



Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Thoughts On Saving The Farm

Just the other day I had the opportunity to be a chaperone on a field trip taken by my daughter's kindergarten class. Our trip was to an apple orchard where the children were treated to a farm tour via a hay ride and the chance to learn a few simple facts about the apple industry. They also had an opportunity to pick some apples, see those apples turned into cider, and even sample some tasty apples, cider, and cookies. What a treat.

The trip was wonderful for many reasons, not the least of which was the well-spoken and sincere presentation to the children and their adult chaperons delivered by the farm owner and his wife. As we traveled across the farm en route to the apple trees, we heard how the farm had survived and been improved over several generations in the same family. We learned of the challenges that this family has faced over the years as they worked to continue farming not enough rain, too much rain, rising input costs, government taxation, regulation and intervention, static market prices, and urban encroachment. Much of the message was targeted to the many adults, but I am sure also sowed a few seeds of thought in the children's fertile minds. I know my daughter asked some pretty interesting questions as we rode the bus back to school.

On our ride back to school, my thoughts were focused on just how shortsighted we have become with regard to food and fiber production. All but one of the 18 or so parents who chaperoned this trip were relative newcomers to Carroll County. To them, Sykesville, Eldersburg, Rt. 140, and Westminster have always looked the way they appear today. They have no point of reference to appreciate the overwhelming loss of farmland to development or understand the cost of "progress." They moved from the city to the country but brought the city with them.

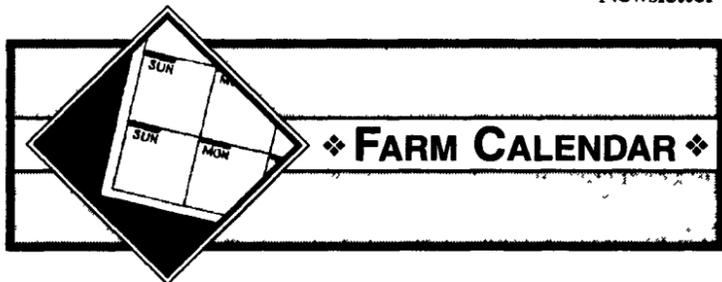
Today we have fewer than 2 million farms in the U.S. This is down from an almost 30 million farms at the turn of the last century. Agriculture has undergone enormous change and has had to compete with residential and commercial development to the point that the future of our agricultural land base is threatened. Yet, we continue to convert approximately one million acres per year from agriculture into urban, suburban, and rural development. When will it stop?

In my view, one of the most overused and frustrating mantras is "farmland protection." What does this mean? In too many cases it means maintaining green space so that the city folks who moved to the country still have some "country" left to look at. Anyone who thinks that Farmland Protection is equivalent to protecting the farmer is sadly wrong. At some point in the debate and conversation, we must raise the ugly specter of profitability. There is no question that farming requires farm land but the farmer (remember him/her?) requires profitability.

During our apple tour, our host spoke of the emotional and physical stress associated with the production challenges his family has faced over the years. He shared how hard it was to know there was not enough income to pay his workers a reasonable wage in some years and what a joy it was to be able to share the wealth when times were better. There was no question that this man and his family loved farming, yet the reality of having to make a living stood starkly in front of him each day.

I recently saw a list of "Reasons to Save Farmland." I won't insult you with its content — just know it wasn't written by a farmer.

— Scott M. Barao
Extension Livestock Specialist
University of Maryland
From the
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Newsletter



Saturday, October 28
Nittany Lion Fall Classic Sale, Agricultural Arena, State College, 11 a.m.
Pa. Simmental Fall Classic Sale, Greene County Fairgrounds, Waynesburg.
Fall Harvest at Pepperbox, Laurel, Del., 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Dynamic Duo Spotlight Sale, Maryland Shorthorn, Hereford, and Angus associations, Frederick Fairgrounds, Frederick, Md., 7 p.m.
Sunday, October 29
Daylight Saving Time ends, Eastern Standard Time returns.
PACD/SCC Joint Annual Conference, Hilton Valley Forge, Valley Forge, thru Nov. 1.

Monday, October 30
Certified Crop Adviser meeting, Grantville, thru Dec. 31.

Pa. Association of Conservation Districts 2000 Conservation Expo, Grand Ballroom, Hilton Valley Forge, 9 a.m.-8 p.m.

Tuesday, October 31
Wednesday, November 1
Penn State Animal Sciences Prospective Student Open House, Penn State University, thru Nov. 2.

National Professional Heifer Growers, Northeast Meeting, Akron, Ohio, thru Nov. 2.

Cambria County Annual Extension Meeting, United Church

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Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Control Winter Annual Weeds

Populations of winter annual weeds in alfalfa seem to be increasing, according to Paul Craig, Capitol Region Extension forage crops agent.

Weeds such as common chickweed, henbit, purple nettle, and marshall have been difficult to manage in the spring and may significantly affect haymaking in first cutting.

Work at Ohio State and Penn State indicate that herbicide treatments in late fall (November) seem to be more consistent than spring treatments, especially when dense stands of winter annual weeds are anticipated. Weeds are smaller in the fall and weather maybe more conducive for herbicide activity.

A late fall treatment that controls

weeds present should provide near complete winter annual control through first cutting and eliminate the need for a spring burn-down.

The decision to use herbicides for weed control in alfalfa stands should be based on the degree of weed infestations, the type of weeds present, and the density of the existing alfalfa stand.

Remember, alfalfa does not spread into open areas. By removing winter annual weeds from infested stands often leads to new infestations of summer annual weeds. Care must be taken by the applicator to ensure the alfalfa stand has entered fall dormancy, the herbicide program is labeled for the target weed and crop, application rates and carrier are considered, and grazing, harvesting, and feeding restrictions are followed.

