

# Lancaster Farming

## OPINION

### Things Of Value

*Editor's Note: The following editorial was written by Scott M. Barao, University of Maryland extension livestock specialist, and appeared in the Animal Agriculture Update Newsletter for May-June 2001.*

The recent passing of a friend and cattle producer, Mr. John Mazur, has triggered a number of thoughts and memories.

John was overall a very private person, but he always took time to share his many talents in a number of ways. I met John in the late 1980s when he joined the Maryland Cattlemen's Association board of directors. John served on the board for six years, two as president. He made many important contributions toward the early growth and development of both our cattlemen's association and beef council. John and I grew to be friends and fishing buddies and I will miss him.

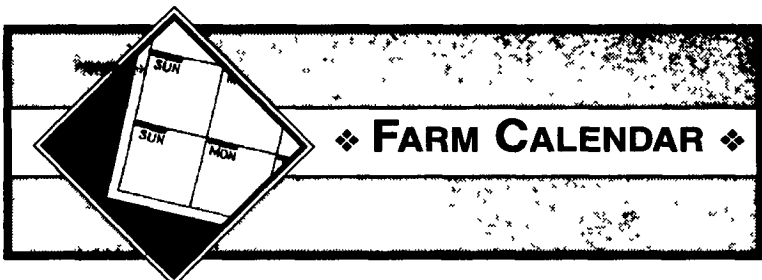
Mixed together with my thoughts and memories of John have been reflections on the circumstances which led me to Maryland and to my position as a livestock extension specialist.

Someone asked me recently what was the best part of my job. The answer came quickly and easily. Far and away, the best part of my job is the opportunity I am afforded to meet and work directly with beef cattle producers and families across Maryland. I count my blessings frequently for the many cattle producers and farm families I have grown to know, respect, and count among my friends over the last 15 years.

My comfort with and attraction to this fine group of folks is largely based on a common thread I have observed across the group. Simply stated, the thread is a commitment to "service." I watch you give so freely of your time to sit on boards, lead 4-H youth groups, attend meetings, coordinate events, chair committees, and share your talents and gifts enthusiastically. These are things of value.

You have taught me many things and I am a better person today because of the interactions I have had with so many of you. I have observed your leadership skills and I have learned more about courage, character, conviction, and compassion than I ever thought possible. These are things of value.

Your true commitment to service sets you apart from the crowd. I believe in my heart that those who are happiest and feel most fulfilled are those who have sought and found how to serve. What greater value exists than to become a servant to the unfolding and flowering of others. Thank you!



**Saturday, July 7**  
Maryland Hereford Association Field Day, Mullinix Bros. Cattail Connection, Woodbine, Md.

**Sunday, July 8**  
Penn State Conservation Leadership School, Stone Valley Recreation Area, State College, thru July 21, (814) 865-8301.

2001 Southeast Dairy Youth Retreat, Asheboro, N.C., thru July 12, (336) 375-5876.

**Monday, July 9**  
National Junior Angus Show, Denver, Colo., thru July 14.  
Mason-Dixon Fair, Delta, thru July 14.

Derry Township Fair, Westmoreland Co., thru July 14.  
Mercer County Grange Fair, thru July 14. (724) 662-5203.  
Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Game of Logging Course, Lancaster, and July 10. (814) 867-9299.

Dairy Option Pilot Program, Huntingdon County Extension office, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. (814) 643-1660.

Landscape and Turf Pest Walks, Lebanon Country Club, 5:30 p.m., (717) 921-8803.

Pasture Sheep, Grazing, and Livestock Direct Marketing, Dave and Holly Albert Farm, Lycoming County, (570) 998-8508.

**Tuesday, July 10**  
Ephrata Area Young Farmers Expanding Dairy Operation Tour, David Zimmerman Farm Builder, King Construction, 7:30 p.m.  
American Society of Entology and Viticulture, Eastern Section Annual Meeting, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, Canada.

Lancaster County 4-H Holstein Roundup, Solanco Fairgrounds, Quarryville, 9 a.m.-8 p.m.; show July 11 at 9 a.m.

