



## OPINION

### Preserving Our Most Valuable Resources

(Continued from Page A1)

\$76 million — or 36.1 percent — of the money bought the development rights of landowners in assembly territory.

Agriculture is an important economic activity of the South Central Assembly area. The 1996-1997 United States Department of Agriculture/Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (USDA/PDA) Annual Report shows the assembly countries contain 1.597 million acres — or 20.7 percent — of Pennsylvania's 7.7 million acres of farmland. The USDA/PDA report also states that the agriculture income from the farms in the area was \$306 million for crops and \$1.4 million from livestock for a total farm income of \$1.7 billion. This is 34.8 percent of the farm gate value of Pennsylvania's total farm production income of \$5.02 billion.

If we consider the related economic activity generated by this farm production — inputs like machinery, feed, fertilizers, labor, fuel and supplies plus the economic activity generated after the crops and animal products leave the farm including transportation, processing, packaging, distribution and sales costs — we can estimate over \$15 billion of additional business activity brought about by our farmers in assembly counties.

These figures emphasize the value our farms and their related businesses contribute to the economy of our area. They also emphasize why we need to continue preserving as many acres as possible while we struggle with land use and growth management.

What are some other benefits of the Farmland Protection Program? Farms for the program are chosen by the local County Farmland Protection Boards. They are selected

either from farms threatened by development with a higher value or from farms under less development pressure at a lower per acre value. This leads to clusters of preserved land, which allow for easier land management and reduce conflict between agriculture and non-agriculture neighbors. It also allows farms to be sold to the next generation at lower cost — ag value versus development value. The average difference between these two values in participating farms in the assembly counties is \$1,580 per acre.

What does a farmer give up for these dollars? He gives up his opportunity to sell his land for a non-farm use at a much higher price. And he does this for perpetuity.

Another reason the program has been successful is that it is voluntary. No landowner is forced to give up his development rights. And if he does so elect, he is compensated only for a part of the actual commercial value of his land.

However, even with the success of the program we need to look at other ways to fund the program as well as to seek other programs to save one of our most valuable natural resources — land. Over the last five years alone, assembly land had 60,000 acres — or 4 percent — of its farmland converted to other uses. Additional possible funding sources are a farmland conversion fee, a realty transfer tax (RTT) or long term installment purchases. Another program that is working well in Maryland is the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR).

If we are to continue to realize the economic benefits of our farmland and to appreciate its conservation and esthetic values, we must continue to build on the success of the current program.



## Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County  
Agricultural Agent

### To Control Corn Disease

Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent, reminds us that the mild winter weather means an increase in the little flea beetle insect. High numbers of flea beetles increases the threat of Stewart's Wilt in corn.

Stewart's Wilt is caused by the bacteria *Pantoea stewartii*. It can cause a fatal wilting of young corn plants especially sweet corn and a few susceptible field corn varieties. It can also be exhibited as a leaf blight after pollination.

The system to predict the severity of the disease is based on the expected survival rate of the flea beetle. Cold winter temperatures reduce the risk of flea beetle survival. The scale developed is based on the sum of the average temperatures for the months of December, January and February. If the total exceeds 90 degrees, the risk is severe.

This past year the sum for Lancaster County was over 110 degrees. The economic threshold for treating susceptible varieties of field corn before the five leaf stage is 50 per cent of plants with 5 or more beetles per plant. In sweet corn the threshold is 10 per cent of the plants with 2 or more beetles per plant.

There are a number of insecticides registered for flea beetle control. Remember to always follow the directions on the label.

### To Look For Alfalfa Weevil

Alfalfa weevil over winters as eggs and adults. The time of the egg hatch is based upon heat units accumulated from January 1. With the unusually warm winter this year, heat units referred to as growing degree days (GDD) have accumulated faster than usual.

For the alfalfa weevil, the base temperature for GDD is 48 degrees. Research has shown that alfalfa weevil begin feeding when 250 GDD base 48 is reached. Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent, reports Harrisburg has already accumulated 92 GDD base 50 from April 1 to April 12.

The National Weather Service does not calculate GDD before April 1. Thus, we have received more than 92 GDD this year. He expects Lancaster County should exceed the 250 GDD before the end of April.

### To Scout For Alfalfa Weevil

Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent, expects many alfalfa fields will see alfalfa weevil feeding very soon. He encourages farmers to begin looking for alfalfa weevil now. A simple scouting procedure consists of three steps.

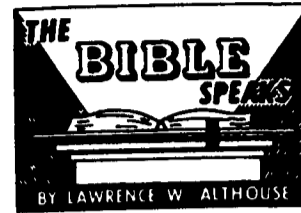
Step one. To sample a field, carry a 5 gallon bucket and walk

through the field in a zigzag pattern. Randomly select 30 entire stems from the field. While collecting the stems, be careful not to dislodge any feeding larvae. Place the stems in the bucket with the top of the stems down.

Step two. Separate the stems into 3 or 4 bundles and beat each bundle 10 to 15 times against the inside of the bucket to dislodge the larvae. Count all the alfalfa weevil larvae that are in the bucket. Divide the number of larvae in the bucket by the number of stems collected to determine the number of larvae per stem.

