



OPINION

Agriculture To Benefit From Dirt Road Program

Pennsylvania's more than 27,000 miles of dirt and gravel roads go hand-in-hand with agriculture and forestry.

For years in Pennsylvania, it was the case, and it still is in some areas, that a local farmer with equipment-handling abilities, interest and time, would be hired to serve as "roadmaster."

While the job title is more or less obsolete, the job is not. Now, under transportation legislation passed last year as Act 3, the job has been given a new look, new respect and state attention.

The legislation provides \$5 million every year in a dedicated line item to be used for dirt and gravel road maintenance.

For rural Pennsylvania, the program is welcome, timely, and, it seems, in greater demand than what can be accommodated in the first several years.

There are two catches. There is a priority listing, according to listings of watershed quality (the better the quality the higher the priority), for municipalities seeking grants through the program. Also, the local road manager, or roadmaster, must attend educational classes (currently targeted for priority municipalities) being provided around the state through a cooperative effort of state agencies and Penn State Extension.

The educational materials are to provide roadmasters with technologies and a background education that will better enable them to make better decisions when rebuilding and maintaining the dirt and gravel roads under their charge.

For rural municipal governments, the funds should be a welcome relief from having to allow dirt roads to further deteriorate because the limited funding is directed toward local high-traffic hardtop roads.

For agriculture, it may seem to mean nothing, but if it reduces stuck tires, vehicle damage, lost time from accidents or unnecessarily washed out or iced-over roads, it can mean more money for agriculture.

Otherwise, good roads just make living that much more enjoyable.

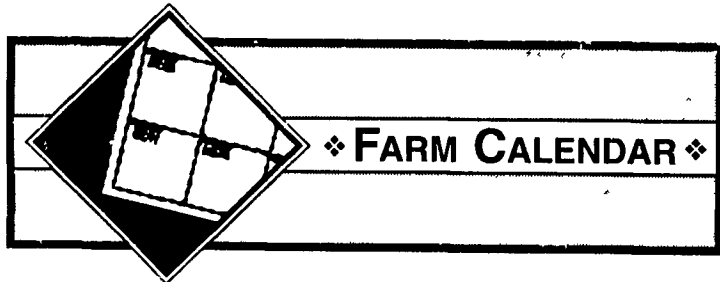
Further, the program acknowledges that, although a common scapegoat, agriculture isn't the worst culprit in accelerating soil erosion and stream sedimentation and in threatening drinking water quality in the state.

Tremendous miles of highways coursing along and over streams throughout the state flush storm water directly into streams with loads of human waste and garbage, motor fuels, oils and solvents, and soils from many non-agricultural activities.

It gets worse in urban areas and especially in cities, and especially older cities.

But most of the state's watersheds are coursed by dirt and gravel roads, and improperly constructed or maintained dirt and gravel roads can be much more serious threats to a stream and water quality for a community.

This program promises to be effective and worthwhile.



Saturday, May 30
Cecil County Breeders Fair, Cecil County Fairgrounds.
Boring Fire Company Gas Engine Show, Boring, Md., thru May 31.
Lebanon County Dairy Princess Pageant, Lebanon County Career and Technology Center, 7:30 p.m.
Blair County Dairy Princess Pageant, Logan Valley Mall, Altoona, 7 p.m.
Dairy Festival, Troy, 11 a.m.
Sunday, May 31

Monday, June 1
Corn Refiners Association Inc. and National Corn Growers Association Corn Utilization and Technology Conference, Hyatt at Union Station, St. Louis, thru June 3.
Food Safety and Sanitation Training, Hazleton General Hospital, Hazleton, 9 a.m.-noon, also

June 8, Tuesday, June 2
Wednesday, June 3
Thursday, June 4
Southeast Pa. Fruit Growers Twilight Meeting, Stoudt's Orchard, Shartlesville, 6:30 p.m.
Ag Marketing Update, Howard Johnson's, Millington, 6:30 a.m.

Friday, June 5
Saturday, June 6
Huntingdon County Dairy Princess Pageant, Huntingdon Area Middle School, Huntingdon.
Chester County Dairy Princess Pageant, at Cochranville Strawberry Festival.
Antique JD Tractor Show and Pulls, Oley Fairgrounds, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sunday, June 7
Clinton County Dairy/Princess



Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Develop Nutrient Management Plans

The Pennsylvania Nutrient Management Law requires all concentrated animal operations (those with two or more animal units per acre) which were in existence when the law became effective on October 1, 1997 to develop and submit a nutrient management plan for their operations by September 30, 1998.

The plan must contain information on number of animals in the operation, nutrients produced, crop nutrient needs and best management practices. The plan needs to include maps of the farm to show field boundaries. Fields need to be identified with acreage and soil types. Crops produced and realistic expected yields need to be established.

The law also states when manure may be applied and set backs that must be observed when applying manure near wells, sinkholes, streams, lakes, ponds, etc. For more details on the Nutrient Management Law contact your local conservation district or Penn State Cooperative Extension office.

To Apply For Cost Share Funds

To assist in developing nutrient management plans, the state has developed a cost sharing program. The cost share must be approved prior to the beginning of the planning process. If you are interested in cost share funds, contact your local conservation district office to obtain approval.

