



OPINION

They Are!

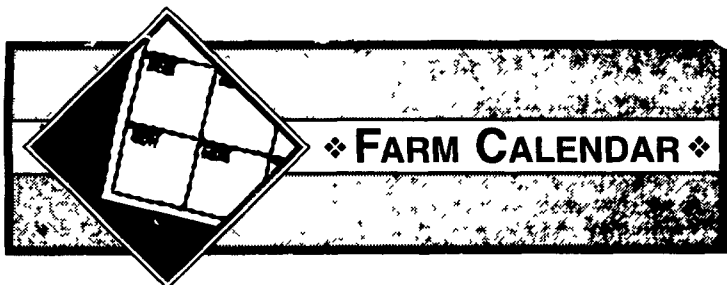
Earlier this century, when people didn't have it so good, farmers were honored as the backbone of the nation. This was especially true when the war in Europe drew U.S. soldiers into the conflict, and the call went out to American farmers to dramatically increase food production. In those days farming was not only a way of life, and a good business, it was a patriotic occupation essential to the strength of our country.

Farmers were honored along with soldiers for their part in the nation's defense. For example, Charles Wilson, a farmer from Chester County was honored on January 7, 1943 at Indiantown Gap with a "V" award along with farmers from other counties.

Unlike people in other countries, our people in America have not experienced famine. Whenever they want food, they can go to the store. If they have no money they can go to the store with food stamps. The need for food is not an everyday experience. Actually, the American population on the average is so overweight it's obvious they have more food than they should have.

That's why the anti-agricultural movement in this country is so disconcerting. Taxes and other laws have already put restrictions on farmer's ability to farm. Instead of doing everything possible to help the farmer produce the food the world needs, the farmer is being discouraged to the point where many farmers now look only to feed their own family. The vision to feed those in need in the world is gone.

If farmers were important to the strength of the nation 50 years ago, why aren't they important for the same reason now? They are! And that's the reason we better wake up. To criticize the farmer with your mouth full is stupid. With the farm backbone of the nation in trouble, you can be sure the economic structure that looks so good on Wall Street has a hidden weakness that is not evident on the daily rise of the stock averages to new highs. A word to the wise is sufficient, as they say.



❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

- Saturday, July 24**
 Lebanon Area Fair, Lebanon Area Fairgrounds, thru July 31.
 Cecil County Fair Old Time Farm Days, Cecil County Fairgrounds, thru July 25.
- Sunday, July 25**
 Clarion County Fair, New Bethlehem, thru July 31.
 Maryland Ag Education Foundation Picnic and Auction, Swan Harbor Farm, Havre de Grace, 2 p.m.-6 p.m.
- Monday, July 26**
 Jefferson Township Fair, Mercer, thru July 31.
 Kimberton Community Fair, Kimberton, thru July 31.
 Shippensburg Community Fair, Shippensburg, thru July 31.
 Troy Fair, Troy, thru July 31.
 Corn Herbicide Plots Field Day, Ken Hyde's Farm, Titusville, 1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.
 Roundup Ready and Liberty Link Corn Weed Control Test, Old Trail Rd., Ebers, 7 p.m.
 Penn State's New Milk Marketing Specialist at York Extension office, 10 a.m.
 Penn State's New Milk Marketing Specialist at Shippensburg High School, 1:30 p.m.
 Penn State's New Milk Marketing Specialist at Rescue Hose Fire Hall, Greencastle, 7 p.m.
- Tuesday, July 27**
 State 4-H Days, Penn State, thru July 29.
 Penn State Diagnostic Clinic, Penn State Agronomy Farm, Rockspring, also July 29.

- Penn Allied Nursery Trade Show, Fort Washington Expo Center, thru July 29.
 Farm Market Tour of Four Southwestern Pa. Farm Markets, bus departs Harrisburg, arrives Wexford to tour Soergel Orchards.
 Annual Ag Showcase Day, Cecil County Fair, Fair Hill, Md., 10 a.m.

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❖ FARM FORUM ❖

Editor:

The future of agriculture is a subject that brings many debates with many opinions as to what needs to be done to insure a bright future for agriculture and for the people who make this their vocation.

People who presently own farmland have it in their power to control what happens to farmland in the future. In order for agriculture to stay and be healthy the land prices and taxes need to be kept low. This would allow interested young people to stay with agriculture instead of going into other fields where there is better pay and



Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Look At Drought Stressed Corn

The prevailing drought conditions may adversely affect the pollination of the 1999 corn crop. Under normal conditions, tassel emergence begins in fields about July 15 and continues to about August 15. Ideally pollination occurs by August 1. About 60 days are required to mature the crop following pollination. According to Dr. Greg Roth, Penn State Agronomy Department, drought stress affects ear development and pollination. In most plants there is internal competition for vegetative development, tassel development and ear shoot development.

With severe drought stress prior to tasseling, ear shoot development may be delayed. This may result in bareness or delayed silk emergence. If silk development is delayed significantly following pollen shed by the tassels, then incomplete pollination may occur.

