



OPINION

Proud To Be A Farmer

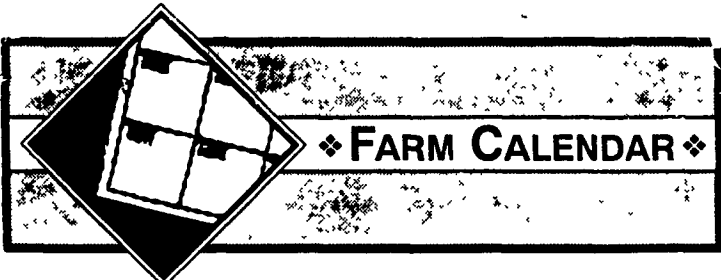
As we come to the end of the year, we look back to see change in the making and we look forward in anticipation of new and exciting challenges. The interdependence of the various segments of agriculture could not be more pronounced. With high milk prices and low grain prices, the saying that what is one farmer's gain is another farmer's loss has certainly been proven true again.

We believe this should not be so. Milk prices should be up where they are. But grain prices should also be up at profitable levels. With consolidation of the companies that control the manufacturing and distribution of the food supply, maybe we need the large farmer controlled companies to provide the access to the retail markets and get farmers up closer to America's dinner tables in the food distribution channels.

The old idea that supply and demand controls the market sometimes seems to be out of line with what we see in the agriculture industry. Just when the Dairy Compact idea was gaining some force, milk prices suddenly shot up to profitable levels. Is this really a supply and demand situation? We don't know, but as the Dutchman said, "It makes one wonder."

Now with hog and beef prices so low that producers are in danger of going bankrupt, the government is talking about giving handouts to them again. Of course, when the government becomes the hand-out-or it takes control of its hand-out-ees. Past experience suggests that we don't want this control, so 1999 should be full of challenges too.

And yet, to be associated with agriculture has been rewarding in the past. And we believe it will be in the future also. We wish prosperity to all those who choose to face the challenges of agriculture into the next millenium. Every business has its challenges and we doubt that farming has any less or more challenges than other industries. Yes, you can be proud to be a farmer even with the challenges of the future. Without farmers, the world dies. Best wishes in the new year.



FARM CALENDAR

- | | |
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| 1999 | 11:30 a.m.
Schuylkill County DHIA Banquet, Dairy Days. |
| Friday, January 1
Happy New Year!
Lancaster Farming office closed,
Saturday, January 2 | Franklin County Dairy Day, Kauffman Community Center, 9 a.m.-2:45 p.m.
Dairy Facilities Tour, Dave Stuck Farm and Irvin Hostetler Farm, 10 a.m.-Noon. |
| Sunday, January 3 | Northeast Tomato Growers' Meeting, Thompson's Dairy Bar, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Vegetable Growers' Association of Delaware 1999 meeting, Jan. 7 Kent County Cooperative Extension, Dover, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Jan. 8 Carlisle Fire Company, Milford, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Jan. 9 Laurel High School Auditorium, 8:30 a.m.-Noon. |
| Monday, January 4 | Computer Basics for Farmers, Fulton County Extension Office, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
Kutztown Produce Study Circle, Kutztown Produce Auction, 7 p.m. |
| Tuesday, January 5 | Friday, January 8 |
| Wednesday, January 6 | Saturday, January 9 |
| Thursday, January 7 | Sunday, January 10 |
| Friday, January 8 | Monday, January 11 |
| Saturday, January 9 | Tuesday, January 12 |
| Sunday, January 10 | Wednesday, January 13 |
| Monday, January 11 | Thursday, January 14 |
| Tuesday, January 12 | Friday, January 15 |
| Wednesday, January 13 | Saturday, January 16 |
| Thursday, January 14 | Sunday, January 17 |
| Friday, January 15 | Monday, January 18 |
| Saturday, January 16 | Tuesday, January 19 |
| Sunday, January 17 | Wednesday, January 20 |
| Monday, January 18 | Thursday, January 21 |
| Tuesday, January 19 | Friday, January 22 |
| Wednesday, January 20 | Saturday, January 23 |
| Thursday, January 21 | Sunday, January 24 |
| Friday, January 22 | Monday, January 25 |
| Saturday, January 23 | Tuesday, January 26 |
| Sunday, January 24 | Wednesday, January 27 |
| Monday, January 25 | Thursday, January 28 |
| Tuesday, January 26 | Friday, January 29 |
| Wednesday, January 27 | Saturday, January 30 |
| Thursday, January 28 | Sunday, January 31 |
| Friday, January 29 | |
| Saturday, January 30 | |
| Sunday, January 31 | |



Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Determine Fields to Rotate

Deciding when fields should be rotated to another crop requires time and some key information in order to make the best decision, according to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent. Rotational changes should be considered well in advance of when the change will take place.

Several factors to consider include a projection of the potential production of the existing crop if maintained another year compared to a new crop, any pH or soil fertility level adjustments necessary for the old or new crop, the suitability of the soil for the existing and new crop, the crop or feed needs of the farm operation, any insect or disease problems in the existing crop that will be controlled or no longer exist as a problem in the new crop and a projection of the impact on farm income for both the old and new crop.