Step three. Determine the value of the hay in dollars per ton. Using charts available at county extension offices, the number of larvae, value of the hay and cost of spraying are compared to determine if spraying is economically justified. For example, if the cost to spray is \$10 per acre and the value of the forage is \$115 per ton, you must have an average of 2.2 larvae per stem to justify spraying.

*Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "It is a sign of immaturity to think yourself exempt from the rules that everyone else lives by."*



### WHERE'S THE GLORY? May 3, 1998

Background Scripture:

John 12:20-50

Devotional Reading:

Romans 5:1-11

When Jesus announced to his disciples, "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified," (12:23), I'm sure they assumed that he meant that the homage paid him by the crowds on Palm Sunday would be capped by some even greater exhibition of God's favor. Isn't that what one would expect if they were to be "glorified"?

But Jesus went on to say something that must have puzzled, if not frightened them: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls in the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit." What does being "glorified" have to do with a seed dying and bearing "much fruit"? The disciples must have felt euphoric about the great reception along the Palm Sunday road, but now Jesus is sounding doomed.

His next words remove are even more portentous; "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also." What is Jesus suggesting about the fate of those who follow him? Surely being in the vanguard of the Messiah is not meant to be a hazardous association! Who would join a Messiah who promised, not security, but danger?

### DANGER AHEAD?

If they listened carefully to what Jesus said next, they would realize that even the Messiah himself would be endangered; "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour," (12:27). Is Jesus saying that this dangerous situation which he is anticipating is the way things are supposed to go? Jesus has already said that his disciples "must follow me" That is scary because it is obvious that Jesus is headed in harm's way.

Ironically, their Master's next words are. "Father, glorify thy name." Something very strange follows. There was a great noise, everyone would agree to that. But what made that noise? "The crowd standing by heard it and said that it had thundered. Others said 'An angel has spoken to him.'" Those who heard a voice heard these words that came as a reply to Jesus' prayer

"I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

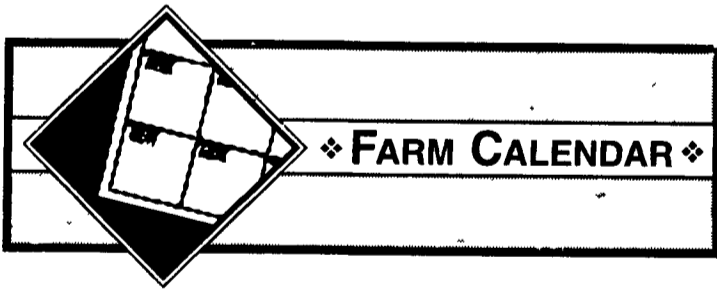
Jesus explains to the disciples that "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine." In other words, the heavenly voice came to the road to the Messiah's glorification ran through the valley of the shadow of death—as must theirs as well. Glorification seems entirely incompatible with danger and death. Where's the glory in death? Jesus has already explained that if something dies it can yet, like a seed buried in the earth, yield "much fruit." Something good can come from this dangerous path he is following. He has also indicated that it is only through death that we can know eternal life.

### THE COSMIC CROSS

But this is about more than just one person's death or even that of his followers. There are cosmic implications that mean that the whole universe will be affected. By his death Jesus will utterly defeat Satan, "the ruler of this world" and his death will reconcile all humanity. "...I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (12:32). Read in this light, Jesus' message is not really one of doom and gloom, but of the glory of God in Christ. As horrible as the cross will be, it will form the bridge whereby God is able to unloose his love into the cosmos. "I have come as light into the world," says Jesus, "that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness" (12:46).

It is interesting, then, that having taught his disciples that he and they must tread a dangerous path to glorification, many of those who had been following him drew back for fear of the consequence: "...many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (12:42). They wanted to play it safe, but you can't play it safe and follow Jesus Christ. You can have one or the other, but not both.

Where's the glory in danger and death? Answer: just on the other side. Either way, playing it safe or taking up a cross, it is a gamble. Each of us has to decide on what we will bet our lives.



## ❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

### 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 Meeting, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.  
Lackawanna/Wyoming County Extension Spring Fling Seminar, Keystone College, LaPlume, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Grant Writing Workshop For Non-profit Organizations, County Office Building, Montrose, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

### Wednesday, May 6

International Internet Dairy Genetics Consignment Sale, noon.

### Thursday, May 7

Lancaster County FFA Leadership School, Lancaster Mennonite High School.

Lancaster/York Fruit Growers' Twilight Meeting, Cherry Hill Orchards, Lancaster, 6:30 p.m.

### Friday, May 8

Antique John Deere Tractor Show and Pulls, Zern's Auction and Sales, Gilbertsville, 2 p.m., also May 9 at 11 a.m.

### Saturday, May 9

Capitol Area Beekeepers Association Short Course, Dauphin County Agricultural and Natural Resources Center, Dauphin, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. and May 16, Milton Hershey School Farm

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