

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

The Place To Be

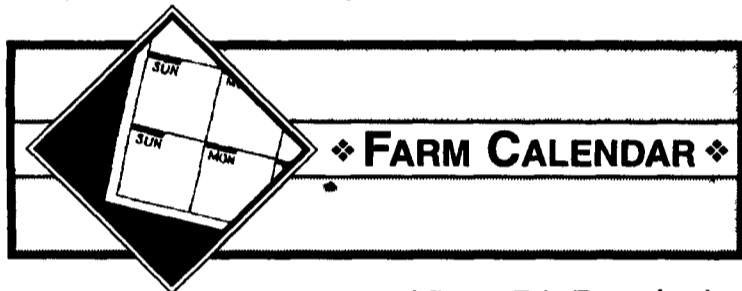
When you consider the benefits to agriculture, we believe the Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg this week was the best thing to happen for our beloved industry in many years. The mix of farmers, farm organizations, educational institutions, agribusinesses, and the general public provided a consortium of public relations and ag industry promotion opportunities unmatched at any other event.

Too long, agriculture has prided itself on being independent and needing to talk only to itself. We had a corner on the food supply. Everyone was dependent on us and so we could let the rest of the world go by.

But now the world owns us. If we don't produce what the consumer wants, or if they just think we don't, they will snob us and go to some other country for their food. Worse yet, they will work against us, environmentally and legislatively. Even our own citizens are not dependent on American agriculture. They can eat the imports from foreign breadbaskets around the world.

That's why the attempt to bridge the gap between Pennsylvania agriculture and the representatives of 60 foreign countries at the Farm Show is so important. This festive event forms the best possible backdrop for both foreign visitors and all our local nonfarm citizens to see our ag industry in show clothes. What a wonderful opportunity to bridge the gap between farm and city while selling your products to the farm community!

If you want to promote your part of agriculture to farmers and support your industry to the nonfarm citizens of the world, the Pennsylvania Farm Show is the place to be.



- Saturday, January 13**
Dauphin County DHIA Banquet, Country Buffet Restaurant, 11 a.m.
Charting the Future of Berks Agriculture, Penn State Berks-Lehigh Valley College, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- Sunday, January 14**
- Monday, January 15**
Farm Computerized Accounting Workshop, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, also Jan. 19, 23, and 26.
New Holland Vegetable Day, Yoder's Restaurant, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association Conference and Trade show, Sheraton-Mesa Hotel and the Community Conference Center, Mesa, Ariz., thru Jan. 22.
- Tuesday, January 16**
2001 Trade Show and New Jersey Annual Vegetable Meeting, Taj Mahal, Atlantic City, N.J., thru Jan. 18.
Northeast Dairy Industry, Managing A Hispanic Workforce, Raddison Penn Harris Hotel and Convention Center, Camp Hill, also an. 18 at Marriott thruway Hotel, Rochester, N.Y.
Annual Meeting of Farm and Home Foundation, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 6:30 p.m.
PAES Lime, Fertilizer, and Pesticide Conference, Penn Stater Conference Center, thru Jan. 17.
Eastern Regional Landscape and Nursery Seminar, Delaware Valley College, Doylestown, 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
Crop Insurance Seminar, Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pa., Pittston.
- Wednesday, January 17**
Ag Business Institute, Adams County Extension Office, Gettysburg, 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
Pennsylvania State Association

- of County Fairs/Pennsylvania State Showmen's Association Convention, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, thru Jan. 20.
- Biotechnology: Progress or Problem Conference, Best Western Binghamton Regency Hotel and Conference Center, Binghamton, N.Y., thru Jan. 19.
- Snyder County Conservation District Winter Meeting, Kreamer Fire Hall, Kreamer, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
- Beaver County DHIA meeting, Beaver extension office, 7:30 p.m.
- Small Business Institute, Agriculture and Natural Resources Center, Gettysburg.
- Nutrient Management Plan Writing Refresher Seminar, Fulton County Conservation District, noon-3:30 p.m.
- Introduction to Spreadsheets, Franklin County Extension Office, also Jan. 18.
- Crop Insurance Seminar, Berks County Ag Center, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- Thursday, January 18**
Northeast Dairy Industry, Managing A Hispanic Workforce, Marriott thruway Hotel, Rochester, N.Y.
Corn Meeting, Garden Gate Restaurant, Prospect.
Environmental Livestock Certification Course, Perkins Restaurant, Lewisburg, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
Ag Outlook Forum, Clarion Inn and Conference Center, Carlisle, 11 a.m.; Country Cupboard Inn, Lewisburg, 6:45 p.m.
Dairy Cattle Nutrition — Rations, Tim and Lloyd Miller Farm, Mayport, 10 a.m.
AgChoice Farm Credit Meeting, Clarion Inn-Embers, Carlisle, 11 a.m.
AgChoice Farm Credit Meeting, Country Cupboard, Lewisburg, 6:45 p.m.

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Now Is The Time
By John Schwartz
Lancaster County Agricultural Agent

To Look At Fire Extinguishers

The proper care and use of fire extinguishers could prevent serious loss from a fire. However, users who do not understand proper fire extinguisher operation may compound the risk of serious farm fires.

A simple method for remembering the four steps in fire extinguisher use is the word PASS, which stands for:

- P - Pull the pin. This unlocks the operating handle.
 - A - Aim the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
 - S - Squeeze the operating handle.
 - S - Sweep from side to side as you knock down the fire.
- Fire extinguishers should be kept in areas where fire hazards pose the greatest threat. This would include in farm shops and

near machine refueling stations.

