

# Lancaster Farming

## OPINION

### Signs Of Recovery?

Late last month the Equipment Manufacturers Institute (EMI) released its "State of the Ag Industry Mid-Year Outlook," a forecast for retail sales of farm equipment.

EMI paints a positive picture for 2002, which, according to the institute, looks "promising in most of the farm equipment categories."

According to the outlook, U.S. retail sales forecast for all two- and four-wheel-drive farm tractors in 2001 will show a slight increase in sales of 0.9 percent compared to actual sales for 2000. Sales predictions for 2002 show a 3.9 percent increase compared to the 2001 forecast.

Leading the way in tractor sales for 2001 are four-wheel-drive tractors (all sizes), which forecast an 11.6 percent increase over 2000. However, the forecast for 2002 is not as favorable, according to EMI, as manufacturers predict a 2 percent decrease in sales.

Leading the two-wheel-drive farm tractors in sales for 2001 are those ranging from 40-100 hp with a 1 percent increase over 2000, followed by an even stronger sales prediction for the next year of 5.5 percent.

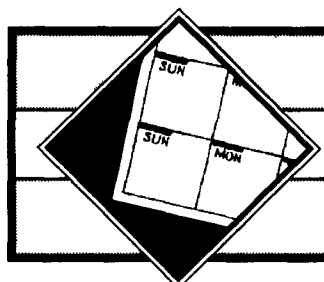
We find that economic times can be improving, apparently, for smaller tractor manufacturers, garden tractors, with a huge horticultural and landscaping industry demand. Small landscaping firms are sprouting up all over the place, and business seems brisk (despite a nagging drought here in southeast Pennsylvania).

And for the general farm economy, EMI's report is good news.

Additional good news comes from EMI regarding self-propelled combines, round balers, planters, mower-conditioners, windrowers/swathers, farm loaders, and air seeders/air drills. However, EMI expects demand for rectangular balers, disk harrows, forage harvesters, and manure spreaders to be down into next year.

Demand is expected to improve for chisel plows and field cultivators for 2002.

Data were collected from 47 farm field and farmstead type equipment EMI member companies. For more information, contact EMI at (312) 321-1470 or through the Internet at [www.emi.org](http://www.emi.org).



❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

#### Saturday, August 11

Washington County Ag Fair, thru Aug. 18.

Pa. Angus Summer Field Day, ErReR Hill Farms, Friedens, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Lebanon County Master Gardeners Select Annuals Class, 10 a.m.-noon, Lebanon County Ag Center.

Southcentral Pa. Holstein Show, Shippensburg Fairgrounds, 9:30 a.m.

Tioga County Holstein Show, Fairgrounds, Whitneyville, 9 a.m.

Ohio Farm Profitability Tour, Yoder Family Farm, Apple

Creek, 2 p.m.  
Kids' Days On The Farm, Pa. German Heritage Center, Kutztown University, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

#### Sunday, August 12


Empire State Meat Goat Association Annual Picnic, Wind-song Farm, Burdett, N.Y., (607) 546-2825.

Garret County, Md. Fair, McHenry, thru Aug. 18, (301) 746-8285.

Bullskin Township Community Fair.

Huntingdon County Fair.

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❖ FARM FORUM ❖

#### Editor:

Maryland poultry growers and poultry companies continue their fight against "co-permitting" by filing requests with the Maryland Department of the Environment for contested case hearings.

By meeting the Aug. 8 filing deadline, growers and companies are seeking a review of co-permitting by the Maryland Office of Administrative Hearings.

This is the first step in a legal challenge to the new poultry company wastewater discharge permits that make Maryland's three poultry companies responsible for some of the environmental practices of farm families that grow their chickens.

As proposed by the Maryland Department of the Environment, the three poultry companies, through their wastewater

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

#### To Care For Next Year's Strawberry Crop

Late August and Early September is when strawberries set their fruit buds for next year's crop. In the conventional production system, they also produce additional runners during this period as well. There are several steps you can take to maximize the potential of next year's crop.

First, you need to be irrigating to relieve the drought stress on the plants. If water is short through this dry weather, you may be tempted to skip the strawberries, since there is no fruit in the field at this time.

This would be a serious mistake and will reduce the potential of next year's crop. Irrigation will relieve the water stress, which will put the plants in a good condition to produce fruit buds.

The other step you should take now is the second application of nitrogen. You should have fertilized with around 40 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre in early July at renovation. If you did that, you should now add an additional 20 pounds of

nitrogen per acre to give the plants another boost. If you did not fertilize at renovation, then add 40 pounds of nitrogen per acre now.

If the current dry weather persists, continue to irrigate through September. When the temperatures drop in the fall, strawberries resume vigorous growth and it is important to remove the water stress to enable the plants to produce next year's buds and runners.

#### To Visit The Pasto Agricultural Museum At Ag Progress Days

"Six Thousand Years of Small Grains" will be the featured theme at the Pasto Agricultural Museum during Penn State's Ag Progress Days Aug. 14-16.

Visitors can see historic grain production items used for soil preparation, sowing, harvesting/handling, threshing, power, cleaning and grain handling.

