



OPINION

Go To The Fair

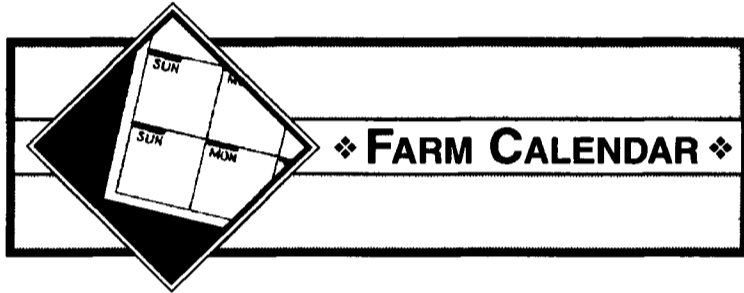
We are in the middle of the special events season for farmers, rural citizens, and everyone who enjoys the county fairs and other showcase events for agriculture. Starting today, we have the busiest fair week of the year.

For all the fans of beautiful dairy cows, the Pennsylvania All-American Dairy Show begins this evening in Harrisburg with the Pennsylvania Dairy Princess Pageant. And along with the dairy antiques show, the All-American includes both state and national dairy shows of all breeds. This year, the numbers have increased so much that officials of the show are laying claim to the largest dairy show in the nation. The youth shows and events also provide a major attraction.

And then there is Bloomsburg Fair in the central part of the state that is likely the largest fair in Pennsylvania. In progress now, many of the ag events are scheduled for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. If you want to really enjoy and Ag Fair, you will want to try Bloomsburg Fair this year.

In Lancaster County, the West Lampeter Fair, and the Ephrata Fair that surrounds Lancaster Farming's office, also are staged this week. And by week's end, Morrison Cove Community Fair in Martinsburg and Tri-Valley Community Fair at Hegins will begin the next week of activity.

So, sometime in the next several weeks, you will want to go to a farm show or fair close to where you live. We think you will be glad




Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Look At Fall Alfalfa Fertility

Although haymaking conditions have not been ideal this year, the total amount of forage production from most alfalfa stands has been significant.

Many alfalfa producers will soon be completing fifth cutting with total yield approaching 7 tons of dry matter per acre.

Fertility programs for alfalfa fields should be reviewed at this time of year. Producers should topdress stands with any necessary nutrients before winter dormancy, reminds Paul Craig, Capitol Region Extension agronomy agent.

Fertility studies have shown that one ton of dry matter of al-

falfa hay per acre removes 15-20 pounds of phosphorous and 45-60 pounds of potash. For a 5-ton per acre hay yield, the crop would remove 100 pounds of phosphorous and 300 pounds of potash.

If not monitored, soil potash levels may become depleted in only a couple of years, resulting in lower yields and reduced winter survival. The best method to determine alfalfa topdress requirements is to use a soil test.

To Topdress Alfalfa Fields

If soil tests call for topdressing alfalfa fields with potash, the recommended program to maintain alfalfa production is to split potash applications, according to Paul Craig, Capitol Region Extension agronomy agent.

Immediately following first cutting and early fall are the best times to apply potash to alfalfa fields. By applying after first cutting, the farmer is providing nutrients to the second and third crops.

Applying nutrients early in the fall allows the plant to enter the winter dormancy period in optimal fertility status. It is critical, however, that fall fertilizers are applied well in advance of fall dormancy and freezing soil conditions.

Avoid applications when soils are soft — early spring when injury to crowns is likely. Split applications to avoid salt injury and provide nutrients at optimum time periods. High rates applied to wet forage may also cause leaf injury. Also, apply topdress as soon after harvest as possible.

Alfalfa absorbs most nutrients from the top 6 to 8 inches of the soil. Unlike nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium move very little through the soil. For this reason, alfalfa fertility programs must begin with optimum soil fertility at establishment with topdress applied to meet plant removal rates.

To Check For Harvest Losses

Two corn kernels or four soybeans per square foot are equal to a loss of one bushel per acre.

