



Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Urban Pet Owners Need Nutrient Management Plans, Too

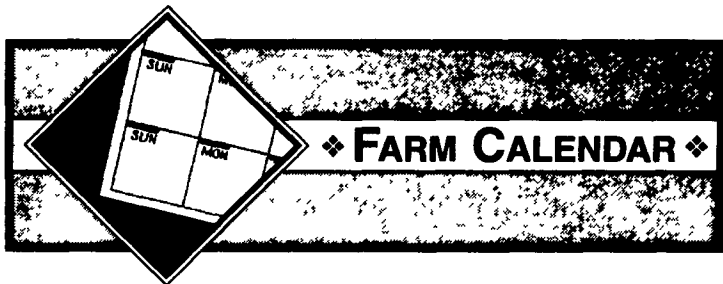
When defenders of development want to allow subdivisions in agricultural areas, they often say there will be less pollution with a field full of houses instead of pastures where manure is applied. This is a myth without merit.

Douglas Smith, extension poultry scientist at the University of Georgia says homes in a new subdivision must usually be located on at least 6/10 of an acre where septic systems are used. Lot sizes may be smaller if a sewer is in place. The home itself, a paved driveway, patio or deck, swimming pool, and any outbuildings or other structures can reduce this by another 2/10 of an acre, as these are impervious surfaces, unavailable for water runoff or percolation.

Now add an outside dog to the backyard (on approximately 2/10 of an acre). A good sized dog, such as a Labrador retriever, may excrete liquid and solid waste at an average of 2.5 pounds per day, or 913 pounds annually (depending on body weight and diet). On a per acre basis the annual manure application rate for that area is 2.3 tons per year, compared to the maximum recommended poultry litter application rate of 5 tons per acre annually for pastures. In other words, two dogs per household in a subdivision approximately equals the maximum manure loading for a given area that a broiler farm would contribute. If smaller lots are used where sewers are available, homeowners may also have cats. Or if there are more than two dogs per household, then the subdivision will greatly exceed what any agricultural operation would ever apply to the land. Plus, the storm sewers pass this pollution much quicker to the streams and lakes.

Even recalculating the manure loading based on the total subdivision area does not substantially change the numbers, as much of the area is under paved roads and many of the houses sit on what were buffer areas for the farm. In addition, many lawns are over fertilized with commercial fertilizer. Obviously, suburban homeowners are a significant threat to the environment.

So, if your local government is rezoning agricultural land for subdivisions, ask two valid questions. Why are they allowing excessive polluters into the area? And why aren't pet owners in subdivisions required to have nutrient management plans?



- 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.
- Sunday, May 21**
Summer Camp Open House, Lindley G. Cook 4-H Camp, 2:30 p.m.-5 p.m.
- Monday, May 22**
Sheep Scrapie Information Meeting, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, Lancaster, 7:30 p.m.
Public Meetings On Dairy, Speaker Pete Hardin, publisher of The Milkweed, Lancaster County Farm and Home Center, 8 p.m.
Pork America Co-Op Meeting, Pa. Dept. of Ag Room 202, Harrisburg, 7 p.m.
- Tuesday, May 23**
Horse Pasture Management Meeting, Westmoreland County extension office, 7:30 p.m.
PennAg Industries Divots For Degrees Golf Tournament, Foxchase Golf Club, Stevens, 7:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. (double shotgun).

- Wednesday, May 24**
Thursday, May 25
Devon Horse Show, Fair, Devon, thru June 3.
- Friday, May 26**
Penn Jersey Extension Program crop Field Day, Forage and Small Grain, Fred Clucas Farm, Oldwick, N.J., 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. and Farm View Farm, Easton, 2 p.m.-4 p.m.
- Saturday, May 27**
Keystone Junior Beef Classic, Butler County Fairgrounds, thru May 28.
- Sunday, May 28**
Monday, May 29
Memorial Day, Lancaster Farming office closed.
- Tuesday, May 30**
Wednesday, May 31
Delmarva Farmland Protection Training Workshop, Crystal Inn, North East, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
Landscape and Turf Pest ID Walk, Lebanon Valley College, 5:30 p.m.
- Thursday, June 1**
Philadelphia County Fair, thru June 4.



To Produce High-Quality Alfalfa Hay

Producing high-quality alfalfa at home means dairy farmers can reduce the purchase of off-farm feeds.

According to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County extension agronomy agent, studies in Pennsylvania have shown that one way to maximize the quality of alfalfa hay is to harvest it early.

The crude protein content for alfalfa at various stages of maturity is mid-bud stage, 19.4 percent; late bud, 18.2 percent; first flower, 17.1 percent; 1/10th bloom, 15.8 percent; and beyond 1/10th, bloom 12 percent.

