



# OPINION

## Celebrate National Agriculture Week

Farmers and ranchers represent less than two percent of the United States population so why should the rest of us want to celebrate National Agriculture Week, March 15-21? Actually, a better question should be "Why wouldn't we want to celebrate it?"

After all, the efficiency and strong work ethic of America's farmers and ranchers means we spend a lot less for food in this country. While we spend 11.4% of our personal income on food, Japan spends 21%, Italy spends 26%, and China spends 53%. Just imagine if you had to allocate more than half your income to food.

Another reason we should celebrate is the contribution agriculture makes to the U.S. balance of trade. Agriculture is America's #1 exporter, hitting record highs in sales overseas and reaching more foreign markets than ever before.

Certainly those are good reasons for us to feel good about American agriculture but this year's National Agricultural Week theme is "Growing Tomorrows." How is American agriculture addressing tomorrow?

According to H.D. Cleberg, president, Farmland Industries, Inc., World population is expected to reach 7.9 billion by the year 2020 and about 10 billion by the end of the next century. In addition, many of the 5.5 billion people who currently populate the world will be coming into new wealth. We'll not only be feeding new mouths, but we'll also be feeding those who can afford to improve their diets.

Today's farmer is meeting the challenges of world needs now and in the future with progressive tools like precision farming and biotechnology.

Through precision farming, producers can precisely control the amount of crop protection products they put on their fields, which helps them to achieve the greatest output per acre, per amount of input.

Through sophisticated satellite technology farmers can map a field and log data on everything from soil conditions to weed density. With that data, which is fed into an electron grid of their field, they can determine the exact amount of chemical that needs to be applied in any specific cropping location.

In the process, both of these approaches allow the farmer to put less stress on the environment.

Biogenetics is another emerging technology in crop production. Some of these biotech products encourage the use of different herbicide programs, while others replicate some advantages of crop protection products.

The bottom line is, today's farmers and ranchers are getting better at what they do so they can meet world needs today and in the future. Let's celebrate their efforts during National Agricultural Week, March 15-21.



## Now Is The Time

### By John Schwartz

Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

#### To Maintain Conservation Plans

Federal government agencies are under pressure to enforce the nation's Clean Water Act. They are focusing on animal waste management and soil erosion. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced plans to develop regulations requiring large animal operations to obtain permits and develop nutrient management plans. The permits would allow EPA to enter farms and do compliance audits. Every commercial farm regardless of size should have a soil conservation plan and nutrient management plan developed and implemented for the farm. Today's society is requiring good stewardship as a necessary component of every farm. By implementing these plans, you are practicing good stewardship and maintaining the sustainability of the farm. Such inexpensive practices as buffer strips, sod waterways and storm water management would go a long way in addressing environmental concerns. Farmers need to look at their operating practices and make changes now. The government is giving us a window of opportunity to come into compliance. How you use this time will depend on the type of government regulations we will have in the future.

#### To Practice Good Management Practices

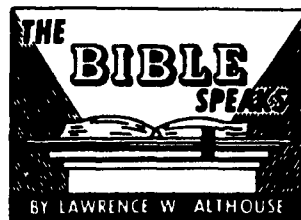
According to Greg Andrews, an Iowa attorney, no amount of public relations, right to farm acts, or cover-ups will protect farmers from lawsuits if the farmer does not farm in an environmentally friendly manner. Farmers must become environmentalists when it comes to their farming operations. Follow your soil conservation and nutrient management plans. Andrews offered the following advice as a legal defense for a lawsuit. Practice good public relations. Need to be open and honest. Talk with your neighbors and notify them in advance to nuisance operations (manure spreading, noise, etc.) Seek their input. Foster goodwill. Give tours and briefings about your operation. A couple of nights at the local motel during manure spreading could be the cheapest way of handling neighbors. Remember, an average lawsuit costs \$20,000. Keep careful records of your activities. Record dates, times and weather conditions. Document when you did certain activities. The business of farming is maturing and as a result farmers need to develop more sophisticated business practices.

#### To Look At Change

Agriculture is changing into a high technology business according to Sano Shimoda, BioScience Securities. We are witnessing the early stages of the bio-transformation of agriculture. The new technologies will reshape the basic tenets of agriculture, transform agriculture and the agribusiness infrastructure, expand the dimensions of agriculture and redefine the role of agriculture in the economy. The core drivers of the new age of agriculture will be biotechnology and precision agriculture. They will create a technology generated industrial revolution in agriculture. This

will reformulate the keys drivers of growth, transform the agriculture production system from today's production driven system to tomorrow's end user demand driven system. The role of the farmer will change from farmer to end user to being a part of a vertically integrated supply and production complex which will expand the dimension of agriculture to an industrial base. Those farmers who will survive in the future will be developing business plans now to adapt to these emerging technologies.

*Feather Prof's Footnote: "Whoever is happy will make others happy too."*



#### TROUBLING THE TEACHER

March 22, 1998

#### Background Scripture:

Mark 5:21-43

#### Devotional Reading:

I Corinthians 1:18-31

From 1965 to 1975 a weekly worship service of spiritual healing was part of the ongoing program of my pastorate at Calvary United Methodist Church in Mohnton, Pennsylvania.

