

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

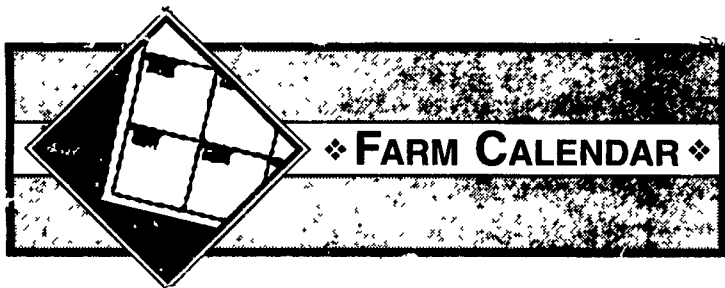
Noisy Farms

Farms are noisy places. Dennis Murphy, professor of agricultural engineering at Penn State says these noises range between 90 and 140 decibels, which is well above the 85-decibel limit at which industrial employers must provide hearing protection for workers.

"Consistent, repetitive exposure to high-decibel noise can damage hearing before you notice any change," Murpy says. "The farmer may think he's getting used to the noise, but in reality he already may have experienced a mild hearing loss."

Farmers may think that extremely high noise levels are normal. But if you must shout to be heard at a distance of about three feet, the noise is too loud and you should either reduce the noise level or wear hearing protection. You may think wearing earplugs or protective muffs like those worn at shooting ranges is inconvenient, unwieldy, or time-consuming. But to protect your hearing is to save you a lot of grief later in life.

Now is the time to get ready for spring work with noisy machinery. Obtain some protection for your ears.



Saturday, January 22

Forest Landowners Conference, Behrend College, Erie, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Cornell Maple Production School, Bradford County Extension Office, Towanda, 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, January 23

Monday, January 24

Adams County Corn Clinic, York Springs Fire Hall, 8:30 a.m.-2:45 p.m.

PDA's New Johne's Disease Prevention, Huntingdon County Extension Office, 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

Workshop On Computerized Farm Recordkeeping, County Lab, York Penn State Extension, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., also Jan. 26 and Jan. 28.

Crop Management Association Annual Luncheon, Logan Grange Hall, Pleasant Gap, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Octorara Young Farmers Association farmer meeting, Octorara High School, 7:30 p.m.

Northeastern Pa. Maple Syrup Producers' Association Annual Meeting, and Dinner, Bethany Methodist Church Hall, Bethany, 10:15 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, January 25

Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Growers Convention, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, thru Jan. 27.

Crops Day, Family Heritage Restaurant, Creamery, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Estate Planning, Columbia County Ag Resource Center, Bloomsburg, also Feb. 1 and 8.

Crop Insurance: Making It Work For You, Schuylkill County Ag Center, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Franklin County Corn Clinic, Kauffman's Community Center, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Mount Joy Co-Op Annual Meeting, Yoder's Restaurant, New Holland, 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, January 26

Berks County Crops Day, Berks County Ag Center, Leesport.

Capitol Region Corn Production Clinic, York County 4-H Cen-

ter, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
York County Corn Clinic, York 4-H Center, Bair, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Mount Joy Co-Op Annual Meeting, Gathering Place, Mount Joy, 11:30 a.m.

Thursday, January 27

Crop Insurance: Making It Work For You, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Drought Recovery Financial Series, Holiday Inn, Bethlehem, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Estate Planning, Team Pennsylvania CareerLink, Shamokin, also Feb. 3 and 10.

Northeastern Pa. Turf School and Trade Show, Woodlands Inn and Resort, Wilkes-Barre.

Lehigh and Northampton County Crops Day, UGI Auditorium, Bethlehem, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Friday, January 28

Pork Producers Seminar, Country Cupboard Restaurant, Lewisburg, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Turf and Ornamental Day, Lebanon Valley Expo Center, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Chester County Crops Day, East Brandywine Fire Hall, Guthriesville, 9 a.m.

Franklin County Cooperative Extension Meeting, Kauffman Community Center, 7 p.m.

Saturday, January 29

4-H Day With the Lady Lions, Bryce Jordan Center, University Park, 2 p.m.

Monday, January 31

N.Y. State Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference, Four Points Hotel, Rochester, N.Y., thru Feb. 2.

Tioga County Dairy Day, Tioga Fairgrounds, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Turfgrass Management For Professionals, Berks County Ag Center, Leesport, also Feb. 2, 3, and 4.

Beef Evaluation Meeting, Bernville Grange, 5:30 p.m. meal, 6:45 p.m. program.

Tuesday, February 1

Dairy Houses, Equipment Systems Conference, Radisson Penn



Now Is The Time

By John Schwartz

Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Remember Dr. Donald Evans

Last Friday agriculture lost a great friend. Dr. Donald Evans, associate professor of Agricultural and Extension Education at Penn State, passed away at his home. Dr. Evans was an outstanding educator, agriculturist, administrator and community leader. He touched many lives, always looking for ways to "make the best better". Always a doer, he constantly turned dreams into reality. Forever challenging and encouraging people, he provided leadership for 4-H, FFA, Ag in the Classroom, production agriculture, public and vocational education and cooperative extension. His efforts in international agriculture is legendary. His vision, leadership and personal commitment was a major driving force in the growth and development of the Polish agricultural system over the past decade. Don, we are going to miss your enthusiasm, leadership and your commitment to agriculture, community and people.

