



OPINION

Political Candidate Confuses Family Farming Issues

Perhaps because of Gov. Tom Ridge's popularity, not many people even discuss that there is an election this year, or that there are contenders for his job.

But there are, and watch out. Some of the distorted muck that has been raised lately by at least one of his want-to-be contenders is doing a 'great disservice to all of agriculture.

For those within the production agricultural community, especially animal agriculture, the ongoing internal debate of what defines a "family farm" versus a "corporate farm" has become an issue for external debate, and those debating it haven't a clue what they are talking about.

Recently a want-to-be gubernatorial candidate mailed out a package of information soliciting support from "family farmers." The package included an article written by the candidate that contained ridiculous statements and plenty of misstatements about the hog industry and manure management.

Apparently, the candidate, or the campaign handlers and consultants, considered that there is a groundswell of opposition by rank-and-file livestock producers to contract production agriculture, or "integrated" agriculture, and that these people could be convinced that Gov. Tom Ridge and his Administration are bad guys attempting to help destroy the "family farm."

A number of farmers who received the mailing however, considered the anti-integrated swine industry political campaign literature a joke, especially those who contract-raise poultry.

The outrageousness of the mailing apparently even caused some of the farmers to get together in opposition to that candidate.

But the real issue of concern is the agricultural community's lack of control over who gets to serve as its spokesperson.

This candidate in no way speaks for the agricultural community on this or any other issue. But the non-farmers don't know that.

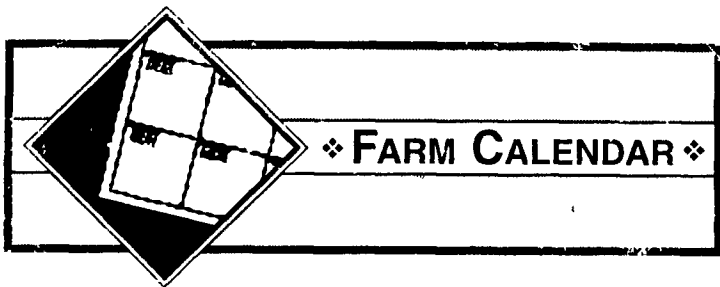
The non-farmers who are new to the issue or have little accurate information can and probably will perpetuate the candidate's misleading statements that "family farmers" don't want contract production to exist in this state.

Perhaps it is time that an accurate definition of a "family farm" is forwarded to the general public.

As a suggestion, we offer that a "family farm" is any farming operation that supports a family, whether it be raising mink, cows, sheep, goats, fish, rabbits, beef, or horticultural products.

If an agricultural operation can keep a family together, if it helps them to be strong and healthy, provides them with the opportunity to live and work together as a family, and to understand and feel the interaction between themselves and Creation, then it is a family farm.

No matter for what office the political candidate seeks.



❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

Saturday, September 12

Lancaster Farmland Trust 8th Annual Membership Picnic, Leola, 1 p.m.-5 p.m.
Bradford County Youth Field Day, Mt. Pisgah State Park, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Sunday, September 13

Honey Harvest Festival, Hashawha Environmental Center, Westminster.
Equine Trivial Pursuit, Green Lane Reservoir Pike, 9 a.m.
Mason-Dixon Red and White Dairy Cattle Association Picnic and Field Day, farm of Paul and Lucinda Moyer, Bernville, 1 p.m.

Monday, September 14

Green Township Community Fair, Cookport, thru Sept. 19.
Poultry Management and Health Seminar, Kreider's Restaurant, Manheim, noon.
Beef Producers Meeting, Country Cupboard Restaurant, Lewis-

burg, 5:30 p.m., and Byerly Brothers Meats, West Milton, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, September 15

Albion Area Fair, Albion, thru Sept. 19.
Sinking Valley Fair, Skelp, thru Sept. 19.
Denver Fair, Denver, thru Sept. 19.
Lancaster County Honey Producers Meeting, Lancaster County Central Park, 7 p.m.
New-Generation Coalitions for Value-Added Products and Marketing Opportunities, Montour DeLong Fairgrounds, Washingtonville, 7:30 p.m.-9 p.m.

Wednesday, September 16

Penn Jersey Pasture Management Meeting, Bonny Dell Farms, Andover, N.J., 6:30 p.m.-9 p.m.
Anne Arundel County Fair, Anne Arundel Fairgrounds, Crownsville, thru Sept. 20.
Berlin Brothersvalley Community



Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Prepare For Small Grain Seeding

According to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County extension agronomy agent, most of the management decisions that affect yield on winter grain crops need to be made before the crop is planted.

These key management factors, often referred to as yield boosters, include site selection, soil fertility, seed bed preparation, planting, variety selection, planting date, and seeding rate.

Variety selection is perhaps the most cost-effective way to control diseases. Selection of high yielding varieties which are resistant to common diseases will go a long way in maximizing yields.

Penn State Agronomy Department evaluates many small grain varieties each year and publishes a report on disease resistance and overall yield potential.

Planting date is a critical aspect of winter grain management. Seeding too early increases the potential for many diseases. Seeding too late will have plants too small to survive the winter. Penn State Agronomy Guide has suggested seeding dates for areas of the state.

To Look At Soils For Small Grains

Site selection is important in two ways for successful winter grain production.

Robert Anderson, Lancaster County extension agronomy agent, reminds us winter grains do not like wet soils. Under wet soil conditions, small grain crops experience excessive winter kill, especially barley.

