



OPINION

Another View Of Farmland Preservation

On 2/2/98 I wrote that there is a better way to preserve farmers and farmland than the current method.

Twenty-three states of the USA now have preservation programs, many based on the perpetual easement concept. However, this is the most expensive method short of fee-simple purchase, and is absolutely unsustainable, besides putting all future generations under the thumb of "preservation boards."

In Pennsylvania, a \$100 million bond issue 10 years ago has grown into a \$220 million expenditure but has only preserved 1 percent of the farmland!!! That is one-tenth percent per year, which will take ONE THOUSAND YEARS to complete!!!! Can there be a more foolish program than this?

Instead, shorten the term from "perpetual" so that each generation pays its own way, instead of the current generation paying for all future generations' interest in these insignificant parcels, that only tend to attract development to their borders anyway, because some people want to live next to a "preserved" farm!! Some "clever" but not too ethical landowners have figured out how to put part of their property into a permanent easement, then sell lots on their adjoining property!!

The Lancaster County (PA, USA) Farm Bureau has had a policy opposing the current program for over eight years, and came up with a plan as follows:

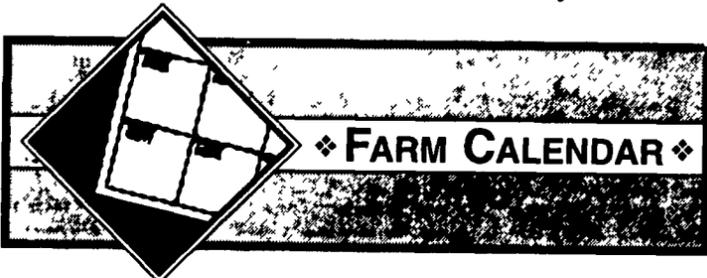
Design an annually rolling five-year program that would provide a tax credit for those who agree to not develop their enrolled land for five years, and each year when property taxes come due, the owner would decide whether to renew one more year in order to get the tax credit, or drop out, paying the full tax for five consecutive years. This kind of planning window would provide the community with an excellent guide to where landowners intend to keep their land in farming for the next five years, providing plenty of time to adjust to changes that may be coming. The value of the tax credit would be set by the taxing authority at a level to reach their goals of the percentage of land they want enrolled. There would be no fear of crisis of lost farmland, because plenty of notice would be given for any enrolled property, allowing neighbors to buy the property, or in any other legitimate way, prepare for a change in use of the property. Eighty percent of farmland could be enrolled annually for the same cost as 8 farms per 1,000 in the current program!!

In Pennsylvania, 40,000 farms could participate for the same cost as 40 farms in perpetual easements per year across the whole state, the current rate.

Planning commissions would have an excellent tool based on each landowner's personal decision on how they plan to use their property for the next five years, instead of attempting to impose the iron fist of government and steal the rights with ever more stringent zoning, which always backfires.

Could you have a more democratic form of government than this plan would provide? The Pennsylvania Landowners' Association endorses this concept fully, as well.

Don L. Ranck
Paradise
Found on the
Dairy-L Internet



FARM CALENDAR

- Saturday, April 25**
Sheep and Wool Day, Springton Manor Farm, Downingtown, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Farm Plow and Field Day, Miller Farm, Dover, Del., 10 a.m.
Penn State/PDA Chem Sweep, Lebanon Fairgrounds, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Sunday, April 26**
- Monday, April 27**
Carroll County Truck and Tractor Pull, Carroll County Ag Center, Westminster, Md., (rain date May 3), 9 a.m.
- Tuesday, April 28**
Management Intensive Grazing

- Course, Holiday Inn, Clarion, 8:30 a.m.-9 p.m., thru April 29.
- Dairy Calf Nutrition Workshop Teleconference, broadcast to various extension sites.
- On-Foot Live Evaluation, Leesport Farmers' Market, 7:30 p.m.
- Life Skills Workshop For Professionals Who Teach Self-Management Skills, Penn State Extension Delaware County, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 29**
Poultry Association Home Economic Banquet, Comfort Inn, Centerville.



Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Check Electric Fencers

Glenn Shirk, Lancaster County Extension Dairy Agent, reminds us to make sure your electric fence is charging your fence and not your barn. The electric fence chargers we are using today are much more powerful than the ones we have used in the past.

To get the electricity to the fence and to keep it from straying into the barn, the fencers need to be well grounded and the hot wire needs to be properly insulated. Refer to your operator's manual for proper installation, grounding and operating procedures.

To Prevent Stray Voltage From Fencers

Improperly installed and maintained electric fencers could cause stray voltage on your farm, reminds Glenn Shirk, Lancaster County Extension Dairy Agent. Some good precautions to prevent this are: Keep the grounding rods well away from the barn, the diesel shed and water pipes.

Use 3 to 5 deep grounding rods rather than one rod. One way to do this would be to run two wires to the fence, the hot wire and the ground wire on insulators. Keep them well separated.

Drive a series of ground rods adjacent to the fence posts where they will be out of the way, and keep the hot wire away from other objects that can pick up voltages and convey it to unwanted areas like pipes, cooper tubes, wires, equipment, ground rods, etc.