According to William McCollum, Pioneer Hi-Breed International, one good way to determine your field harvesting loss is to use a hula hoop. If you do not have one, you may purchase one at your local toy store.

To determine harvest loss, check behind the combine using your hula hoop. Count the number of loose grains on the ground within the hula hoop.

A 28-inch (2.33 foot) diameter hula hoop has an area of 4.26 square feet. Every 8.5 corn kernels or 17 soybeans found within the hula hoop equals one bushel loss per acre.

Find where the loss is coming from. Losses from the header will be evenly distributed over the entire header width. Losses from the separator will be concentrated directly behind the combine.

Acceptable losses generally range from two to three percent for corn and three to five percent for soybeans.

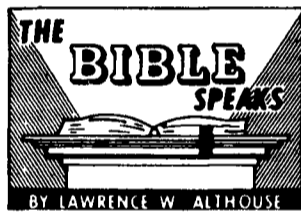
Feather Prof's Footnote: "We must be the changes we wish to see in the world."

— Mahatma Gandhi

- Saturday, September 23**
International Plastics Congress, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, thru Sept. 27.
All American Dairy Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, thru Sept. 28.
Lancaster Farmland Trust Old-Fashioned Farm Picnic, Roman and Lucy Stoltzfoos, Kinzers, 1 p.m.-5 p.m.
Bloomsburg Fair, thru Sept. 30.
1st Annual Fawn Grove Olde Tyme Days Fall Gas Engine and Garden Tractor Show, Fawn Grove, thru Sept. 24.
Dairy Princess Pageant, Sheraton Inn, Harrisburg, 5:30 p.m. reception, 6:30 p.m. banquet, 8 p.m. coronation.
Romano 4-H Center Benefit Auction, 4-H Center, Honey Brook.
- Sunday, September 24**
- Monday, September 25**
Pa. State Council of Farm Organizations Meeting, Capitol Building, Harrisburg, 11 a.m.
- Tuesday, September 26**
Pa. Holstein Fall Championship Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, 9 a.m.
Pa. Feeder Calf Roundup Tele-Auction Sale.
Ephrata Fair, Ephrata, thru Sept. 30.
Morrison Cove Community Fair, thru Sept. 29.
Lebanon Family Health Services Women's Workshop Series, Lebanon, 7 p.m.-8 p.m., also Oct. 24 and Nov. 14.
- Wednesday, September 27**
Eastern National Holstein Sale, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, 7 p.m.
West Lampeter Community Fair, thru Sept. 29.
- Thursday, September 28**
Eastern National Holstein Show, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, 8 a.m.
- Friday, September 29**
Tri-Valley Community Fair, thru

- Oct. 1.**
Penn State's Agroecology Day, Penn State's Agronomy Farm.
Saturday, September 30
Composting Workshop, Farm and Home Center, Lancaster, 9 a.m.-10:30 a.m., also Oct. 7 and Oct. 21.
21st Annual Falmouth Goat Race, Falmouth, 10 a.m.
Mason-Dixon Fall Harvest Festival, Mason-Dixon Fairgrounds, Delta, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Sunday, October 1**
National 4-H Week, thru Oct. 7.
Open Youth Schooling Horse Show, Northampton County 4-H Center, Nazareth, 10 a.m.
Solanco Young Farmers Family Picnic, Rick Brenneman Farm.
East Central Pennsylvania Two-Cylinder Club 6th Annual Fall John Deere Antique Tractor and Implement Show, tractor pulls, St. Peter's Church, Macungie, 9 a.m.
Lebanon Valley Chamber of Commerce Farm-City Tours, 1 p.m.-4 p.m.
- Monday, October 2**
Hollidaysburg Community Fair, thru Oct. 5.
- Tuesday, October 3**
Pa. Retail Farm Market Association "Are You Crazy?" Bus Trip, Columbia County.
Pasture Meeting, John and Dan Ferko Farm, Central City, 1 p.m.
- Wednesday, October 4**
Keystone International Livestock Expo, Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, thru Oct. 9
World Dairy Expo, Dane County Expo Center, Madison, Wis., thru Oct. 8.
Getting Started In Farming Seminar, Howard County, Maryland Extension Office, 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m., also Oct. 11, 18, and 25.
New Holland Farmers' Fair, thru Oct. 7.

