



OPINION

Going Global

For one moment, if you think that the biggest ag issues are the spotlight of debates exclusively in the western world (places such as U.S. or as far away as the United Kingdom), think again.

If you enjoy Internet surfing, check out the National Agricultural Library (www.nal.usda.gov/) and click on the left bar under "Ag Events Calendar" (or go directly to the calendar by typing in www.agnic.org/mtg/2001.html).

It's almost hard to believe how many different types of symposia and conferences are scheduled for a given month on a planetwide basis. And the major issues in agriculture truly are global.

Along with the customary producer events (the Fifth International Peach Symposium scheduled July 9-11 in Davis, Calif.), you also have the 12th International Congress on Photosynthesis, Aug. 18-23 in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

Along with the Sixth International Congress on Plant Mitochondria Aug. 23-26 in Brisbane, you have the Physical Methods in Agriculture event Aug. 27-30 in Prague, Czech Republic.

There are standard items you'd expect to see. Such as the Central Veterinary Conference Aug. 25-28 in Kansas City, Mo. And the Biocycle Southeast Conference, Composting and Organics Recycling — The Soil and Water Connections, Aug. 27-29 in Atlanta, Ga.

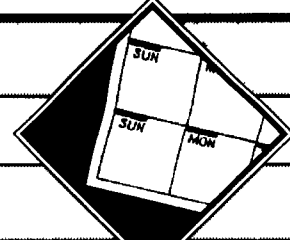
There are 33 international items scheduled for August alone. It boggles the mind!

No area of speculation about ag's future is left undiscovered at these events. Just last week was the Fourth International Workshop On Artificial Intelligence In Agriculture, June 6-8 in Budapest, Hungary. The applications of artificial intelligence in agriculture, the conference focus, showcases the use of "emerging technologies," according to the write-up: "neural network, genetic algorithms, fuzzy control, constraint satisfaction, and case-based reasoning."

The workshop was conducted in the Hotel Eben in Budapest and on the campus of the Szent Istvan University. The conference language was in English, of course.

We at *Lancaster Farming* strive to keep our readers as up to date as possible about farm events, conferences, and symposia. I suppose we have to be selective.

We just wonder: how many of our readers would like to know about neural networks, genetic algorithms, fuzzy control, constraint satisfaction, and case-based reasoning? I'm sure in some ways, large or small, they impact agriculture in any number of ways.




❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

Saturday, June 16
 Hay Day, Eastern Ohio Resource Development Center, Caldwell, Ohio, (740) 732-2682 or (740) 432-9300.
 Sheep Nutrition and Parasite Control Talk, Sullivan County, N.Y. Cooperative Extension, Liberty, N.Y., (607) 844-8367.
 Sullivan County Dairy Princess Pageant, Dushore, 7 p.m.
 Crawford County Dairy Prin-

cess Pageant, Twelve Apostles Lutheran Church, Saegertown, 8 p.m.
 Third Annual Pennsylvania Herb Festival, York Expo Center, York, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Rodale Institute On Marketing To Demand: Meeting The Needs of Today's Increasing Aware Consumer, Kutztown, (610) 683-8548.

Sunday, June 17
 Happy Father's Day!
 (Turn to Page A42)



❖ FARM FORUM ❖

Editor:

As a dairy princess, I look forward to June. This festive month marks the beginning and ending of dairy princess reigns (as well as my own). It also is Dairy Month.

If you are not familiar with the dairy industry, you might be wondering what the big deal is.

June is the month when the dairy industry begins the summer season by promoting their wholesome products, not to mention saluting the 10,000 dairy farmers throughout Pennsylvania for all of their hard work and dedication to produce nature's most perfect food, milk.

Because we live in a fast-paced society, we take for granted the small things in life. For instance, can you imagine a world of cereal without milk, sundaes without ice cream, or biscuits without butter? If you can't, make sure you thank the dairy farmer.

Believe it or not, milk and dairy

products just don't appear at the grocery store for you to buy. Dairy farmers are dedicated to providing you with safe, high-quality milk and dairy products.

Their commitment to quality goes beyond caring for their animals and the land. This way of life has been passed down from generation to generation. Farming is in their blood. It's a tradition that farmers want to pass on to their children and grandchildren.

I am honored to represent an industry that works year-round to make sure you have the most wholesome, high-quality dairy products available. I am also very proud to say that my family is one of the 60,000 farm families across that state to be able to carry on the legacy my great grandfather began in 1941.

Help support all dairy farmers by consuming more dairy products.

—Melinda Wolfe
 Pennsylvania Dairy Princess



**Now Is
The Time**
By Leon Ressler
*Lancaster County
Extension Director*

**To Use The
Pre-Sidedress**

Soil Nitrate Test (PSNT)

Providing the correct amount of nitrogen for corn production is very important. Applying too much nitrogen wastes money and can contribute to ground and surface water contamination.

If the available nitrogen is less than needed by the crop, however, yields will suffer. If the fields in question have a history of manure use, the PSNT is an important tool to determine which fields should be sidedressed with nitrogen and which have enough residual nitrogen.

With the high cost of nitrogen fertilizer this year and the low price of corn, it is especially important to determine how much nitrogen is needed by each field.

The PSNT was developed to help answer this question. Research has shown if the soil nitrate-N level is above 21 ppm, there is little chance of an economic response to adding

additional N to the field. At soil nitrate-N levels below 21 ppm, sidedress nitrogen will be needed to obtain optimum yield. This test has most value on fields with a significant contribution from organic N sources, such as a history of manure application or use of a forage legume in the crop rotation.

This test is not useful on fields where the primary nitrogen source is from fertilizer.