4H-Day Camp, Mount Pisgah, Bradford County, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Farm Field Day, Mike and Terra Brownback, Spiral Path Farm, Loysville, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., (814) 349-9856.

Pasture Walk, Jerome Griebel's, 7:30 p.m. (814) 782-0033.

Perry County Holstein Summer Picnic, Saville Brethner In Christ Church, Ickesburg.  
Pennsylvania Junior Holstein Judging School, Somerset, noon, also July 11.

**Wednesday, July 11**  
Pest Management Field Day, Landisville Research Farm, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Ohio Berry Night, Ohio State University Center, (614) 292-4900.

Lancaster County Holstein

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**To Learn About No-Till Farming**  
Soil erosion is still a significant problem on many farms in Lancaster County.

Two field days have been planned which will focus on using no-till practices when farming with horses. The first day event is planned July 12 from 9:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at the A. K. and John Stoltzfus farm at 214 Peach Bottom Road, Peach Bottom. The second event will be July 20, also from 9:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m., at the David Stoltzfus farm at 462 Whitehorse Road, Gap. For more details, call the Lancaster County Extension Office at (717)-394-6851.

**To Monitor Alfalfa For Potato Leafhopper Infestation**  
The potato leafhopper is the most destructive insect pest to alfalfa in Pennsylvania. It reduces yield, quality (especially lower protein content), and shortens the life of the alfalfa stand. The stress to alfalfa caused by the leafhopper can result in increased rot and stand failure. This is especially true in new seedings.

This pest does not overwinter in Pennsylvania but moves into the state on storm fronts from the south in late May or early June. Therefore we escape leafhopper damage on the

first cutting but it is new spring seedlings and the second and third cuttings that receive most of the damage.

Potato leafhoppers are pale yellowish green, slightly wedge-shaped, have wings and are only about 1/4 of an inch long. The nymphs are similar in appearance to the adults except that they are smaller, have no wings, and are yellow to cream colored with the possibility of a slight tinge of green.

Eggs are deposited in the stems and leaf veins. In warm weather, it takes only three weeks to develop from an egg to an adult. Therefore large populations can build up quickly. The adults are very active and fly above the plants when disturbed. The nymphs are also active and will quickly move, usually sideways, when disturbed. Although potato leafhoppers can be found in your field from late May until frost, most of the damage is done from mid-June until mid-August.

Both the adults and nymphs feed on the plants. They insert their mouth parts into the plant tissue to extract plant juices. This feeding process distorts and causes blockage of the tiny tubes that distribute the nutrients within the plant. This blockage causes the typical leafhopper injury: triangular-shaped yellowing of the leaves and stunting of the plants commonly referred to as "hopper burn." Stunted plants do not recover even after the leafhoppers have been controlled.

To protect your alfalfa crop from damage, monitor the situation in your fields. In a square-shaped field, monitor in a "U"-shaped pattern; while in a rectangular field, an "I"-shaped pattern is the best. In each field, select five sample sites along the "U" or "I" shape. Use an insect net with a 15-inch diameter hoop and a tightly knit bag such as muslin.

Within each of the five sample sites, make 20 sweeps with the net while walking in a zigzag pattern. Don't stop swinging the net until each of the 20 sweeps are completed. Sweep the net about 3-4 inches below the tops of the plants.

After completing the 20 sweeps in the first site, continue to swing the net back and forth a few times to force the insects into the small end of the bag. Grab the net quickly about 10 inches from the small end to trap the insects in a rather small area.

The difficult part is identifying and counting the potato leafhoppers. Count all the pale green adults (disregard any brown ones) and the nymphs. Slowly open the net and be alert for adults that can leave the net quickly without being noticed. After counting is complete, make note of the total. Then repeat this procedure at the next four sites. This will complete 100 sweeps.

Now calculate the number of leafhoppers per sweep. For example, if you collected a total of 60 leafhoppers, divide 60 by 100 for an average of 0.6 leafhoppers per sweep. When the number is very high (40 or more per 20 sweeps) at the first site, there is little need to spend anymore time sampling the other four sites in the field.