Also, small grains should not be planted in the same field for two consecutive years because of disease control. Wheat when planted two years in the same location of-

Fair, Berlin, thru Sept. 19.
Southern Lancaster County Fair, Quarryville, thru Sept. 18.
Penn Jersey Pasture Management Meeting, Willow Brook Farms, Catasauqua, 6:30 p.m.-9 p.m.
Thursday, September 17
Berks County Grazing Walk, Double G Farm, Barb and Kevin Gorski, Bernville, 6:20 p.m.
Charles County Fair, Charles County Fairgrounds, La Plata, thru Sept. 20.
North East Community Fair, North East, thru Sept. 19.
Oley Valley Community Fair, Oley, thru Sept. 19.
New-Generation Coalitions For Value-Added Products and Marketing Opportunities, Gregg Township Fire Hall, Allenwood, 7:30 p.m.-9 p.m.
Rural Youth of Lancaster County Picnic, Neffsville Community Park.
Friday, September 18
Eastern State Exposition, West Springfield, Mass., thru Oct. 4.
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ten become infected by the disease "take-all." The name is very appropriate for the severity of this disease.

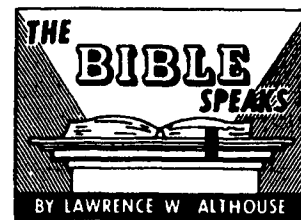
Soil fertility is another area which needs attention. Soil pH should be between 6.0 and 7.0. Wheat will tolerate the lower pH but barley does much better at a pH of 7.0.

Winter grains also experience significant levels of winter kill if the phosphorous levels are low. Potassium levels should be in the optimum range. A soil test taken before planting will allow soil fertility problems to be addressed before planting.

Nitrogen should be applied in the spring following planting. If the field receives regular applications of livestock manure, additional nitrogen may not be needed and may increase the amount of lodging.

To Adjust Cows to Cool Weather

Glenn Shirk, Lancaster County



FREEDOM FOR ALL?
September 13, 1998

Background Scripture:

Exodus 2:23-25; 5:1-2; 11:1-8; 12:29-32; 15:1,2, 19-21

Devotional Reading:
Psalms 105:37-45

In the 1960s, when many of our citizens were engaged in the struggle to realize the American dream of "liberty and justice for all," I well remember those who could not imagine why Christians would become involved in what they regarded as "a secular matter." "Just preach the gospel," I was admonished, "and leave civil rights and social justice to others!"

A decade or so later, when in various Central and South American countries, Christians, Protestant and Roman Catholic, joined with the oppressed in working and sometimes fighting for freedom. I heard much the same arguments. Quite free to speak his opinion without fear, one man said, "You don't have to be free to be a Christian."

True, one can be in some kind of bondage and still be a follower of Jesus. Slaves, convicts and prisoners of all kinds have found Christ in their bondage and served him well. But, if one is a Christian, the desire for freedom burns ever more brightly and Christian discipleship cannot help but bring us into eventual conflict with totalitarian authority. Often it is not enough to "give unto Caesar" the things that are Caesar's, for they are usually not content unless they can also possess what belongs to God.

JUST FOR SOME

Too many Americans believe in "liberty and justice," not "for all, but just for some." In Robert Nathan's book, *The Enchanted Voyage*, he writes: "Liberty, he thought: you've got to be willing to give it to others if you want to have it yourself." None of us are ever truly free if we deny it to others.

Contrary to what many think, I believe "freedom for all" is a spiritual matter. We cannot possibly understand the Old Testament if we think the quest of freedom has little or nothing to do with God. Its pivotal event was and is the Exo-

extension dairy agent, reminds us as we approach the end of summer, temperatures can change greatly and rapidly. Many barns are now tunnel ventilated. These barns have a lot of fans that are designed to move and exchange a lot of air very rapidly.

This works great when temperatures are high. However, when temperatures drop and we fail to reduce the number of fans running, we can chill cows and set them up for respiratory problems such as pneumonia as well as predisposing them to other ailments.

When temperatures drop we need to reduce the number of fans that are running. Do not turn off all the fans or close up the building tightly. We still need to exchange air but at a reduced rate. This allows us to keep the air fresh and the cows healthy.

Feather Proof's Footnote: "We cannot solve today's problems with the same level of thinking that created them."

And the people of Israel groaned under their bondage, and cried out for help . . . And God heard their groaning" (3:23,24a). Apparently they did not think that their oppression was not a matter for God. Neither did God.

He not only listened to their cries, he answered their cries with a message for the Pharaoh. (Pharaoh may not have been an evil man per se, just a "practical politician" who was concerned about the economy!) "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel," says Moses and Aaron, "Let my people go . . ." (5:1). The denial of freedom is contrary to the will of God and "Let my people go" has been the rallying cry of the oppressed through the centuries. The Passover is still at the heart of the Jewish faith and Jesus' celebration of the Passover with his disciples is the central sacrament for Christians. How, then, can we say that freedom is not a spiritual matter?

CONTRARY OPINION

Sometimes we assume that freedom is only for the "worthy" (usually those who believe as we do). John Stuart Mill, one of freedom's greatest prophets, said "If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind should be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind." If we truly are committed to liberty and we trust in God, why are we so afraid of opinions contrary to ours? Might it be that we do not really trust in God?"

God acted in history to obtain the liberty of his people. After their escape from the Egyptians, they knew that it was because of God that they were now free and they gave him the thanks and praise: "I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously . . . The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation . . ." (15:2).

If we examine the democratic ideal upon which our revolution was founded, we will find undisguised the God who said "Let my people go!"

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