

# Lancaster Farming

## OPINION

### The Christmas Story

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

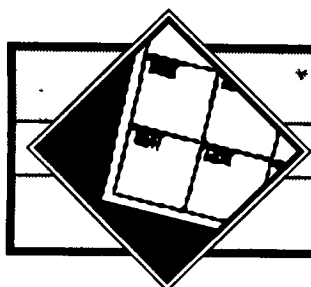
And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child. All they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Holy Bible



❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

Thursday, December 25  
Merry Christmas!  
Lancaster Farming office closed.

Tuesday, December 30  
Farm Business Transfer and Structure meeting, Fogelsville Holiday Inn.

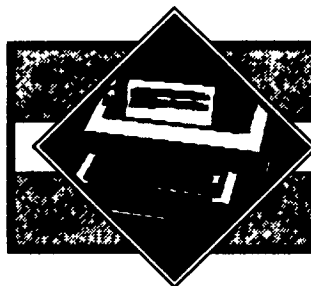
1998

Thursday, January 1  
Happy New Year!  
Lancaster Farming office closed.

Sunday, January 4  
Retirement Reception for William A. Reagan, Franklin County Senior Extension Agent, St. John's United Church of Christ, Chambersburg. 2 p.m.-4 p.m.

Monday, January 5  
Crop Pest Update, Blairsville Grange Hall, 10:20 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Crop Pest Update, Worthington Fire Hall, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.

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❖ FARM FORUM ❖

Editor:

Less than 2 percent of the U.S. population is involved with growing and raising the food that eventually ends up on America's dinner table. It's no wonder the level of knowledge about agriculture — and about those of us in the beef business — isn't as high as it was 40 years ago.

If the beef industry is to be successful in the future it must communicate with teachers, healthcare professionals, restaurant owners and operators, scientists and everyday cooks in kitchens around the world. Through the \$1.00 per head beef checkoff, that's exactly what we're doing. Being involved in the dairy



**Now Is The Time**  
By John Schwartz  
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

### To Prepare for 1998 Corn Crop

According to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent, top notch corn growers do not spend the winter doing nothing. Winter gives the farmer time to consider management decisions that will increase yields and to make adjustments in the cropping program.

Possibly the three most important things for farmers to do in the winter season are 1. attend professional meetings to make sure they are aware of the most up to date research and its impact on crop production, 2. make the necessary equipment repairs, adjustments and purchases to ensure the best possible planting job is accomplished and 3. purchase the best possible raw materials to ensure an excellent crop (seed, fertilizer, pest control products, etc.).

Good growers are busy now preparing for next spring's planting. This preparation should include quality time for yourself and family. No one can produce at a high level all the time. Time is needed for relaxation and reflection.

### To Increase Corn Profits

Information is more important than ever to the profitable crop producer, according to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent. Attending extension meetings, agriculture industry meetings and reading trade publications are a few ways to make decisions based on the most recent research. Networking with other good farmers is another way to get valuable information. The better the information you have to base your decision, the better your decision should be.

Do not skimp on inputs like seed, fertilizer and pest control of pests above the economic threshold. Not all seeds offer the same genetic potential to produce. Find out which varieties are doing the best and use them. Properly plant enough seeds.

Corn, like other crops, the more plants there are, usually the higher the yield is. If fertilizer is needed, apply it. However, if fertilizer is not needed, save the money by not applying any

business, I realize any decrease in consumer confidence in ground beef sales affects the price of cull cows. In the recent Hudson Foods ground beef recall, the checkoff staff sent response letters to *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report* and *NBC Nightly News*. Staff talked to the media daily to calm consumer and media frenzy.

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### To Look At Bt Corn

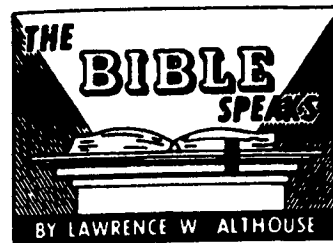
For the first time in 1997 corn growers could purchase corn that had the ability to produce its own toxin, Bt, to kill the European Corn Borer (ECB).

