



OPINION

Celebrate Earth Day

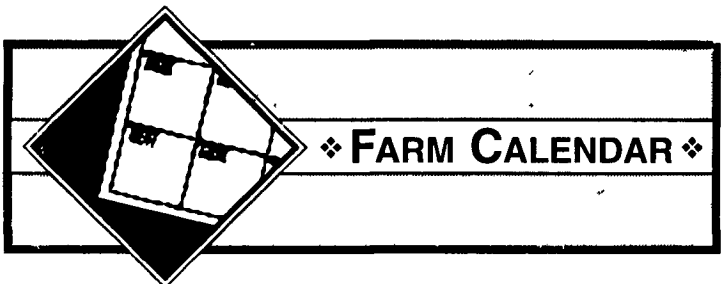
America's agricultural community will come together for the first time to officially celebrate Earth Day with events highlighting agriculture's successful environmental practices and a public rededication to conserving and protecting the more than 1 billion acres of land used for producing food and natural fiber in the U.S., The USDA, local and state governments, and many interested organizations that have partnered with the ag community to actively support these efforts have joined in the national celebration from April 14 - 22.

Agriculture and the Environment: A Growing Partnership is a celebration that is moving across the country in a series of events and will culminate April 22 in Washington, D.C., with a public event at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It will include remarks from national agricultural leaders; the kick-off of a major USDA public outreach campaign; and the public launch of a pledge drive that will reach out to the entire agricultural community and all its supporters through Earth Day 1999.

"Our country's two million farmers and ranchers face the daily task of helping provide food and natural fiber to families in the U.S. and around the world," said U.S. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman. "And every day they take pride in protecting and enhancing our natural resources for today and for further generations."

A national poll showed that 89 percent of Americans believe that farmers are committed to protecting the environment. The poll was conducted by Penn + Schoen Associations on behalf of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives.

The agricultural community is continuously working with each other, various government agencies, and private companies to devise innovative programs that enable them to conserve soil and water resources and protect wetlands and wildlife habitat. And Earth Day gives us another opportunity to focus on our unity instead of our differences.



Saturday, April 18

Maryland Jersey Association All-Breed Calf Sale, Carroll County Ag Center, Westminster, Md., noon.

Pennsylvania Pleasure Walking Horse Association Spring Clinic, Fox Field Farm, Reinholds.

Northeast Highland Cattle Association N.Y./Penn Sale, Empire Livestock, Bath, N.Y., noon.

Mid-Maryland Black and White Sale, Middletown Fire Company Carnival Grounds, Middletown, Md., 2 p.m.

Meat Goat Production Conference, McHenry, Md., 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Identifying Trees Course, Leonard Harrison State Park, Wellsboro, 10 a.m.

2d Annual Eastern Alpaca Jubilee, Sussex County Fairgrounds, Augusta, N.J., 9 a.m.-5 p.m., thru April 19.

Sunday, April 19

Monday, April 20

4-H Capitol Days, Harrisburg, thru April 21.

Elk Creeks Watershed Association presents "New And Innovative Techniques In Conservation Design Storm Water Management," Elk Township Building, Lewisville, 7:15 p.m.

Tuesday, April 21

Dairy Calf Raising Satellite Program, York Pleasant Acres Complex, also at various extension sites, also April 28.

Dairy Farmers Of America Info

Meeting On Fed. Order II, Ramada Inn, Watertown, N.Y., 1 p.m.

Dairy Farmers Of America Info Meeting On Fed. Order II, Ag Center, Cooperative Extension Office, Morrisville, N.Y., 7:30 p.m.

Basic Livestock Evaluation, Berks County Agricultural Center, 7:30 p.m.

Lancaster County Honey Producers meeting, Lancaster County Park Conservation Center, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, April 22

Pa. Poultry Federation Annual Fund-Raising Banquet, Hershey Convention Center, Hershey, 7 p.m.

Environmental Fund For Pa. Earth

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Editor:

In early April, there was a hearing of the State Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee in Williamsport, Pa. Both farmers and agri-businesses were there to testify in favor of Pa. joining the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact. This compact will help to



Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Evaluate Starter Fertilizer

Farmers are aware of two key factors associated with fertilizer these days. First, it is expensive and second, too much is not good for the environment. Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent, reminds us, with these two considerations farmers must carefully weigh the benefits of using a starter fertilizer when planting corn.

Starter fertilizer is usually most beneficial in cold, wet soils where nutrients are not always available to small plants. If starter fertilizers are applied, they supply the small plant with a small amount of easily accessible nutrients. As the soils warm and the plant grows, it is able to receive the required nutrients from the soil.

Deciding when to apply starter fertilizer should be based on weather conditions and fertility level of the soil. Corn is most likely to show a response to starter fertilizer when planted in cool soils which will remain cool based on the weather forecast.

To Look at Phosphorous Levels

Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent, states corn is most likely to show a response to starter fertilizer on soil with a low phosphorous level. Soils with optimum or high levels of phosphorous are less likely to show a response.

When soils have an excessive level of phosphorous, even under cool growing conditions, corn is not very likely to show a response. Dr. Doug Beegle, Penn State Agronomy Department, states starter fertilizers rarely provide a benefit on soils that test high or excessive in phosphorous.

