

# Lancaster Farming

## OPINION

### Not That Much More Important

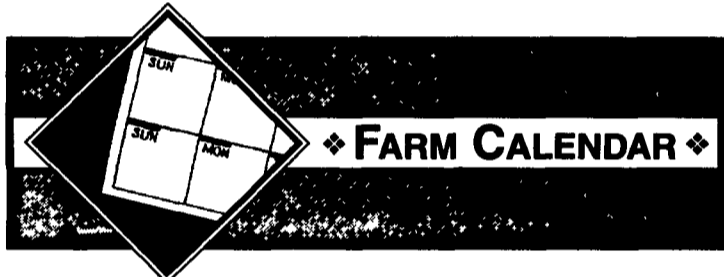
Did you have any feelings of exhilaration this week, like a dozen high-tailing heifers that have just found a hole in the pasture fence? But you didn't know why you felt this way?

It could be you were experiencing a psychological reaction to Tax Freedom Day that came and went on Wednesday, May 3, 2000 has been declared the day when the average American taxpayer has earned enough to pay for his or her government—federal, state, and local.

The Tax Foundation, an independent Washington DC group follows such things and notes that since 1992 the total tax burden has grown markedly. And while state and local taxes have grown somewhat, the lion's share of the increase has been the rapid growth of federal tax collections.

Of special interest to farmers will be the figures that put the tax bite into perspective. Americans will spend more time working to pay their taxes than they will spend working to provide food, clothing, and shelter combined. For food alone, Louis Moore, Penn State professor, ag economics, says we spend about 10 percent of our income. This means citizens need to work only about 38 days out of the year for food but they need to work 124 days for taxes.

Sure we need government, just like we need food. But government isn't that much more important.



Saturday, May 6

Registered Highland Cattle Show and Sale, York 4-H Facility, 10 a.m.

Spring Fling Scavenger Hunt, Ludwig's Corner Riding and Driving Club, Marsh Creek Park, Glenmoore, 9 a.m. (rain date May 7).

Forensic Forestry, Florence Lockhart Nimick Nature Center, Rector, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Sunday, May 7

Monday, May 8

Poultry Management and Health Seminar, Kreider's Restaurant, Manheim, noon.

Pa. State Grange Week Legislative Luncheon, Radisson Hotel, Camp Hill, 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, May 9

Regional Twilight Fruit and Small Fruit Meeting, Blyler Orchards, Spring Glen, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 10

Thursday, May 11

Fruit Twilight Meeting, Joe and Barbara Haas Orchard, Columbusville, supper 5:30 p.m., meeting 6:45 p.m.

Friday, May 12

Pa. Fair at Philadelphia Park, thru May 29.

Saturday, May 13

Western Pa. Sheep and Club Lamb Sale, Mercer County 4-H Park, Mercer, 6:30 p.m.

Northeast Production Select IX Sale, Hereford Sale, Cooperative Extension, Morrisville, N.Y., 12:30 p.m.

Old Bedford Village Spring Celebration and Plow Day, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Farm and City Day, North Museum, Lancaster, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sunday, May 14

Willowdale Steeplechase, Kennett Square.

Nature Walk at site of future arboretum, Penn State, corner of Bigler Rd. and Services Rd. near Penn State Hort Trial Gardens, 1:30 p.m.

Monday, May 15

PennAg Industries Spring Poultry Banquet, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey.

Tuesday, May 16

Current Advancements and Issues in Equine Health, Holiday Inn, Phillipsburg, N.J., 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Chester County Cattleman Meeting, New Bolton Center, Kennett Square, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.

Wednesday, May 17

Horse Pasture Management Workshop, East Hanover Township Municipal Building, Shellsville, also May 24.

Twilight Fruit Meeting, Heilig Orchards, Richwood, N.J., 6:15 p.m.

Small Grain Twilight Meeting, WREC, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 18

Strawberry Twilight Meeting, Wye Research and Education Center, 6 p.m.

Friday, May 19

Gettysburg Fair, thru May 21.

Saturday, May 20

Lebanon County Rabbit Convention, Lebanon Fairgrounds.

Capitol Area Beekeepers Short Course on Basic Beekeeping, Milton Hershey Farm Conference Center and Apiary, Hershey, noon-5 p.m.



### To Develop A Learning and Quality Initiative

To be successful in business today you need to develop a culture for your business.

Recently, I came across several initiatives one of the county's leading agribusinesses has developed for their company. I believe these initiatives should be the part of the culture of all farms.

The Learning Initiative states "We must continually increase our learning ability as individuals and as an organization. We need to develop leaders to take our expertise to the next level of excellence.

Our success depends upon individuals with high emotional

quotients (EQ) working and sharing together. EQ are individuals who make sound decisions, admit their mistakes and put what is best for their peers and the organization ahead of their personal agendas."

The Quality Initiative states "We must embrace quality in all that we do. We believe our customers have two perceptions. We have a quality product and quality permeates our organization.

However, quality and efficiency must go hand in hand. Greater accuracy and accountability, as required by the customer, will result in the need for higher levels of quality control.