As the alfalfa plant matures, the percent crude protein declines. Also, by harvesting early, you may gain an

extra cutting in the fall. Thus, cutting alfalfa at the proper stage of maturity is very important in achieving best quality feed for your cows.

To Control Herbicide Drift

The increase use of post-applied herbicides has brought the issue of herbicide drift to the top of the list of concerns related to the use of pesticides.

Robert Anderson, Lancaster County extension agronomy agent, reminds us that, because of the nature of applying sprays, it will be impossible to completely eliminate the problem of drift. However, applicators can reduce the risk by using appropriate equipment and basic knowledge.

Recent research evaluating nozzle type and spray pressure showed these two factors affected drift. The study found that the Drift Guard and Turbo TeeJet nozzles produced less drift than the flat fan nozzle. Also, by increasing the spray pressure, you increase the chances for drift.

Pesticide applicators should take steps to ensure that the spray equipment is set up properly to minimize drift by selecting the best nozzle, spray pressure, and boom height. They must also consider weather conditions and avoid spraying on windy days to avoid problems.

To Use Front-End Loaders Safely

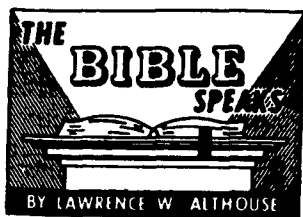
A front-end loader can be a valuable addition to your tractor. The loader-tractor combination can also be dangerous if not operated properly.

Loaders can change the center of gravity and the stability of tractors, causing tipping hazards for the operator.

The following guidelines can help ensure the safety of tractor operators using front-end loaders on your farm:

- Install only loaders designed and approved by the tractor manufacturer
- Use only approved attachments for handling large bales
- Never use a loader for removing fenceposts, towing, or knocking something down
- Use ballast to correctly balance the loader and tractor from front to rear
- Use loaders for the jobs they are designed to handle
- Use a rollover protective structure (ROPS) and always wear a seat belt
- Do not exceed suggested load limits
- Carry loads at a low height and slow speed
- Never move or swing a load over people in a work area
- Always lower loads to the ground when park
- Use extra care when working on inclines
- When carrying a load, drive forward when going uphill and back downhill with loads.

Feather Prof.'s Footnote: "The best way to predict the future is to create it."



ON 'REAPING' AND 'SOWING'

Background Scripture:
2 Corinthians 9.

Devotional Reading:
2 Corinthians 81-15.

I was born during "The Great Depression."

Like all of the generations that experienced that traumatic episode in American history, the Depression and the rationing of the World War II that followed it had a lasting effect upon my values.

I grew up with a "scarcity mentality," a fear that there would not be enough to go around. Some 20 years ago I was challenged to minister in a situation where, instead of a salary, I would have to earn my living with fees and honoraria. I questioned how it could possibly work.

Two-plus decades later, I still can't tell you how it worked out, but only that it did. Despite the fact that I did not know where my next dollar was coming from, God always seemed to provide enough so that we were never in want. In time, I learned to trust that God would provide enough so that I could live and give.

I have not been a "fast learner." I still have to persuade myself that I can give without the assurance that I can "afford" it.

In the days when I earned a salary, it was comparatively easy

to pledge a tithe. That was more an act of calculation than faith.

Today it is easier for I have experienced for myself Paul's assurance: "And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work" (9:8). Giving has not impaired my ability to "have enough of everything."

A FAITH PROBLEM. Living that way is a test of faith and I have come to realize that the problem of giving and living generously is essentially a faith problem. It is a contest between a "scarcity" and "abundant" perspective on life.

This goes far beyond the giving of money and material goods. As Paul puts it, "he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."

Paul, however, assures us not only that we will have enough for ourselves, but that we will have even more if we share: "He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your resources..."

So long as we continue to share what God gives us, he will continue to give us more. When the lad by the Sea of Galilee shared his fish and loaves, his little was multiplied to feed the many.

A SPIRITUAL RETURN. There is a spiritual return, too: "You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God; for the rendering of this service not only supplies the wants of the saints but also overflows in many thanksgivings to God" (9:12).

Mere material sufficiency is not the highest reward of generosity; the opportunity to glorify God with our contribution is.

This is a law of life and I am sorry that it has taken me so long to believe, not with my mind, but with my whole being. The farmer knows that if he skimps on the seed he will skimp on the harvest. It is the difference between proclaiming cream and living skim milk.

There is one last perspective in Christian giving: "Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (9:8).

We can be argued into giving, shamed into sharing and even tricked into benevolence, but unless we give and share willingly, we rob ourselves of the joy of giving. He who sows without cheerfulness will reap without joy.

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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