There was nothing dramatic about the mechanics of this service. It was quiet, supportive and often surprisingly effective. While I would never claim that either I or my associates — another UMC minister and a prominent local medical doctor — ever healed anyone, God alone does that — we were nevertheless aware that this ministry was beneficial to hundreds of people who were seeking healing of mind, body or spirit. At least three local physicians referred one or more of their patients to us or asked us to put them on our prayer list. Some physicians who knew little or nothing about us told their patients that "whatever it is you're doing, keep on doing it!"

What did we experience? We saw a large number of people improve and get well over a period of time; practically all of these were under a doctor's care. We saw a significant number of people who experienced remissions of their illness or the lessening of pain and suffering as their illness progressed.

#### ULTIMATE HEALING

We saw some of our patients die and we learned to help them to die — as victors, not victims. We came to regard death as part of God's plan for life and, in effect, the opportunity for ultimate healing. And we saw a much smaller number of people healed almost spontaneously, although these were the exception, not the rule.

There were lots of other benefits from this ministry. It taught people to forgive and be forgiven. Receiving prayer requests from all over the world, this ministry helped to widen our horizons and bring us into contact with a wide variety of people. It involved many in a lifelong commitment to pray as intercessors for others. It made real to some the power of God in the most tangible way. We came to realize that we needed to pray and work for healing of relationships, families, churches, communities and our broken world.

Even after I left that parish in

Pennsylvania, I continued my interest and involvement in the church's ministry of healing, conducting seminars, traveling around the world to examine other healing ministries, and in 1977 writing a book, *Rediscovering the Gift of Healing*, published by Abingdon Press and later reissued by Samuel Weiser Co.

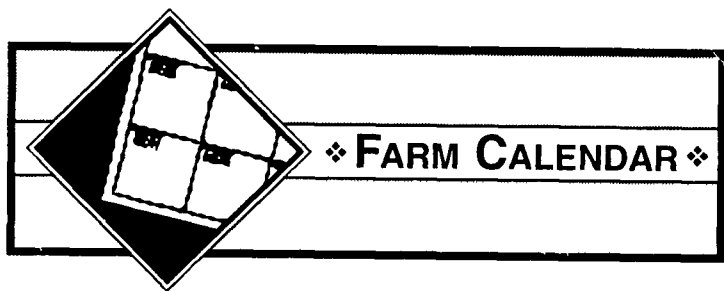
#### 3-FOLD MISSION

All of the above is simply an introduction to my perspective on the healing ministry of Jesus. I believe that Jesus came with a three-fold mission of preaching, teaching and healing — and that he commissioned his disciples and the Church to continue that mission. Over the years I have been associated with scores of medical doctors — but fewer clergy — who have shared that conviction.

There are lots of healing accounts in the four gospels, including Mark. In Mark 5:21 through 3:6 there are two healings that are very instructive for us. First, both Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, and the unnamed woman with a hemorrhage, come to Jesus because they believe he can effect healing. Notice the faith with which Jairus says to Jesus, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live" (5:23). And the unknown woman says to herself: "If I touch even his garments, I shall be made well" (5:28).

Neither apparently know of Jesus except by reputation, but they trust him to be able to provide healing. "Daughter," says Jesus to the unknown woman, "your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease" (5:34). When Jairus is told that his daughter is already dead, Jesus appeals to his faith, saying: "Do not fear, only believe" (5:36). The result: the woman is healed of her hemorrhaging and the little girl is restored to life.

This is not magic or supernatural hocus-pocus, but simply the recognition that faith in Jesus Christ can open the door through which healing must come into our lives. The friends of Jairus said to him, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" (5:35). Yet that is exactly what Jesus wants us to do, to continue to "trouble" him so that we may experience the wholeness for which God created us.



### ❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

#### Saturday, March 21

Equine Expo, Diamond 7 Arena, Dillsburg, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Penn State Garden Symposium, Farm and Home Center, Lancaster, 8:45 a.m.-3:15 p.m.  
Spring Junior Dairy Judging Contest, Penn State.

#### Sunday, March 22

#### Monday, March 23

Pesticide Update Meeting, Fruit Research Lab, Biglerville, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.  
Beef Nutrition School, Ed's Steak House, Bedford, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., also March 24.  
Small Fruit Growers Meeting, Days Inn, Butler, 9 a.m.-3:10 p.m.

#### Tuesday, March 24

Livestock Housing Workshop, Mercer County Extension Office, 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.  
Pesticide Review Exam, Venango County Extension Office, 7 p.m.-9 p.m., exam March 25, Venango County Extension, 7 p.m.

Dairy Ag Engineering Conference, Mercer County extension

office, 9:30 a.m.-2:20 p.m.

Beef Management Short Course, York County 4-H Center, Bair, 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m., also March 31 and April 7, 14, 21, and 28 and May 2 and 13.

Precision Agriculture: An Introduction to GPS, Carroll Community College, Westminster, Md., 10 a.m.-noon.

#### Wednesday, March 25

Grazing in the Northeast, Radisson-Penn Harris, Camp Hill, thru March 26.

United Dairy Cooperative Services Inc. Annual Meeting Notice, Holiday Inn, Horseheads, N.J., 10:30 a.m.

Ag Engineering Conference '98, N.W. REA Building, Cambridge Springs, 9:30 a.m.-2:20 p.m.

Carroll County Milkers' School, Carroll County extension office, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

#### Thursday, March 26

Pesticide Update for Private Applicators, Farm and Home Center, Lancaster.

Pa. Holstein Showcase Sale, Farm

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