However, the seeds you have planted in your students, colleagues and friends will continue to grow and multiply. As a 4-H member, I was taught the final test of a leader was that he leaves behind in other the people the will and desire to carry on. Dr. Evans passes that test with flying colors. On behalf of the agricultural community, I say thank you for making this world a better place to live.

To Reduce Stress

Stress is an everyday reality for today's farmer. When you feel pressure mounting, try these tips from N.Y. FarmNet. Shift from worrying to problem solving. Make daily, yearly and long term business plans. List priorities, set realistic goals, make a schedule and do not procrastinate. Learn to say no to things that hinder these goals. Be flexible when the unexpected occurs. Use clear communication. Listening skills are just as important as language skills. Use negotiation during conflict. Balance work and play. Make weekly time to relax and laugh, and daily time for yourself. A tired mind leads to bad decisions and accidents. Take care of your body. Exercise. Eat

Harris Hotel and Convention Center, Camp Hill, thru Feb. 3. Decisions 2000-Agricultural Marketing Seminar, Days Inn, Allentown.

Crop Meeting Series, Planter Setup and Maintenance, George V. Sciple And Son, Easton, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Lancaster County Cattle Feeder's

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healthy. Get adequate sleep. Think positive thoughts. Find others who do the same, and try to minimize time with those who do not. Celebrate holidays and family events. Talk with others.

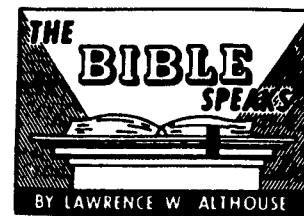
To Put First Things First

John Vogel, editor of Pennsylvania Farmer, stated we need to pause long enough to put life in perspective and to focus on what is most important for our happiness. True success is found in a satisfying life, not in money, power or achievement. The following is a list for you to consider as you set goals for this year. Eat in moderation.

Sleep well and long enough to recharge your body and your mind. Surround yourself with

people you have faith in. Know when and how to slow down and relax. Really love your family and let it show. Know "when to hold and when to fold." Know that in the long run, good prevails over bad. Thrive in your vocation, even with its peaks and pits. Take time to savor the little things. Take time to marvel at truly huge things. Laugh a lot and live longer for it. Remember that the secret of getting more is giving more. Reserve a day a week to do absolutely nothing that resembles work.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "Time speeds uncontrollably faster. But we chose whether to leave long lasting legacies or just a tombstone at road's end."



DEMONIZING THE OPPOSITION

January 23, 2000

Background Scripture:

Matthew 12:22-45

Devotional Reading:

Luke 12:1-14.

Halford E. Luccock, writing in *The Interpreter's Bible*, says joshingly that "With all reverence, a list of sayings of Jesus could be assembled under the starting headline, 'Things I Wish Jesus Had Never Said.' He goes on to say, 'That may sound blasphemous, but it is not. Such a list would include sayings that have been so continuously and badly distorted, so warped from their original meaning and context, that the mis-understanding of them has caused great distress and evil.' His point of reference is Mark 3:29, in which Jesus says, 'Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin...'"

Matthew 12:22-45 is similar. Having just healed a deaf and blind demoniac, Jesus is under attack by some of the Pharisees. People in the crowd are asking, "Can this be the Son of David?" and the Pharisees are quick to snap back: "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons" (12:24). When confronted by the awesome power of Jesus' miracles, his opponents turned to slandering him.

Beelzebub was an ancient Canaanite god, "Lord of the earth." But the biblical writers expressed their contempt for this Baal, calling him *Baalzebub*, meaning "Lord of the flies." They regarded him, not as a god, but as the prince of demons. Later on in this passage (v. 26), Jesus identifies Beelzebub with Satan.

A Civil War?

Jesus responds to this charge with an argument that reveals the irrationality of their words. If Jesus is casting out Satan, then it is a defeat for Satan. And, if it is a defeat for Satan, how could Satan be giving him the power to do so? "If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?" (12:26) Jesus depicts a civil war and, indeed, it was this depiction, "a house divided against itself," that Abraham Lincoln used so effectively in his pre-civil war debates with Senator Stephen Douglas.

Then, Jesus goes on to make that statement that Halford Luccock says he wishes Jesus had not made: "Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven" (12:31). It does take one's breath away to hear Jesus say that sin and blasphemy against the Spirit of God will not be forgiven. Are there one or more sins that God cannot forgive?

Willful Blindness

I am personally glad that Jesus said this, particularly that he said it so pointedly, because it stands before us as a dire warning against a practice which is all too common: demonizing our opponents. What this means is that we attribute all that they do to their alliance with Satan. I remember all too well the woman who told my mother that she was going to Hell because she didn't embrace a particular religious practice. She was sincere in her belief, but she was endangering her own soul in making this attack.

The problem with demonizing persons you don't like or don't agree with is that you are permitting your feelings to hide the spark of God that is in each of these persons. This is arrogance on our part, imposing a limitation upon the grace of God, insisting that a work of mercy is a sign of Satan. As George Arthur Buttrick put it, "In obdurate pride men can call the light darkness, or Jesus' works of mercy the black magic of Baalzebub."

But why does Matthew have Jesus say that such blasphemy "will not be forgiven"? Perhaps it is not a matter of *will* not, but *can* not. It is not only blindness, it is also *willful* blindness. When, in our arrogant judgment we condemn others as being in league with Satan, we fail to see the God in them because we do not want to see Him. Buttrick says: "A man who deliberately tampers with the light God gives may rob himself of the power even to see pardon, let alone receive it."

When we demonize others, we give Satan his best shot at us.

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