Keeping them current and fully charged is the responsibility of everyone at the work site. Equally as important as having extinguishers readily available is having the proper type of extinguisher for your operation.

The ABC type of extinguisher will control fires involving:

- Class A fires, combustibles such as wood and paper.
- Class B fires, flammable liquids such as gasoline and grease.
- Class C fires, fires involving electrical wiring and machinery.

To Learn From Farm Fatality Numbers

The Pennsylvania summary of farm fatal accidents from 1999 shows some dramatic changes.

The total number of fatalities dropped from 45 in 1998 to 30 in 1999. Until this recent dropoff, the fatality numbers have remained rather constant with 46 in 1997 and 44 in 1996.

The biggest factor in this dramatic decline is fatalities from tractor overturns. Seven deaths occurred from overturns in 1999 compared to 20 in 1998 and 14 in 1997.

Deaths involving children rose steeply in 1999. Ten children, age 14 and under, died in accidents in 1999, up sharply from four fatalities in 1999. Accidental deaths involving machinery declined from 9 in 1998 to 6 in 1999. Fatalities involving animals stayed roughly constant with three in 1999 and two in 1998.

Deaths from nontractor and machinery stayed the same at six for 1999 and 1998.

The summer months were the most deadly on Pennsylvania

farms in 1999, with five fatalities occurring each month in May, June, and July.

Let these numbers remind us that farming may be a deadly job, especially for children and older adults. Take every safety step possible to eliminate accidents!

To Look At Conservation Success

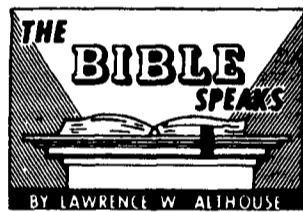
USDA Agricultural Research Service reports good farming practices are proving to be successful in reducing soil sedimentation at three lakes located in the Mississippi Delta region.

About 7,320 acres of farmland surround these lakes. A project was set up to evaluate how changing farm practices could help improve the water quality of the lakes. In this, the sixth year of the project, scientists are finding that algal populations have shifted from those that impair water quality to those that are not harmful.

This shift is occurring as a result of conservation practices such as planting winter cover crops, reducing tillage, and planting vegetative filter strips. These practices minimize soil movement and restrict herbicide runoff into the lake.

These same practices will also help Pennsylvania farmers reduce nonpoint pollution into streams and lakes. By taking a proactive stance and voluntarily implementing conservation practices, farmers are helping to reduce the need for government regulations.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, and working together is success."



CAN YOU AFFORD IT?

Background Scripture: Luke 9:18-25, 57-62, 14:25-33.
Devotional Reading: Matthew 10:34-39.

WARNING: This scripture passage may be destructive to your peace of mind!

It's only fair for me to warn you. I wish I were exaggerating, but I'm not. If the background scriptures listed above do not shake you up, you are simply not paying attention to them.

These sayings of Jesus are not the "velvet glove" approach, but bare knuckles. I say this because what many of us think it means to be a Christian is not at all what Jesus is saying in the 9th and 14th chapters of Luke.

"Who do people say that I am?" Jesus asks his disciples and they answer, "John the Baptist... Elijah... one of the old prophets." Peter is the last to answer: "The Christ of God" (9:18-20).

Notice that Jesus neither confirms or denies Peter's answer. Instead, he goes on to say, "The Son of man must suffer many things; and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed..." Perhaps Peter may have thought that Jesus was ignoring his answer, but I believe Jesus is saying, "Yes, Peter, but the Christ of God is not the Christ that people are expecting."

Instead of a triumphant victor over the Romans, the true "anointed" of God is a one who gives himself to be broken for

others. His role is radically different from what most people expect.

'Follow Me!'

So, Jesus also transforms the understanding of what it means to be his follower: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (9:23). There are to be no membership cards, no secret handshakes, no badges — only a willingness to bear a cross.

Every Sunday at our church people wishing to join the church are invited to come forward for that purpose. Bearing a cross is not one of the questions asked and I cannot help but wonder how many would come forward if it were.

Jesus challenges potential disciples to count the cost of following him. In 9:57-62 he lays down standards which are as radically different from common expectations as are his understanding of his own Messianic role. Following Jesus cannot be one of several loyalties; it must be the very highest loyalty, higher even than any loyalties to the family. (Incidentally, I do not think Jesus is refusing to let a potential disciple bury his father or forbidding another to say goodbye to his family. I believe he is simply using these normal familial obligations to emphasize that following him must be an even higher responsibility.)

To plow a straight furrow requires the farmer's full attention. So it is with the person who chooses to follow Jesus Christ.

On 'Loving Less'

In Luke 14:25-33, there is another possible misunderstanding when Jesus says, "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."

Does Jesus really ask his followers to "hate" the members of his own family? The English word "hate" here, so say scholars, comes from an Aramaic (the language Jesus spoke) expression meaning "to love less." As much as we love our families, we must love Christ more.

So what Jesus is counseling here is that those who would be his followers should first count the cost and ascertain if they are willing to pay the price. Jesus is not asking for a pat on the back, a signature on a petition, or a vote of confidence. To follow Jesus means a radical commitment that supersedes every other commitment. Our family, our job, our ideology, our nation and our politics must all be subjugated to our commitment to Christ. Ask yourself — as I am asking myself — does Jesus come first in all areas of my life? Do I really love these less than him?

"Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (14:27). Jesus came into this world to bear its crosses and we who would follow him must be willing to share in the bearing of crosses. Becoming a member of a church is one thing that we can add to our lives with a minimum of effort and dislocation. Following Jesus and bearing crosses, however, asks something almost infinitely more than that.

Can you afford it?

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