

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Phosphorus 'Can Of Worms'

We learned not too long ago from our friends in the farm press that in January last year, the Virginia General Assembly passed a house bill that requires poultry farms to develop and implement phosphorus nutrient management plans by Oct. 1 this year (from a story in the Delmarva Farmer, reprinted in the May 2001 PennAg Journal).

The article goes on to talk about how soils high in phosphorus can only receive very low amounts of poultry litter, if at all.

This is a literal "can of worms" that we saw coming years ago. Though Pennsylvania's nutrient management law is nitrogen-based, we thought other states may try to "rethink" the requirements to include phosphorus.

Agronomy experts will tell you that some southeastern Pennsylvania soils test extremely high for phosphorus. Penn State has worked diligently with NRCS and other U.S. agencies to develop a "site index" for phosphorus. To try to simplify the complexities of the plan, the "site index" merely is a method to allocate only specific amounts of phosphorus-loaded nutrients to certain areas specific to the actual farm. For example: No placing phosphorus material next to a farm pond, or creek that runs through the farm, or drainage area, etc. But it's OK to place the phosphorus where the crops will readily make use of it.

But there's a real headache at work here. Many plants make so little use of phosphorus, compared to the amounts that turn up in confinement-operation based manure. Poultry litter is loaded with phosphorus, in many cases.

There have been widespread attempts to allow animals to more successfully utilize phosphorus in feed. But still, amounts get bypassed from the animal into the manure.

The real question is: how will Virginia be able to police such a plan? Many times, state conservation districts can't even enforce regulations pertaining to soil movement, let alone nutrient/nitrogen management.

If Northeast states, where confinement housing is a literal farm way of life, end up changing nitrogen-based nutrient management plans to phosphorus-based, that would be one can of worms we don't think anybody would want to open.



Now Is The Time By Leon Ressler

Lancaster County
Extension Director

To Scout Corn Fields For Weeds

Recent rains have significantly changed the weed control situation in a lot of corn fields.

With moisture to germinate both the crop and the weeds, it will soon be obvious whether the rain arrived in time to activate the preemergence herbicides.

Before you rush to decide if postemergence herbicide applications are needed, allow a few days to see if any of the herbicides with reachback potential will still burn down small, emerged weeds.

Identify the weed species you have to deal with and the severity of infestation. It may be that a pass with a rotary hoe or cultivator may be sufficient to control the escaped weeds. If you are not equipped for those options, then make plans for an application of postemergence herbicides. Check your agronomy guide for information related to the relative effectiveness of various herbicides on specific weeds. Read the product

labels carefully and use the recommended spray adjuvants.

An adjuvant is any product added to the herbicide formulation or added to the spray tank by the operator to increase herbicidal activity or application characteristics. There are a number of different kinds of additives used for this purpose but the most common type is activator adjuvants. These additives are primarily used with postemergence herbicides.

Before a foliar-applied herbicide can do its intended job it must be transferred from the leaf surface into the plant tissue.

Before the herbicide can be transferred into the plant tissue it must pass the cuticle of the leaf, which has water-repellant waxes. This barrier varies in effectiveness between the different weed species. For example, lamb-quarters cuticle is very resistant to the passage of water-soluble herbicides while other weeds are less resistant.

The most common types of activator adjuvants used are surfactants, oils, and salts. These additives influence the physical and chemical properties of the spray solution, including surface tension, density, volatility, and solubility. These properties will in turn modify the spreading, wetting, retention, and penetration of the spray solution. It is important that the right additive be selected for the herbicide product you are using. Adding the right adjuvant can significantly improve herbicidal activity.

To Scout For Black Cutworm Infestations

While you are walking your cornfields to evaluate weed control, keep an eye out for insect damage. One of the pests to be looking for is the black cutworm. Newly hatched larvae are about 1/4 inch long and, when fully

grown, are about 2 inches long. The color ranges from gray to nearly black. There is a pale stripe along the center of the back.

The texture of the skin is what distinguishes the black cutworm from other cutworms. The skin texture consists of convex, rounded, coarse granules with smaller granules interspaced between. Magnification to five times or more is needed for this character to be readily seen.

While the insect overwinters in Pennsylvania as pupae and adults, significant outbreaks occur when moths migrate into the area on storm fronts during April and May. When the moths drop out of the storm systems they lay their eggs where they land. Most of the eggs are believed to be laid before the crop is planted.

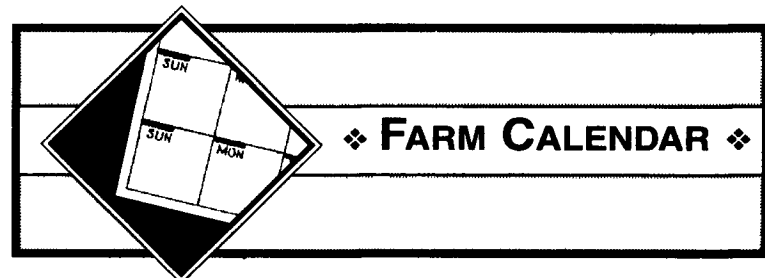
The feeding pattern of the black cutworm is influenced by the soil moisture conditions. When soil moisture is adequate, the larvae hide in the soil during the day and move to the surface at night, where they cut off the plants just above the soil surface. Where soil conditions are dry the larvae do not move to the surface to feed but instead chew into the plants just below the soil surface. This causes the corn plants to wilt and usually die.