Thursday, April 30

On-Foot, On-Rail Beef, Lamb, and Swine Evaluation, Leesport Market, Leesport and Peters Bros. Meats, Lenhartsville.
Tioga Bradford Milking School, C&N Bank, Troy, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Friday, May 1

Grazing Management Meeting, Yoder's Restaurant, Mifflinburg.

Saturday, May 2

Eastern Llama and Alpaca Festival, Charming Forge Farm near Reading, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., thru May 3.

Erie County 4-H Public Auction, Waterford Fairgrounds, Waterford, 10 a.m.

Adams County Apple Blossom Festival, South Mountain Fairgrounds, Arendtsville, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., thru May 3.

Sunday, May 3

Monday, May 4
18th Annual Statewide FARMER Dinner, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, reception 5:30 p.m., dinner 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 5
Franklin County Fruit Twilight

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To Control Herbicide Drift

The increased use of post applied herbicides has brought the issue of herbicide drift to the top of the list of concerns related to the use of pesticides, according to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent.

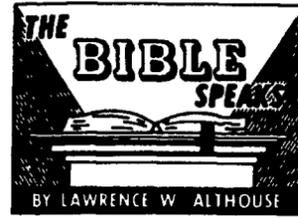
Due to the nature of applying sprays, it will be impossible to completely eliminate the problem of drift. However, applicators may reduce the risk by using appropriate equipment and basic knowledge.

It is normally considered that droplets less than 200 microns in size pose a risk to drift. Based on

research done by Dr. Robert Hartzler, he found nozzle type and pressures had a significant influence on drift potential. His research showed that the drift guard and turbo teejet nozzles produced less drift than the flat fan nozzle. Increasing spray pressures increases the number of small driftable droplets.

Pesticide applicators should take steps to ensure that spray equipment is set up properly to minimize drift by selecting the best nozzle, spray pressure and boom height. Also, weather conditions must be considered and avoid spraying on windy days.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "If you do not discipline yourself, someone else will do it for you."



FREE INDEED!
April 26, 1998

Background Scripture:

John 8:12-59

Devotional Reading:

Psalms 51:1-9

There's a story about a little boy who passed his neighbor on the sidewalk. "I'm running away from home!" the little boy announced as he sped off. Minutes later the neighbor saw the little boy coming up the sidewalk from the opposite direction. As he passed the neighbor he said again, "I'm running away from home!" Soon the boy was seen to be approaching again and this time the neighbor stopped him to ask, "If you're running away from home, why do you continue to run around the block?" Looking at the neighbor in disbelief, the boy explained, "Cause I'm not allowed to cross the street!"

I like that story because it illustrates something I've learned over the years; no freedom is absolute and when we have reached what we think is freedom, we may have simply attained a state of bondage on a less obvious level. We are a lot like that little boy, forever running away from home, but getting nowhere because we aren't allowed to cross the street.

In John 8 we find the critics of Jesus confidently discussing "truth" and "freedom" without really knowing what it is like to personally know either of them. Like the old farmer once explained, "You can't describe a place you ain't never been." So often, that is what is happening when we talk confidently about "truth" and "freedom."

WALKING IN DARKNESS

It all begins in John 8 when Jesus proclaims, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (8:12). Immediately the Pharisees pounce on him, "You are bearing witness to your self; your testimony is not true." They contest what Jesus is saying because they reject him, but Jesus tells them that what he says is true because it comes, not from him but God. Surely, if they knew God, they would recognize what Jesus is saying as true.

Of course, that's the hard part, isn't it? How can we be sure we know God? Jesus replies to us as well as them: "if you knew me, you would know my Father also" (8:19). This is what Jesus meant when he said that he is the light of the world. He illuminates the darkness that surrounds the nature of God. When we know what Je-

sus is about, we also know what God is like. All that I think that I know about God is what I have seen in the life and words of Jesus. There are lots of things I do not know about Jesus and his Son, but what I do perceive is enough life for me to live hopefully and faithfully.

This light that Jesus shines on God the Father gives me the only possible capacity for true freedom. As Jesus tells his followers: "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (8:21,22). Their reply is indignant: "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been in bondage to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will be made free?'" (8:33).

WHO ME, IN BONDAGE?

I can hear us saying something similar. "I'm a descendant of John Wesley, how can you say I'm in bondage?" "I'm a disciple of John Calvin, what do you mean I'm not free?" "I'm a Roman Catholic, how can you make me more free?" Actually, Jesus is telling them, "truth" and "freedom" are not so much in what they say they believe, but in what they do about it. "If you were Abraham's children, you would do what Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God" (8:39,40). If the life doesn't match the words, the words are a lie.

As I write these words the whole world waits to see whether we will once again go to war with Saddam Hussein. The other day my wife, Valere, told an audience that as Christians we ought to pray for Saddam and the people were shocked. Pray for such a man as he? But isn't that what Christ has taught us to do with our enemies? If we, are true disciples of Jesus Christ, how can we curse those who are our enemies? Is it because we believe that God is incapable of changing the heart of this tyrant?

"So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." Only in Jesus Christ can we know real freedom — from hate and prejudice, from judging when we ought to be blessing, from despair when God offers us hope. Only when Christ has freed us from that kind of bondage can we be free indeed!

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