With the growing concern about phosphorous, farmers should be very careful when applying phosphorous fertilizers to soils that have high levels of phosphorous. Let the plants help you in reducing the levels already there.

stabilize milk pricing to Pennsylvania's dairy farms. The Compact is already operating successfully in six New England states.

However, as usual, there was also testimony opposing the Compact, which has prompted this letter. Mr. Charles Markham, a

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To Look At Seed Corn Treatment

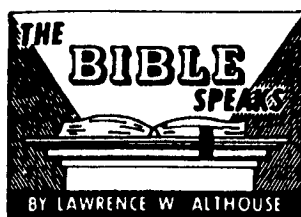
Last spring many corn fields had the seed in the ground for long periods of time before the seed germinated and green foliage appeared above the ground. Any time seeds spend long periods in the ground not growing, increases the potential for insects and diseases to attack the seed, according to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent.

Now is an excellent time to look at the seed labels to see what the seed is treated with. The possible treatments include Captan,

Apron and Maxim or a combination of these products. Iowa State looked at the per cent emergence of early planted corn using no seed treatment, Captan, Captan plus Apron and Maxim plus Apron.

Results of this two year study showed no treatment resulted in a 48.9 per cent emergence. Captan alone had 82.1 per cent emergence and combination treatments had 85.9 per cent or better emergence.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "Knowledge without common sense is like having a well without a method of drawing up the water."



CHECK THE EXPIRATION DATE!
April 19, 1998

Background Scripture:

John 6:1-59

Devotional Reading:

Isaiah 55:1-11

Thirty-one years ago I purchased and read a remarkable book, *Twelve Baskets Full*, by Margaret T. Applegarth. Essentially it is a book of unique and profound story — meditations based upon the account of Jesus feeding the 5,000. Few books have excited and inspired me as this book, the obvious intention of which is to help us see deeply beyond the raw details of the story.

This whole sixth chapter of John is written to help us look to the deeper and abiding meanings lurking below the surface of the obvious. We know the facts. Jesus and his disciples are beside the Sea of Galilee where they have been hunted down by a large multitude of people who have witnessed or heard about Jesus' signs. But these people will be hungry, and neither Jesus nor his little band have the bread to feed them or the money to buy it.

Then Jesus performs another sign: using a lad's five barley loaves and two fish, Jesus is able to feed the whole crowd of 5,000 people. And even more significantly, when all have eaten their fill, there are enough fragments left over to fill 12 baskets. I find it significant that this is the only so-called "miracle" (Jesus called them "signs") to appear in all four gospels.

A GREATER 'SIGN'

Despite the spectacular nature of this "sign," the deeper significance is an even greater "sign" and "miracle." If the evangelists were simply telling us that Jesus had the power to feed 5,000 people with five barley loaves and two fish, that's pretty impressive — but I'm not sure what it has to do with me and my life. The real meaning is so much more spectacular and mind-boggling than the mere multiplication of matter. Although that is quite a feat, it deserves the rank of "mere" beside the real meaning.

The next day people, finding him and his disciples gone, get into boats to find him on the other side of the lake. Puzzled, they want to know: "Rabbi, when did you come here?" (They really meant "How?" not "When?"). But, as he so often does, Jesus ignores the superficial level of their question and cuts to the heart of the matter: "Truly, truly I say to you, you seek me, not because you

saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves" (6:25,26).

This response by Jesus always puzzled me, because it seemed to me that they followed him to the other side precisely because they did see his "signs." But today it occurred to me for the first time that he is really saying that, although they saw the signs they didn't really see that toward which the signs were pointing. These people had seen only the multiplication of loaves and fishes. The multiplication was only the medium, not the message.

NO EXPIRATION DATE

Then Jesus proceeds to what they had apparently missed: "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life . . ." (6:27). We are no less blind than they were, for we too labor for food which perishes, instead of that which nourishes us to eternal life. So, the first thing Jesus says to them and us is that there is a bread, a source of nourishment that, unlike the things of this world, does not perish.

Jesus is not just talking about bread or even food in general here, but all material things. No matter how wonderful they may taste or feel, they are fleeting in their satisfaction and sustenance. If you look carefully there is an expiration date on each one of them! Again and again they need to be replenished. "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died" (6:49). So it is with the things we buy to eat and drink, the playthings we get to amuse ourselves, the objects we accumulate to persuade ourselves that we are getting somewhere in life.

Not only is there a bread which does not perish, Jesus tells them: "I am the bread of life . . . if anyone eats of this, he will live forever . . ." (6:48,51). You and I know today that Jesus was speaking figuratively about himself, but many who heard him were outraged to hear him say that they must "eat" this "bread." They could not stretch their minds to think of anything except the blatantly material which could not satisfy them or sustain them. But they could not be induced to look at the spiritual behind the material.

So whatever it is that you desire and set your heart on, check the expiration label before you spend too much for it. There is only one reality that has no expiration date: eternal life with Christ.

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Lancaster Farming, Inc.

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Robert G. Campbell General Manager

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