(Turn to Page A31)



ANSWERING GOD'S PRAYERS

Background Scripture:
1 Samuel 3; 7:3-14.
Devotional Reading:
Luke 12:35-40.

No, that is not a misprint in the title. I realize that we never think of God "praying," especially to us! But if prayer is really two-way communication, in a sense is God not praying when he calls to us, just as we are praying when we call to him?

Might not God call us as much as we call upon him?

A little boy sent to the store to buy milk lost the money his mother had given to pay for it. As the boy sobbed, the town atheist gloated: "If God loved you, wouldn't he send someone to help you?"

"He did," the little boy replied, "but they didn't listen to him!"

When God seems to permit some tragic evil, the problem may not be that God doesn't send someone to prevent or correct it, but that he does and we do not respond.

Whether you think of God's calls to us as prayers, the result is the same — all too often we fail to respond because we don't expect to hear from him. We may assume that communication with God is essentially one way: us to him. We may also believe that God calls some people, but not "ordinary people" like us.

Then, too, we may be so self-centered that we do not ever concern ourselves with what God needs of us.

No Frequent Vision
We see this in the story of

Samuel, the young apprentice prophet serving Eli, the judge and priest of Israel. It is a story about spiritual darkness.

1 Samuel tells us that "the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision" (3:1). Because of Eli's spiritual decline, the people of Israel were not enlightened. Symbolic of this spiritual darkness was Eli, "whose eyesight had begun to grow dim, so that he could not see..."

Yet, despite Eli's spiritual and physical dimness of vision, as well as the moral darkness of his household, "the lamp of God had not yet gone out..." For young Samuel "was lying down within the temple" and God knew that Samuel had not yet been corrupted by Eli.

Here, the analogy turns from one of seeing to hearing: "Samuel! Samuel!" God called. But because Eli had never led him to expect to hear God's voice, Samuel thought it was Eli who was calling. Even though he did not know it was the Lord calling him, Samuel was responsive with a willingness to hear and respond: "Here I am."

Finally, when at last Eli realized the Lord was calling Samuel, he counseled the boy, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, for thy servant hears'" (3:9). Until Eli told him who was calling and how he should respond, Samuel could not enter into communication with God.

I believe God calls each of us and often. Sometimes the "call" of God to us is ignored because we don't realize what that call may sound, look, or feel like. We need to help each other to discern God's call.

God's Many Voices
Take a look around your life. Are you quite certain that there are no clues that God is calling you?

Maybe he speaks to you as an

inner urge or conviction when you read the scriptures or listen to a sermon. Perhaps he speaks to you through the beauty of nature or through the voice of a friend or associate.

The very first time I can recall that God called me to the ministry was when my pastor told someone else that he expected that some day I would become a minister. When those words were reported to me, I thought it was absurd. Later, however, I realized that God used that pastor's remarks to call me.

I have no doubt that God uses people in your life to speak his words to you. The reason we do not hear or understand what God says to us is that, unlike Samuel, we seldom say, "Here I am" or "Speak, for thy servant hears." That is, we rarely perceive when we do not think there is anything to perceive. What we wait for is a loud, disembodied voice radiating from the heavens. I am not saying God never uses that voice, but that has so many other voices with which to speak to us.

Even Eli, from whom there was "no frequent vision," opened himself to the Lord so that he could advise young Samuel. When Samuel told him that God had pronounced judgment against Eli and his family, he responded with rare perception, "It is the Lord; let him do what seems good to him" (3:18).

Lancaster Farming
Established 1955
Published Every Saturday
Ephrata Review Building
1 E. Main St.
Ephrata, PA 17522
—by—
Lancaster Farming, Inc.
A Steinman Enterprise
William J Burgess General Manager
Everett R Newswanger Editor
Copyright 2000 by Lancaster Farming