To Look At Rotating Sod Fields

If a perennial sod is going to be rotated to corn or another annual crop, planning the weed control program well in advance is of paramount importance, according to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent. A successful approach is the early application of herbicides. Early applications usually improve weed control.

On livestock and dairy farms where both alfalfa and corn are grown, soil fertility levels may be

1999 Winter Dairy Management School, Delevan Fire Training Center, 9:30 a.m.-3:20 p.m.

1999 Winter Dairy Management School, Delevan Fire Training Center, 9:30 a.m.-3:20 p.m.

Act 6 Nutrient Management Certification/Plan Writing Seminar, Berks Ag Center, certification.

Workforce Management for Farms and Horticultural Business, Radisson Penn Harris Hotel and Convention Center, Camp Hill, through Jan. 15.

Wayne County DHIA annual meeting, Bethany Methodist Church Hall, Bethany, 12:30 p.m.

Act 6 Nutrient Management Certification/Plan Writing Seminar, fertility, Berks Ag Center, Leesport, exam Jan. 20.

Act 6 Nutrient Management Certification and Plan Writing Seminar, fertility, Berks Ag Center, Leesport, exam Jan. 20.

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another key factor in deciding when to rotate from alfalfa to corn. Livestock manure is normally applied to only corn fields. This management practice builds soil levels of phosphorous and potassium during the corn portion of the rotation.

It makes good economic sense to take advantage of this build up by rotating to alfalfa when the existing alfalfa fields require the addition of fertilizer which must be purchased. Alfalfa will help use the excess nutrients built up during the corn portion of the rotation.

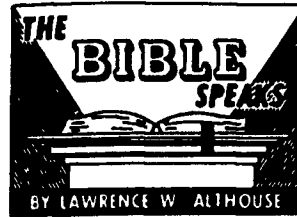
To Look At Rotating Alfalfa Fields

Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent, reports deciding when to rotate out of alfalfa is often a more difficult decision to make.

Normally anytime the number of alfalfa crowns or plants is less than five per square foot, rotating to another crop makes production sense unless this would leave the farm without adequate alfalfa production to meet livestock feeding needs.

When examining the number of alfalfa plants in a field in the fall or early winter, several adjustments should be made to the data gathered. Dig up several plants and determine the number or per cent that are healthy. Also, consider the buildup of hard to control weeds in the stand. The decision to rotate out of alfalfa may be delayed until after the first cutting of alfalfa next year if additional forage is needed.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "If a window of opportunity appears, do not pull down the shade."



THE PROMISE UNBROKEN

December 27, 1998

Background Scripture:

Luke 24: 13-23

Devotional Reading:

John 16:1-11

It may seem quite strange to follow the Christmas story with a portion of the Easter story and only one week in between. But the good news of Jesus Christ is just one story in several segments and it is well for us to realize that Christmas and Easter are all part of that one story.

The prophet Isaiah had prophesied, "Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Is. 7:14). When Matthew quotes this, he goes on to explain that Immanuel "means, God with us" (Matt. 1:23b) When Jesus began his ministry, many were attracted to him because they felt that when they were with Jesus they were in the presence of God.

THE PROMISE NOT BROKEN

That is what ties the Easter story so closely to the message of Christmas. If his enemies were able to arrest, try and execute him, the promise of "God with us" would be negated. If Jesus was put to death it would be impossible for him to fulfill his promise, "Lo, I am with you always..." (Matt. 28:20)

The experiences of the resurrected Christ, on the other hand, were God's evidence that the promise of "God with us" was not broken, for Jesus was still with them. Unfortunately, the good news seemed almost too good to be true. They found an empty tomb, but that was not proof that Jesus was alive. They didn't know how to evaluate the testimony of the women who went to the empty tomb. The two disciples on the Emmaus road did not know what to make of these conflicting thoughts. They reacted much as some of us would have; wanting desperately to believe, they nevertheless doubted.

Isn't it strange that these men walked for miles with the risen Christ and did not recognize him until they sat at table and broke bread together? Or have you wondered why the Risen Christ appeared as a flesh and bones human to some and

as a spiritual vision to others? The four gospel accounts of the resurrected Christ cannot be pieced together. Thank God for that, I say. This is not an accident report, but the most transcendental encounter any of us can experience!

THEIR EYES WERE OPENED

Some people get rather excited about these discrepancies in the gospel accounts, as if they all should fit together comfortably. But to me the discrepancies and differences in the resurrection appearances are healthy. Because these accounts are so different, they are more believable as a spiritual experience. That's what happens when we encounter God close at hand—just as late in John's account of Jesus' ministry, God spoke, saying that he has glorified his name "and I will glorify it again." Though some disciples clearly heard God's voice, John tells us some "said that it thundered!" (John 12:29).

When Jesus "took the bread and blessed, and broke it," then "their eyes were opened and they recognized him." Often we have the same problem. Jesus is with us, just as he promised, but for some reason known only to the One who made us, we do not recognize him. It is as if we are wearing blinders. He is so close to us—sitting at the table with us when we break bread, for example—and we just don't realize it. In retrospect sometimes we can say, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Lk. 24:32)

Even when he appeared to leave them for the last time (24:50-53), he would still be with them, but in a different way. "And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power on high." The physical body has its limitations, even the physical body of Jesus. Jesus never promised to be physically with us forever. The promise of his power is an even greater fulfillment of the promise "God with us"

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