### To Understand The Food Chain

Developing alliances with customers and suppliers that form a food chain will be one of the most important decisions farmers will have to make over the next couple of years.

Farms will need to be an integral part of the food supply chain. We will need to challenge ourselves to understand the needs of our suppliers and our suppliers' suppliers, our customers and our customers' customers.

Farmers will need to partner with those who enhance the strategic advantage for the entire food chain of which they are a part. Then and only then will value be added to the entire food chain and enhancing the bottom line of that chain.

In the process, farmers must align themselves with suppliers

and customers who think the way they think and focus on the same core values they do. The business of tomorrow must be able to assemble the strengths of many partners to become far more nimble and responsive.

### To Develop An Environmental Initiative

One of the county's leading agribusinesses has established an initiative to be the leader in meeting environmental concerns.

Stewardship is the individual's responsibility to manage his life and property with proper regard to the rights of others. They recognize the need to accept the responsibility and ownership for providing solutions to environmental problems.

Science is on our side. Through research and future discoveries, we will find different methods which will help solve the environmental challenges at hand.

At the same time we, as an industry, need to do a better job educating the consumer of our stewardship efforts and our desire to improve the land and the environment. We will need to document our efforts in order to demonstrate our efforts are real and scientifically sound.

Good stewardship is a commitment, a commitment which will lead us to the inevitable conclusion that one must develop and promote sustainable agriculture.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "Together we can accomplish the unimaginable."



### RAINING ON YOUR OWN 'PARADE'

Background Scripture: 2 Corinthians 1 through 2.  
Devotional Reading: 2 Corinthians 1:3-11.

Churches often do have aromas. My first full-time pastorate would always have the aroma of chocolate during Lent and Easter—the by-product of weeks of Easter candy-making by ladies of the church. Some churches I remember by their rich aromas of highly-polished pews and vinyl cushions. In the Middle East I remember the churchly aromas of incense. Other churches always smelled like restaurants and still others were musty like long-neglected attics.

Some of these aromas were pleasing; some of them not. It is often surprising to me in talking with people who no longer attend church that their remembrances of church are colored by aromas usually not pleasant or inspiring.

That aroma may be figurative or metaphorical instead of literal, as in 2 Cor. 2:14b,15: when Paul says "...and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing..." Paul is not speaking of a physical aroma, but an inner one.. A STENCH THAT REPELS Many churches give off a most distressing aroma when we do not handle well disputes and differences within the life of the church. These divisions are like an unpleasant aroma, indeed a stench that repels people who might otherwise be attracted to the Christ. Currently, that is the effect of the various di-

visions and schisms with Christendom, the 'people of God,' lay and clergy alike, washing their dirty laundry in public so that it is evident that, despite what we may profess, our churches are not about sacrificial love and grace, but contention and bitterness. Note, when I speak of 'divisions,' I am not thinking of the many and various denominations, but of the conflicts that nurture hostility between the members of Christ's body.

Several mainline denominations—United Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopal—are facing schisms within because of the growing hostility between church members mostly, but not solely over the issue of homosexuality. However sincere and well-intentioned these conflicts may be, the disputes are turning away prospective disciples, branding the church with a disputatious image. If the churches cannot find peaceful and constructive means to handle disputes, they really present the Gospel as a lie. This is just as true within congregations as within denominations.

How many people of the last two millennia have been lost to God in Christ because their dominating experience of a Christianity in a local congregation was one of knock-down, drag-out conflicts? I have experienced several churches of which it could be said they would rather fight than pray or perform sacrificial service.

IN-FIGHTING In 1 Cor. 1 and 2 we can put together a picture of the in-fighting that took place in the Corinthian church. Apparently Paul had been shamefully opposed by a member of that congregation, causing Paul to delay his planned stop at Corinth from Macedonia. Though Paul postponed this visit for good reason, the postponement became another obstacle in relationships in the church, This was not some slight affront, for Paul speaks frequently of the considerable pain this man caused him. What saves the situa-

tion, however, is Paul's two-fold attitude. First, he refuses to take this dispute personally and forgives the offender. Secondly, believing that the man has been punished enough, he urges the Corinthian church to forgive and comfort him. Paul does not overlook what has happened nor does he close to his eyes to the painful result, but he commends the church to forgiveness and reconciliation. How often do we see that in out churches where doctrinal purity and procedural correctness are too often more highly valued than bearing the cross of loving service with and for other Christians? Paul calls to mind the well-known image of a victorious Roman general and his troops marching in procession along an avenue leading to a temple where an aromatic sacrifice will be offered. That is the analogy he presents to us. Let the church move forward as a triumphal throng and let its gracious, self-sacrificial behavior provide for our world "the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing." Let's not "rain" on our own "parade."

Note: In the Steps of Paul to Rome & Greece, an 18-day tour conducted by Larry & Valere Althouse, is scheduled for April, 2001. If interested, please contact us: 4412 Shenandoah Ave, Dallas TX 75205/e-mail: althouse-s@aol.com; fax: (214) 52109312.

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