The soil sample should be taken when the corn is 12 inches tall or at least a week before planned sidedressing. Walk the field in a random pattern and take 10-20 cores to a 12-inch depth, if possible. If a 12-inch depth is not possible, then take the samples as deeply as you can. Avoid starter bands and other atypical areas. Because of sampling problems this test cannot be used on fields that received injected fertilizer or manure.

It is important to dry the sample as quickly as possible. Crush the cores and combine them into one sample per field. Spread and dry the samples in the sun or under a heat lamp in a well-ventilated area. Send the samples to a reputable lab for soil nitrate-N analysis, or use a field test kit for soil nitrate-N to determine the nitrate-N level in the sample.

If the level is 21 ppm or higher, no sidedress N is needed. If the level is less than 21 ppm, use the worksheet in the Agronomy Facts 17 publication entitled "Pre-sidedress Soil Nitrate Test for Corn" to determine the nitrogen rate needed. This publication is available from your county extension office and also on the Internet at <http://www.agronomy.psu.edu/Extension/Facts/agfact17.pdf>. The worksheet can also be found in the agronomy guide.

**To Learn More
About Composting**
 Composting does provide possibilities for moving surplus manure off

the farm to other users. It does take significant effort, however, to produce compost. Before venturing into this alternative, it is important to become knowledgeable about the process.

The Department of Environmental Protection in partnership with the Pennsylvania Compost Association, the Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture, and the Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania — will conduct a free composting conference June 28. The event, entitled "Growing Your Business: Composting Strategies for Expanding Markets," will be at the Holiday Inn in Grantville from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

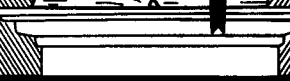
Acting DEP Secretary David E. Hess will be among the featured speakers as well as nationally known recycling and composting expert Nora Goldstein. Bob Rynk of the U.S. Compost Council will also address the conference. The conference will include presentations from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and DEP's Bureau of Mining, recycling initiatives, and private industry perspectives on recycling organic wastes. A panel discussion will help business owners learn about new markets for compost and how to make their compost more competitive.

Although there is no charge to attend, preregistration is required. To register visit DEP's website at <http://www.dep.state.pa.us/> and type in "composting conference" at the directLINK box. For more information, contact Pamela Rosser at (215)-772-0118.

Quote of the Week:
"Some of the Presidents were great, and some of them weren't. I can say that, because I wasn't one of the great Presidents, but I had a good time trying to be one, I can tell you that."

— Harry S. Truman
 33rd President of the United States

**THE
BIBLE
SPEAKS**



BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

**LIMPING
THROUGH LIFE**

Background Scripture:
 1 Kings 18.
Devotional Reading:
 Joshua 24:14-18.

The story of the great contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel has both four important lessons for us and two thorny issues.

I'll begin with the first important lesson: God sends prophets to disturb us. When King Ahab sees the prophet Elijah approaching him, he calls out: "Is it you, you troubler of Israel?" (v.17). As far as the king is concerned, Elijah is a troublemaker. In the Old Testament there is an unwritten theme: if you are enjoying what the prophet is saying, you either don't understand him or he is not a prophet. There are prophetic voices in our own time, I believe, but these prophets are not, cannot be popular.

The second important lesson is that the trouble is not with the prophet, but with those who hear the prophet. Elijah replies to Ahab: "I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and you father's house, because you have forsaken the command-

ments of the Lord and followed the Baals" (v.18).

The comic-strip character Pogo put it well: "We have met the enemy and they are us!" God's prophet is not the enemy. We are our own enemy and prophetic voices are sent so that we can stop causing ourselves trouble.

**A Little Baal,
A Little Yahweh**

The third important teaching is actually the crux of this whole chapter: in your life you cannot mix a little worship of Baal with a little worship of God and still leave room for God.

Elijah's trouble with Ahab is that the king seems to think that he can accommodate both Baal and Yahweh in his kingdom. "Let's be tolerant, here!" is probably his theme. "There's room for both."

We know Ahab is wrong, yet we often fail to apply that understanding to our own society. Our problem is not with the worship of Baal, nor even Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, whatever. The religion that is most dangerous to Christianity today is the secular religion of materialism/consumerism that we try to embrace with one hand while embracing Christianity on the other. We honor God but worship things.

Note that I have purposely used the visual analogy of "embracing with one hand" — a virtual impossibility! You need two hands and two arms to embrace anything and that is what Elijah is saying: you cannot embrace both Baal and Yahweh.

Elijah uses another analogy: "limping through life." When the priests of Baal performed their rituals, they danced around the altar, bending, leaping, and contorting their bodies. Sarcasically, Elijah calls it "limping" and he says that is

exactly what the people of Israel are doing when they offer one foot to Yahweh and another to Baal.

If The Lord Is God

So the fourth important lesson is his challenge to them and to us: "How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him" (v. 21).

Don't keep sitting on a fence. Make a choice and stick with it. As Ralph Washington Sockman once put it: "A mind may entertain a host of different intellectual opinions and scientific theories, but religion involves commitment."

That brings me to the first of the thorny issues. When the priests of Baal have obviously failed to induce their god to set fire to the offering on their altar, Elijah prays that Yahweh would do exactly that on the altar he had built: "Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt offering..." (v. 38).

Good for Elijah and good for the Israelites who witnessed this, but what about us? Are we to prove the superiority of our God with similar contests? Shall we invite people to follow Jesus Christ only if we can replicate Elijah's spectacular? Is that the only way or even the best way to prove the God revealed in Jesus Christ? Or is it in the lives that we live?

And, in our certainty that the way of Christ is the highest revelation of God, shall we respond as Elijah did on Carmel and slaughter the advocates of other religions?

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