**To Determine The Economic Injury Threshold For Your Alfalfa Field**

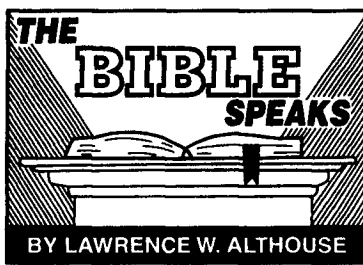
A number of factors need to be considered when determining if spraying to control the leafhopper population is justified. The first factor is the number of leafhoppers present in the field. The second factor is the development of the plants. A relatively low number of leafhoppers can inflict a serious amount of damage if they are present when the plants are small.

Greatest losses to the alfalfa crop from leafhopper feeding occur before the plants reach six inches in height. Plants 12 inches and taller can tolerate leafhopper feeding without high losses resulting.

The third factor to consider is the value of the crop. The higher the value of the crop, the lower the economic injury threshold will be. Thus, with an equal pest population, spray application will be more profitable on a crop of higher value. The final factor to consider is the cost of the control to be applied.

The variability in each of these factors shows why the economic injury threshold is not a simple number. A publication entitled "A Pest Management Program for Alfalfa in Pennsylvania" is available from your county extension office. Consult the charts in this publication for assistance in determining the economic threshold for your alfalfa crop.

**Quote of the Week:**  
"The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself."  
— Franklin D. Roosevelt



### GOD, WHAT DO YOU WANT?

**Background Scripture:**  
Amos 4 Through 5.  
**Devotional Reading:**  
Malachi 1:6-14.

How the people of Israel look forward to The Day of the Lord, the time when God would smite all their enemies and make Israel prominent among the nations. They saw it as a time of recognition and reward, and they could hardly wait. It would mean vindication for them and judgment for others. If that's the deal, who wouldn't want it?

But Amos told the people of Israel that was not the deal. The judgment they so desired for other nations would fall upon them as well. "Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! Why would you have the day of the Lord? It is darkness, and not light" (5:18).

It is bad, not good news. For, like their neighbors, they too will be judged by God and the results of it will be disastrous.

But how can that be? They are such dutiful Israelites. They bring their sacrifices to the temple every morning. Wow! Every three days they bring tithes. Wow again! They

also cough up freewill offerings. Wow to the third power! So, why shouldn't they eagerly anticipate the day of the Lord? God, what do you want from us?

#### Unanswered Messages

It's not that God hasn't warned them. God has been sending them messages which they haven't heeded: "cleanness of teeth in all your cities" (food has been in short supply), and rain has been withheld, spoiling the harvest. He also sent blight and mildew and devastated their gardens and fig and olive trees. He sent them pestilence, political upheaval, and military losses.

But they ignored all these signs: "Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel... prepare to meet your God, O Israel!" (4:12). And don't think that your rituals and financial support at the temple are going to get you off the hook. In fact, "The Lord God has sworn by his holiness that, behold, the days are coming upon you, when they shall take you away with hooks, even the last of you with fishhooks" (4:2).

God's judgment will not be a slap on the wrist: "The city that went forth a thousand shall have a hundred left, and that which went forth a hundred shall have ten left to the house of Israel" (5:3) This will happen, not because they haven't come frequently enough to the temple nor given enough in their offerings, but because of the way they treat others: "Therefore because you trample upon the poor and take from him exactions of wheat, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine" (5:11).

#### What They Lacked

The people of Israel — at least the upper class — have power and wealth. What they do not have is God's approval: "For I know how many are your transgressions, and how great are your sins — you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and turn aside the needy in the gate" (5:12).

Religious rituals will not do it. "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies" (But Lord, that's what we thought it was all about!) "Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and cereal offerings, I will not accept them."

"Take away from me the noise of your songs, to the melody of your harps I will not listen" (5:21-23).

So, if their power and wealth will not save them, what will? God, what do you want from us? The reply of Amos is unambiguous: "But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (5:24).

In other words, what God really wants is for them to stop ignoring the plight of the poor, to cease exploiting the weak, to refrain from cheating the powerless, and to end their corruption of justice.

So, what about feasts, solemn assemblies, tithes, and offerings? They are only the icing on the cake. Render justice and compassion and then your rituals and offerings will be pleasing in God's sight. But not before!

### Lancaster Farming

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