Economic thresholds for when one should treat have been established. The thresholds are for seedleaf-emerged corn — 2 percent of the plants cut; two-leaf stage — 3 percent of the plants cut; three-leaf stage — 5 percent of the plants cut; and four-leaf stage — 7 percent of the plants cut. If the majority of the cutworms are 1 to two inches long, however, control will not help because most of the feeding is finished.

Quote of the Week:

"Am I not destroying my enemies when I make friends of them?"

— Abraham Lincoln



❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

Saturday, May 26

Massachusetts Sheep and Wool Craft Fair, Cummington, Mass., (413) 625-2424.

Boer Goat Seminar and Sale, Northeast Livestock Marketing Cooperative, Blandford Fairgrounds, Mass., (413) 774-7599.

York County Dairy Princess Pageant, York County 4-H Center, 7:30 p.m., (814) 694-2661.

Clearfield County Dairy Princess Pageant, Curwensville Civic Center, Curwensville, 8 p.m.

Sunday, May 27

Monday, May 28

Memorial Day. Lancaster Farming office closed.

Tuesday, May 29

Wednesday, May 30

Examination for Nutrient Management Specialist Certification, Pa. Dept. of Ag, Harrisburg, 9 a.m.-noon.

Dairy Options Pilot Program Training for Centre County, Logan Grange Hall, Pleasant Gap, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Water Resources Forum, Ramada Plaza Suites Conference Center, Pittsburgh, 7 p.m.

Safe Drinking Water Clinic, Susquehanna County, 1 p.m.-3 p.m. and 7 p.m.-9 p.m.

Thursday, May 31

Philadelphia County Fair, thru June 3 and June 7-10.

Water Resources Forum, Hampton Inn, Philadelphia, 7 p.m.

Super Forestry Reunion, Penn State Mont Alto Campus, (717) 749-6105.

Keystone Stud Ram and Ewe Sale, Penn State Ag Arena, thru June 2.

Empire Spring Classic Sale, Fiber Fest and Youth Show, Cobleskill Sunshine Fairgrounds, New York, thru June 2.

Armstrong County Dairy Princess Pageant, Pitzer Crooked Creek Inn, Ford City, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, June 1

National Tunis Show, Cobleskill Sunshine Fairgrounds, New York, thru June 2, (518) 295-7188.

Clarion-Venango County Dairy Princess Pageant, Cranberry Mall, Cranberry, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 2

Maryland Walnut Council Workshop, Western Maryland Research and Education Center, Keedysville, Md., (301) 695-6659.

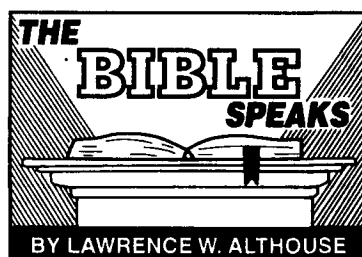
51st Annual West Virginia Purebred Sheep Breeders Stud Ram and Ewe Club Lamb Sale, Tri-County Fairgrounds, Petersburg, W.Va., (302) 257-4372.

Lebanon County Dairy Princess Pageant, Lebanon County Career and Technology Center, Lebanon, 7:30 p.m.

Wyoming-Lackawanna County Dairy Princess Pageant, Factoryville Fire Hall, Factoryville, 7:30 p.m.

Franklin County Dairy Princess Pageant, Lighthouse Restau-

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YOUR 'PRECIOUS' LIFE

Background Scripture:

Acts 20:13-38.

Devotional Reading:

1 Corinthians 15:10-11.

It is quite possible to misunderstand Paul when he says, "But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God" (20:24).

Actually, part of the problem is that this verse is translated awkwardly in the King James and Revised Standard versions. The J.B. Philips and Living Bible paraphrases render the verse more smoothly:

"But I do not consider my own life important or valuable to me, so long as I can finish my course and complete the ministry which the Lord Jesus has given me..." (Philips)

"But life is worth nothing unless I use it for doing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus..." (LB)

The Jerusalem Bible gives us a slightly different slant:

"But life to me is not a thing to waste words on, provided that when I finish my race. I have carried out the mission the Lord Jesus gave me..."

The Precious Life

The problem is that Paul seems to be denigrating the value of his God-given life.

After reading and re-reading this verse several times, I don't think that is really what Paul is saying. In each paraphrase and translation, if the second part of the sentence had been placed first, his comments on the value of his life would be more forcefully within the context of his desire to fulfill God's purpose for him.

(Try that in each of the four versions above. For example: "So long as I can finish my course and complete the ministry which the Lord has given me, I do not consider my own life important or valuable to me" — Philips.)

The important thing here is not the worthlessness of his life to him, but the impetus to fulfilling his ministry.

So what does all that matter? To me it matters because I would not be able to join Paul in saying "my life is worth nothing," nor could I say it is not "precious to myself." My life is worth a great

deal and is precious to me. I thank God for it every day, morning, noon, and night. As I get older I realize ever more what a precious gift it is from God.

My Life

So, it is not because my life is worthless, but because it is worth so much that I must be concerned with the second part of Paul's declaration. Compared to the purpose for which he created me, the possessive portion of "my life" is dwarfed by God's design.

I would not borrow Paul's language to say it, but I think we essentially agree. No matter what I want for my life, what really matters most of all is for me to come as close to fulfilling his purpose as I can. Nothing in this world can equal that goal.

What that meant for Paul was a humble ministry trusting, not in himself or others, but the grace of God. "And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, bound in the Spirit, not knowing what shall befall me there; except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and affliction await me."

I close with two questions: How precious is your life to you? And how precious is your life to the Lord?

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