To evaluate the benefits of the Bt corn, an experimental plot was planted at the Penn State Southeast Research Farm, Landisville PA. Two corn varieties were planted. The varieties were the same with the exception one had the ability to produce Bt toxin. Both varieties were planted on April 29 and May 30 and at 26,500 and 31,000 plants per acre.

At the end of the season, the corn without Bt there was lodging

while Bt corn had almost no plants falling over. The lodging difference was less dramatic for the non Bt corn planted April 29 (10.7 per cent) compared to non Bt corn planted May 30 (20.1 per cent). Bt corn out yielded the non Bt corn by 13 bushels planted on April 29 and by 39 bushels planted on May 30. While Bt corn may cost a little more money, it would appear it is worth it for corn planted after the middle of May.

*Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "You become successful the moment you start moving toward a worthwhile goal."*



THE TRUE FAITH  
December 21, 1997

Background Scripture:  
Matthew 1:18-25, 1 John 4  
Devotional Reading:  
Isaiah 9:2-7

We all want to have 'the true faith,' don't we? That means that we want to be certain that what we believe is more true than any other faith. Many religious charlatans today are able to attract adherents because they have persuaded them because of their charisma that they have the true answers to the biggest questions of life.

Do you remember what I said last week about the heresy of Gnosticism? These early heretics based their interpretation of Christianity on having 'the truth' revealed to them. Salvation was a matter of finding and understanding the 'right beliefs.' Unfortunately, many of those with the 'right beliefs' led 'wrong lives.'

The writer of 1 John said, in effect, God is light. Light, the Gnostics understood as 'illumination,' as knowing the right stuff, as we might put it today. But the writer of John says, yes, God is light, but light is more than illumination. And he leads the reader to see that 'light' is essentially 'love.' God is light, yes, and God is love. You cannot understand God if you do not know he is love.

### MY SECRET!

The Gnostics reveled in ideas, doctrines and mysteries. It led many of them to boast, "I know the secrets of God and you do not!" Our author, however, tells us that the basis of knowing God is not in ideas, but in the experience of giving and receiving love. "Beloved," he writes, "let us love one another for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God." With the mind, God is unknowable. With the heart, however, we know God at the deepest level of which we are capable. "No man has ever seen God, if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us."

Isn't it strange, then, that so often Christianity has been perceived primarily as a system of belief and doctrine. Christianity has been divided and the gospel maligned by Christians who have

fought over what they believed to be 'the true faith.' People have been abused, persecuted, tortured and put to death because they were judged to be deficient in 'the true faith.'

The true faith that the writer of 1 John lifts up for us is something totally different "God is love and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." If we want to know 'the truth,' we can only know it through love—the love of God that is mediated into our lives and the love we give to others.

### LOVE AND FEAR

Before I enter a period of prayer, I quiet myself with deep breathing, thinking to myself as I inhale, "Breathe in love," and as I exhale, "breathe out fear." Explaining this to a group I was teaching, I was asked why I used love and fear instead of love and hate? "Isn't hate the opposite of fear?" I was asked. I replied that indeed hate is the opposite of love, but fear is the ground out of which all hate grows. We hate other people—particularly races and religions—because we feel threatened by them. I truly believe that, if tomorrow we were able to eradicate all fear in the world, we would find we had destroyed all hate as well.

Thus I take comfort in the words of 1 John. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." If we fear anything or anyone, it is because we do not totally trust the love of God. The message of Christmas is a perennial reminder to the whole human race that love is the only truth in this world that can heal our fears and hatred. "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son..." That is the essence of the Christmas message to the world.

The message of Christmas in a nutshell: "And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also." If you understand nothing else of the gospel but that and live by it, it is enough.

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