The Penn State Agronomy Guide lists herbicide options, effectiveness, and restrictions. Take time this fall to evaluate your alfalfa stands and determine if an herbicide program is needed this fall.

To Control Hay Crops For Spring Rotations

If you plan to rotate an old alfalfa/grass field into no-till corn next spring, fall is an excellent time to kill the alfalfa and grass, according to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County extension agronomy agent.

Fall applications of Roundup or Ranger are generally more effective in killing cool season perennial grasses such as orchardgrass, fescue, and quackgrass than are spring applications of the products. However, early fall applications are more effective than late fall applications.

With a mild fall or winter, the application may be delayed but the best rule is to apply the herbicides as soon as possible. Fall applications of

Banvel or 2,4-D or a combination of these products were found to be more effective in killing established alfalfa plants.

To Manage Frost-Damaged Corn

Appropriate management of frost damage corn can help to reduce yield losses and maintain feed value, according to Robert Anderson, Lancaster County extension agronomy agent.

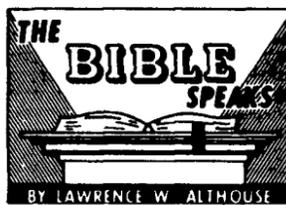
Frost damage corn will have small and misshapen soft kernels. The incomplete development of the starch structure will cause a pithy kernel, resulting in a high percent of kernel breakage during handling and low-test weight (below 45 pounds per bushel). It will result in low protein levels and low digestibility.

Amino acid levels will be very variable. Negligible losses will occur if the corn has already dried to 35 percent moisture or below, even with a severe frost. If any green leaves remain after a frost, even leaves that are below the ear, the corn plant will continue to live and mature.

This will increase its dry matter content. A good rule of thumb to remember is let frosted corn stand as long as there are green leaves and the ear has not formed the black layer.

The best use of frosted corn is animal feed. However, it should be tested so that the feeding program may be supplemented with additional protein and amino acids. In addition, fungi may present a problem with frosted corn. You should continue to check for fungi during storage. Expect storage time to be reduced as much as 50 percent with frosted corn.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "Wisdom is knowing what path to take next and integrity is taking it."



WHEN A 'HOUSE' IS NOT A HOUSE

Background Scripture:
2 Samuel 7; 1 Chronicles 17.
Devotional Reading:
1 Kings 8:15-21.

When is a "house" not a house?

In 2 Samuel 7, there is a play on the various meanings of the word "house."

In 7:1,2 house means the "palace" of David the king: "Now when the king dwelt in his house..." Then King David says to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent."

No longer do the tribes of Israel wander in the wilderness. They have put down roots and a kingdom has been established by David. Surely, God now needs a permanent house, a place for the Lord to dwell.

We can easily understand David's reasoning, for we might very well make the same judgment. We are human beings and human beings have an edifice complex.

The religion of Israel, while very vital, has been in human terms somewhat chaotic and disorganized. The tent or tabernacle that was carried through the wilderness was now seen to have been intended as a temporary arrangement. Now is the time to put up an edifice that will be a worthy house for God to dwell — and here the word house means a "temple."

A House To Dwell In?

That is the meaning when God says, "Would you build me a house to dwell in? I have not

dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day..." (7:6).

In the early days of Israel, the tent was not regarded as the dwelling place of God, but as the place where he came to meet his people through Moses. God was not limited to a tent. But, somewhere along the line, some (all?) Israelites came to believe that, when they moved the tent, they moved God. They would not have put it so baldly, but that understanding was very much behind the way they conceived of God and it is obviously the basis for David's desire to build a suitable dwelling place for the Lord.

David's intention was obviously quite sincere and there was only thing wrong with his plan — it was not God's plan! He reminds David and the people of Israel that they are his servants, not the other way around. "Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture... and I have been with you wherever you went... and I will make for you a great name... and I will appoint a place for my people..." (7:8-10). (For emphasis I have bold-faced the repeated "I" statements. For more of the same, see 7:10 through 15.)

He is reminding David that his ascendancy was God's plan, not David's. Although his intention was sincere, David's plan was susceptible to the danger of institutionalizing religion. If you can build a dwelling for God — rather than a place to meet him — you have some control of the relationship. As Ganse Little writes: "That which is honestly meant to be a means to the more effective worship of God so easily degenerates into an end in itself. The devotion which should be given to God alone becomes attached to the maintenance and the preservation of a hallowed structure, the traditional ritual, the system of ecclesiastical prerogatives, the power of a priestly hierarchy."

Davidic Offspring

God promises, "Moreover the

Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house" (7:11). Here is another meaning for house — in this case it means a "dynasty." This is the kind of house that God wants to establish with David, generations of Davidic offspring, not an edifice. Historically the dynasty of David ended in 587 or 586 BC., but spiritually, we see the Davidic line culminating in the person of Jesus Christ and the teaching that the temple was superseded by the living temple of the Christian church.

It is well and good for us to erect structures "to the glory of God" and fashion church rituals and polity to continue the work of the gospel, but it is more a tent ministry than a temple system to which we are called. Cathedrals are beautiful tributes to God, but the church is always in danger of a "cathedral psychology" or an "edifice complex." None of the most important and significant events in the life and ministry of Jesus took place in a temple. Even the Last Supper was held in an "upper room, furnished." In David's response, he asks: "What other nation on earth is like thy people Israel...?" (7:23).

The gods of the other nations were bound to their people by kinship and represented a deification of the nation's character. But God chose Israel — not the other way round — and the only tie that bound him was his own choice. God's plan was that Israel should reflect his character. And all who respond to that grand invitation become members of the household of God.

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