



Lancaster Farming

OPINION

A Bug In Your Farming Operation

We now hear a lot of talk about the potential problems mechanical devices that are operated by computers and their chips may have on New Years day They call it the Y2K problem

With the farmer's propensity to bull through most any problem, it is no surprise that many of you tough thinkers believe the Y2K problem will not have much affect on your farming operation. But researches from land-grant universities and others who have studied the potential problem say we need to be on guard As Dr Mike Adelaine, extension computer specialist at the South Dakota State University extension service, says, "Y2K will happen and the best approach is an informed approach "

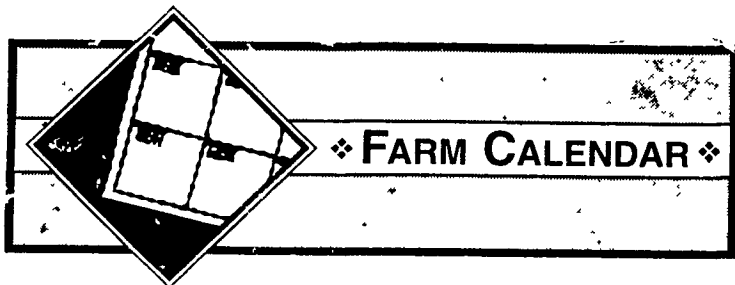
If it is mechanically controlled and does not have a battery, solar or electrical power, Y2K is probably not an issue. But if it is a critical part of your operation and is not mechanically controlled you should check it out.

Technology has provided effective and reliable tools to agribusiness and farming enterprises. Some of these tools involve software programs, integrated circuits, and microprocessor chips Unfortunately, some of these devices were designed without a way to recognize the upcoming date change to the year 2,000. David A. Martin, extension education at the University of Maryland, says you need to develop strategies to reduce the risk of potential problems in your business.

Many of the plans you make are similar to how you might prepare for any potential disruption such as a hurricane, tornado, or a major spill of toxic chemical. The difference in this case is that unlike a natural disaster where you never know when it will come, we know when the Y2K bugs will hit us.

Equipment systems around the farm could malfunction. Suppliers, utilities, or vendors you rely on could have short-term difficulty in providing services to your operation On a global scale, there is some possibility that other countries could have Y2K problems that affect their ability to import our products which would lower demand and lower the price for a commodity.

We would be inclined to say Y2K is a lot of hype. But then we remember just how much of our production and transportation equipment and vehicles depend on computer chips to keep them running. So you may want to read the article in section A of this issue from the University of Maryland entitled Planning Strategies for Y2K in Agricultural Businesses. Or you can go to South Dakota State University's Internet page on the subject at <http://www.abs.sdstate.edu/ecs/home/y2k.html> and download a quick checklist for you beef, dairy, grain, or swine operation. We hope there is no problem. But since we have fair warning exactly when this potential problem may overtake us, we should not ignore it. We think it is best to have a contingency plan in place should Y2K becomes a bug in your farming operation on 12:01 a.m., January 1, 2,000.



Saturday, November 6
 NAILE, Kentucky Fair and Expo Center, Louisville, Ky., thru Nov. 19.
 Lancaster County Farm Women Convention, Farm and Home Center, Lancaster.
 Crawford County Holstein Annual Meeting, Vernon Central Fire Hall, Meadville, 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, November 7
 Pennsylvania Farmers Union State Convention, Uniontown Holiday Inn, thru Nov. 10.
Monday, November 8
 Northampton County Cooperative Extension Meeting, Star

Grange, Moorestown, 7 p.m.
 Poultry Management and Health Seminar, Kreider's Restaurant, Manheim, noon.
 Dauphin County 4-H Achievement Night, Extension Center, 6 p.m.
 Turf and Ornamental Meeting, Lebanon Agriculture Center, 9 a.m.-11 a.m.
 Fayette County Holstein Annual Meeting, Fayette County Fairgrounds, Uniontown, 7:30 p.m.
 Informational Meeting on Plum Pox Virus, Penn State Fruit Research and Extension Cen-

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Now Is The Time
 By John Schwartz
 Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Plan Buffer Areas

Grass, shrub and tree buffer plantings offer a variety of advantages to the farm and environment, according to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Agronomy Agent. Vegetated buffers slow water runoff and trap sediment, fertilizers, pesticides, bacteria, pathogens and heavy metals. This reduces the potential of these things reaching and polluting surface water.

Buffers help to trap snow and rain resulting in an increase of water infiltration. Buffers which contain shrubs and trees help to protect farm buildings and livestock from harsh winter winds and weather while providing wildlife habitat. Buffers along streams, roads and in areas where soil erosion is a problem can add beauty to the farm while helping the environment.

With increased public pressure to improve water quality, farmers voluntarily planting buffers now could reduce future and more costly regulations. The choice is up to you.

To Maintain Buffers

Buffers need special care in order to maintain their effectiveness.

