parishoner. On the way I witnessed a terrible accident in which a woman crossing the street was hit by a car and thrown up into the air. All of us brought our cars to a stop and jumped out to see what happened. The woman lay in the street, a bleeding, broken body that was still breathing. All the drivers looked at each other, expecting someone to take over and help her until an ambulance could get there. But no one stepped forward.

SURELY SOMEONE ELSE
I confess that I was squeamish and assumed that surely someone would take the initiative. But nobody did. So, not because I wanted to, not because I thought I was the one best prepared to help her, but because it was obvious no one else was going to make a move, I stooped and began to minister to her as best I could. Eventually the ambulance arrived and they took her away.

I did not see how she could possibly survive this terrible accident. But several days later, I saw her in the hospital and she had not only survived but would recover completely, I was told.

Now I mention this incident only because I'm sure we all find ourselves in situations when we ask or wonder, "Why doesn't

someone do something about that?" The very fact that we are perceptive enough to ask the question often means that we are the ones who may have to provide the answer. We may think that there is someone else who surely can do a better job than we — and quite possibly there is — but that is no excuse not to do what we can do.

We will never know if Nehemiah thought of himself as a leader, but maybe he saw something that had to be done and realized that, if it was going to be done, he would have to do it. Of course, Nehemiah did not have to do this task all by himself, but he had to get the job started so that others could pitch in.

IN A POSITION TO HELP
He started with the king he served in the very trusted position of cupbearer. Kings were always afraid of being poisoned so their cupbearers had to be men in whom they could entrust their lives. So, Nehemiah, although he may not have felt that he had leadership skills, was in a position to do something and he did it.

Don't think for a moment that it was easy for Nehemiah. He knew he was sticking his neck out by bringing up this subject to the King. "Then," he says, "I was very much afraid" (2:2). Despite his position as cupbearer to the king, he knew this request could cost his position, perhaps even his life. Leadership calls us and there is no guarantee that it won't cost us to respond to that call.

Nehemiah doesn't tell us if he was gifted, handsome, a good speaker or possessor of a powerful physique. What enabled him to lead the people in Israel in the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem was his understanding of people and his sincerity. "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins . . . Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer disgrace" (2:17). He tells us that they responded to his challenge, saying "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work" (2:18).

How do you strengthen your hands for a good work? Answer: you put your trust in God and he will provide power enough for the task.

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