For commercially developed plans, the cost share for a farm of 0 to 50 acres is 75 per cent of actual costs not to exceed \$250. For 50 or more acres the cost share is 75 per cent of costs not to exceed \$4 per acre or \$800 per operation. Cost share funds are available for farmer developed plans.

For a plan developed by an individual for his own operation the cost share is \$200 for an operation

Pageant, Porter Township, Lamar, 2 p.m.
Md. Junior Polled Hereford Pr. Show, Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship.
Monday, June 8
Ephrata Area Young Farmers meeting, Therapeutic Riding Program, Greystone Manor, 7 p.m.
Tuesday, June 9
Centre County Wool Pool, Grange Fairgrounds, Centre Hall, 7 a.m.-11:30 a.m., and 1 p.m.-2 p.m.
MDIA meeting, Cove Mountain Farm, Mercersburg, 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday, June 10

Thursday, June 11
Lancaster County Poultry Association Golf Outing, Foxchase

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up to 50 acres. For an operation over 50 acres, the cost share is \$3 per acre not to exceed \$800 per operation. Only concentrated animal operations will be eligible for cost share funds in the first year of the program. After October 1, 1998, voluntary nutrient management plans will be able to receive cost share as well.

To Look at Estate Planning

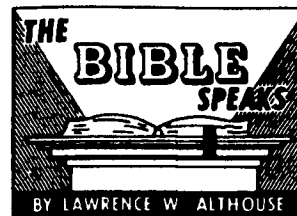
When was the last time you took a look at your estate plan? If it has been over 5 years you may want to review it. Also, now would be a good time to look at your business succession plan. What plans do you have to pass your farm to the next generation? How are you preparing the next generation to assume management and ownership of the farm?

Estate planning and business

succession planning work hand in hand. By developing a plan and then implementing the plan will help to insure the future of your farm. It is important to start early with your children to cultivate their interest in the farm. Treat them fairly and provide them with good wages and working conditions.

Allow them to build assets so they will be in a position to buy into the farm business. Look at estate planning as a method to help implement your plans for the farm. Now is a good time to discuss your future goals for the farm and meet with your advisors to develop your estate and business succession plan.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "The key to happiness is having dreams. The key to success is making dreams come true."



WATCH!

May 31, 1998

Background Scripture:

Mark 13

Devotional Reading:

Joel 2:28-32

As we approach the millennium of 2,000 AD, we are hearing and reading dire predictions of the apocalyptic events forecast in the Book of Revelation. Some Christians sincerely believe that "the end times" forecast in the last book of the Bible, as well as Mark 13, are precisely those that will accompany the turn of the century.

Here in Dallas a few weeks ago, a cult group waited expectantly for the return of Christ in a flying saucer. When the day arrived and he did not return, the group reassessed their calculations.

Christians have long divided over the question of Christ's return—when? how? and why? Both Jesus and Paul seem to have expected the coming of the Kingdom of God. But in the Bible Jesus' remarks on his return and the coming of the "end times" are anything but clear. Paul, on the other hand, seems to have expected it as imminent in his earliest letters, but by his later letters, was no longer certain when the last days would occur.

APOCALYPTIC

Part of the problem is the very nature of apocalyptic writing, a style common in Judaism at the beginning of the Christian era. Highly symbolic and abounding in vivid and often inconsistent imagery, it is virtually impossible to interpret literally. It is found in some of the writings of the Old Testament prophets and in the Book of Daniel. The principal example in the New Testament is Revelation, but Mark 13 is also apocalyptic writing.

I wish I could tell you that there is a clear, unified message in Mark 13 and I can explain it to you, but I cannot. I believe, as some scholars do, that Mark 13 is a collection of apocalyptic sayings that were not originally part of one text, explaining why they cannot be easily put together in a consistent message. There is a lot here that is very confusing. At the same time, there is something here for all of us, despite what we may or may not believe about the immanent

return of Christ with his kingdom.

Mark 13 begins with one of Jesus' disciples pointing to the Jerusalem temple and saying, "Look Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" We can appreciate his reaction for these buildings were very impressive, particularly if we may assume that the person was from the countryside rather than Jerusalem. But Jesus tells this follower that "There will not be left one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down" (13:1, 2). Yes these things are impressive—as many of our churches are today—but they are not enduring. Only one thing endures forever, the will of God.

FALSE MESSIAHS

Secondly, Jesus warns them that "Many will come in my name, saying 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray" (13:6). That is a prophecy that has been fulfilled again and again since the earliest days of the church. Unfortunately, there are always those who will follow these false messiahs.

Third, while Christians wait for Christ's return they are likely to suffer for his sake. "You will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them" (13:9). When this happens, we are not to think something has gone wrong with God's plan. Actually, these things are evidence that the plan is intact and will be fulfilled.

Fourth, "But of that day or that hour no one knows" (13:32). If someone comes—as they always do—saying when that day will be, don't be taken in by them—as someone always is. One more time **NOBODY KNOWS THE DAY OR THE HOUR, "but only the Father."**

Finally, the bottom line: "Take heed, watch... Watch therefore..."

"And what I say to you I say to all: Watch" (13:33, 35, 37). When Christ, like the master of the house in the parable, returns, let him find us doing and being what he has called us to do and be.

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