Earl Hess, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, makes the following suggestions when farming around buffers. Bring row crop patterns perpendicular into the buffer.

Use the buffer as a turning area rather than planting end rows along side the buffer. Inspect buffers frequently for areas that are eroding and needing reseeded or other repairs. Do not encroach with tillage or planting equipment. Do not use buffers as roads or field lanes.

When crossing buffers, lift tillage equipment and turn off spray equipment. Fertilize, reseed and replant as needed. For more information on buffers, contact the Natural Resource Conservation Service office serving your county.

To Look At Trusts

One of the major issues facing many farmers is how to transfer the farm from one generation to the next. There are many tools available to you.

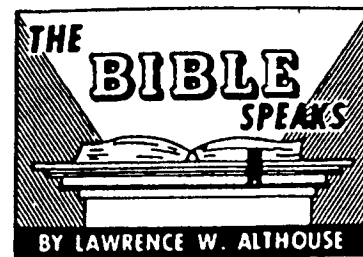
Every estate has social capital. Social capital is that part of your total wealth that you have earned but are not allowed to keep. You are not allowed to keep it because the United Federal Gift and Estate Tax Law decrees that once your total wealth exceeds \$600,000 (\$1,200,000 for married couples) a portion of the excess

must be shared with society. That portion which you must share is your social capital.

Through the use of trusts you are able to keep the social capital in your community instead of sending it to Washington D.C. for the federal government to decide how to best spend it. The estate of the late Joe Robbie paid 55 percent federal estate tax which forced the family to sell the Miami Dolphins football franchise in order to pay the tax. The estate of Jacqueline

Kennedy Onassis included a charitable trust that reduced the estate taxes to less than two percent on the transfer of \$164 million for the ultimate benefit of her grandchildren. You do not need to be wealthy to take advantage of these opportunities. Contact your attorney and discuss trusts and see how you may use them to keep your wealth in your family and community.

Feather Prof's Footnote
 "Small opportunities are often the beginning of great achievements."



When You Lose A Moses
 Nov. 7, 1999

It was about 20 years ago that I stood on Mt. Nebo, the traditional spot from which it is believed Moses last beheld the Promised Land. We had timed our arrival there so that sundown was just a few minutes away. As the sun quickly descended across the horizon, we were able to see it shining on the roofs and towers of Jerusalem some 30 miles due west. What a glorious sight - for Moses and for us.

Mt. Nebo is a mountain in what is today the Kingdom of Jordan. If Moses ascended this mountain, he saw magnificent vistas of the Promised Land: to the north, the high mountain country of southern Gilead; to the west across the Dead Sea, our guide pointed to the desert oasis of Ein-Gedi and the mountains south of Hebron; to the east, we saw the mountainous country of Ajlun and Jerash, and running straight from the silvery Dead Sea to the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River Valley. If this isn't where Moses looked over into the Promised Land, it should have been!

Moses would not cross the Jordan into the Promised Land. This man who was instrumental in their escape from Egypt and their journey across the Sinai Peninsula was about to breathe his last. Whatever resistance the people of Israel had given Moses, whatever discontent they had murmured against him, now they were aware that they were about to lose this great leader whom God had sent them. Just as many had despaired under his leadership, now the whole company of Hebrews despaired at the loss of his leadership.

INDISPENSABLE MAN

This man whom many had opposed and resisted was now seen as the indispensable man. That is a very human reaction. We become so dependent upon the leadership of a person that when we are about to lose that person we are afraid that the cause is lost. No one will be able to take his or her place. It is true; many leaders are hard to replace. When it is obvious that they must

relinquish their leadership we are certain no one can take their place. There could be only one Moses.

Moses knew what they were thinking and his last act of leadership was to put the situation into perspective for them. Summoning Joshua, Moses said to the people of Israel, "Be strong and of good courage; for you shall go with this people into the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them; and you shall put them in possession of it" (31:8). Moses passed the mantle of leadership to Joshua.

After Moses died, Joshua led the people into the Promised Land and they learned that, although there had been only one Moses, there was also only one Joshua. They were two different people with different gifts and graces, but they shared something in common: the realization that it was the Lord who was leading them. "It is the Lord who goes before you," Moses told them, "he will be with you, he will not fail you or forsake you; do not fear or be dismayed" (31:8).

IT IS THE LORD WHO LEADS

I remember when President Franklin Roosevelt died. In those days he was their only President I ever knew. How could anyone replace him? When Harry S. Truman was sworn in as his successor, I was certain this man could not do the job. Totally unlike F.D.R., Harry Truman led us in a different way and in retrospect many regard Truman as a great President. But at the time hardly anyone thought he could do the job.

This is one of the mistakes we make in church, community and nation - we place too much expectation and faith in the man or woman in office. Of course we need the best leadership we can find, but we must remember what Moses told the people of Israel "It is the Lord who goes before you, he will be with you, he will not fail you or forsake you, do not fear or be dismayed."

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