To Evaluate

Pollination of Corn

Silks from the basal portion of the ear typically emerge first while the tip silks generally emerge last. Pollen shed normally coincides with the silk emergence and lasts for up to 7 days on an individual tassel. Because of plant variability in typical fields, pollen is sometimes available for up to 14 days. Pollination may be assessed by gently pulling the husks off an ear once the silks have turned brown and then gently shaking the ear. Those silks that remain attached to the ear were not pollinated. Often these will be the late emerging silks from the ear tip, but they may be scattered throughout the

financial security. This can happen if the present landowners make the sacrifice by not asking full price for their properties, thus helping the young dedicated farm youth to stay with the farm.

There are programs in most counties across the nation to help with the transfer of farm properties to others interested in agriculture. Unless the sacrifice is made for the willing young who take on a greater risk and challenge than their peers in many other ventures, we will continue to lose farmland to development.

Being a good steward to the

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ear.

Because of the drought conditions, many fields will be producing what Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent, calls "hard of hearing corn silage," corn silage without very good years. Silage producers will have to monitor corn fields closely to determine when to harvest based on moisture content of the corn plant.

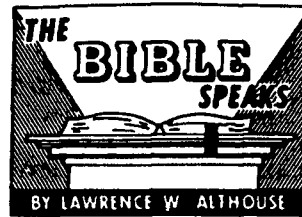
To Estimate Corn Yields

Once the pollination process is complete, a rough yield estimate may be made by determining the average number of kernels per ear and multiplying it by the plant population. Multiply the number of rows by the number of kernels per row to get the number of kernels per ear.

Then multiply this number by

the plant population to get the number of kernels per acre. Then divide the kernels per acre by 90,000 to get the yield estimate in bushels per acre. For example, 16 rows times 20 kernels per row times 23,000 plants per acre equals 7.36 million kernels per acre. 7.36 million divided by 90,000 equals 81.8 bushels per acre. Yield estimates may be very useful in making marketing decisions. Row numbers and especially kernels per row will likely be reduced in many fields because of the drought stress that occurred while these yield components were being determined.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "It is not the amount of time you devote, but what you devote to the time that counts."



EXPENSIVE LENTILS!
 JULY 25, 1999

Background Scripture:
 GENESIS 25: 19-34; 27: 1-40
Devotional Reading:
 LUKE 16: 1-9

Whenever in the past I have come across the story of Jacob and Esau, I have tended to side with Esau because he was obviously the victim of this brother's greed and treachery. I have also often wondered to myself how God could possibly have chosen Jacob instead of Esau as the heir of Abraham and Isaac and the bearer of his covenant. I thought God always favored the "good guys" and opposed the "bad guys"!

Of course, one of the fallacies with that kind of reasoning is that it fails to take into account that in this story, as well as in life itself, the line between the "good" and the "bad" is not as definitive or actual as we would like to think. It is hard to make a "good guy" out of Jacob — although God did! — and equally difficult to pigeonhole Esau. In fact, in this story there seems to be a notable lack of character on everyone's part: Isaac favoring Esau, Rebekah instigating Jacob against his brother, Jacob vilely cheating his brother, and Esau seeming to despise his own birthright. This is a story neither of angels nor devils, but something in-between. So, it is our story, too.

In the first incident, Genesis 25: 29-34, we can be so disturbed over Jacob's opportunism that we miss the culpable role Esau played. The writer tells us that "Esau despised his birthright." What was Esau's birthright? Answer; next to life itself, the greatest gift of a father could give his firstborn in those days—a double share of inheritance, leadership of the tribe and the role of bearer of God's covenant.

DESPISING YOUR BIRTHRIGHT

Because of my previous pro-Esau bias, I have often thought that the writer of Genesis was being unnecessarily negative in saying that Esau "despised his birthright" I probably would have edited the sentence to read: "did not sufficiently value his birthright." My dictionary says that "despise" means "to regard with contempt, distaste, disgust or disdain; scorn, loathe" — all of

them powerful verbs and adverbs. So, was this just a poor choice on Esau's part or a much more serious dereliction?

I am now disposed to think that Esau may well deserve the stronger terms, for on closer examination, it seems to me that he was very contemptuous of his birthright, selling it for a pot of red lentils. Coming in from the field, he smelled and saw the pot of red lentils Jacob was cooking and he just had to have some. "Let me eat some of that red potage, for I am famished" (25:30)

Actually, the judgement upon Esau is dependent upon the meaning of "famished" as he used it. "Famished" originally meant "extremely hungry, starved," but in popular usage it is also a way of saying that we are "very hungry." There is a real difference between being on the point of starvation and simply being "very hungry." I have said at times that I was "famished" or "starved," but I just meant that I was very hungry.

INSTANT GRATIFICATION

So what is Esau's sin here? It appears that Esau put his physical appetites above and beyond important realities. If he had been truly starving and at the point of death, the sale of his birthright would be understandable. But, if his hunger was not life-threatening, then we can understand the writer saying that "Esau despised his birthright." He sought instant gratification without any thought of the future. He treated his valuable birthright with contempt, valuing it no more highly than a bowl of red lentils.

For us, then, this story is as much about our own choices as it is Esau's—the gifts and graces, the resources, the potential God puts within each of us. How highly do we value what God gives us and how easily do we let these things go when "the price is right"? His birthright for a bowl of red lentils was an outrageous deal! The price he paid for that brief moment of personal satisfaction was obscenely expensive.

And we, what about the price we pay for instant and fleeting gratification?

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