The collection begins with a 6,000-year-old clay sickle and concludes with a horse-drawn binder and photographs of horse-drawn combines, according to Darwin Braund, museum curator. The latter items are representative of those that closed the human- and animal-power era in most of the U.S. by the 1940s.

"For centuries, the harvesting and threshing of small grains required more labor than growing them," said Braund. "Thus, much attention was paid to improving the harvest. It was the most important event on Earth every year."

In the earliest days, the heads of grain were handpicked from each stalk, and then threshed by rubbing them between the hands, explained Braund. A flint stone with a sharp edge was the earliest mechanized cutter. Clay sickles were made in areas with no stones.

Sickles made of bronze, an alloy of copper and tin, followed the clay models. They in turn were replaced when the Iron Age made sharper blades possible. New designs of the tools improved efficiency in their use.

"A large timeline on the museum wall will cover the 6,000 years and describe the concurrent developments in harvesting and threshing small grains," said Braund. "Visitors will see a self-raking reaper (1830s)

and grain binder (1930s) operating in the museum, as well as a horse-tread-powered threshing machine (1870s)."

#### To Support The Pasto Agricultural Museum's Silent Auction

The second silent auction to support Penn State's Pasto Agricultural Museum will be conducted during Ag Progress Days, Aug. 14-15.

The auction will help generate funds to preserve our rich heritage of agriculture and rural living. Proceeds will benefit the Penn State Ag Alumni Endowment for the Pasto Agricultural Museum. More than 100 items, from a baby llama to a new John Deere lawn tractor, have been donated, according to Darwin Braund, museum curator. "Buyers will find items to meet practically any interest, need, and checking account," he said.

Items include antique hand tools and furniture, newer and antique model tractors, a year's supply of Penn State Creamery ice cream, meats from the University Meats Lab, and gift certificates for tools, dinners, perennial plants, seed corn, and shoes.

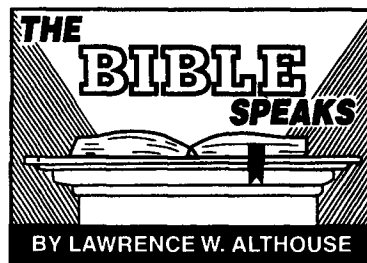
Farm production items include bull semen, one ton of Agway calf feed, tires for a farm wagon and skid-steer loader, a galvanized farm gate, fence wire, dry cow treatments, for mastitis, a barn ventilation fan, a 6-foot diameter stock-watering tank, alfalfa and corn seed, and a four-year subscription to *Lancaster Farming*.

Donations for fun and recreation include Penn State football tickets, Nittany Valley Symphony tickets, a full day of fly fishing on the world-famous Spruce Creek trout stream in Huntingdon County and a major league baseball and baseball card, both signed by Bellefonte native Eric Milton, starting pitcher for the Minnesota Twins.

So you can see everyone should be able to find something of interest at the silent auction. While at Ag Progress Days, stop by the museum, enjoy the exhibits, and bid on an item of interest.

#### Quote of the Week:

"Don't be afraid to go out on a limb. That's where the fruit is."  
— Arthur Lenehan



### GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS

Background Scripture:  
Isaiah 7; 2 Kings 16;  
2 Chronicles 28.  
Devotional Reading:  
Psalms 33:4-12.

This passage from Isaiah needs a cast of characters and some textual notes. Remember that on the death of King Solomon, the nation of Saul, David, and Solomon broke into two: Israel, the larger kingdom in the north, and Judah, the smaller kingdom in the south. In the times described in Isaiah 7, 2 Kings 16 and 2 Chronicles 28, Ahaz (not to be confused with Ahab) is King of Judah and Remaliah is king of Israel. Ahaz is the grandson of King Uzziah who reigned in Judah at the time when Isaiah received his prophetic call (Is. 6). The ruling house of Judah is called "the House of David" and "Ephraim" is a name that is sometimes used for Israel.

Now that we have that sorted, let's see what is happening.

Israel, under the leadership of Pekah, son of King Remaliah, and Syria, under the leadership of Syrian King Rezin, have attacked Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, and have been repulsed. We must assume that the leaders of Judah did not at first realize that the Israelites (Ephraim) were in league with the powerful Syrians, for when that has become common knowledge, even though Judah

has successfully repulsed their attack, both King Ahaz and his people are paralyzed with fear!

That's amazing, isn't it? After they were successful in defending themselves, then they became afraid. But it happens sometimes, like Peter obeying Christ's commands to walk on the waters of the Sea of Galilee. But when he looks down and realizes what he is doing, then he becomes afraid and begins to sink! I have also read historical accounts in which, while in battle, soldiers seemed to perform without fear, but, when it was all over, suddenly fell apart. In a somewhat less dramatic manner we know there are times in our lives when, after God has demonstrated his love for us, we are strangely susceptible to fear.

#### Do Not Fear

So God sends the Prophet Isaiah to King Ahaz to reassure him that God will not let Rezin and Pekah and the allied armies of Syria and Israel prevail of Judah: "Take heed, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint because of these two smoldering stumps of firebrands... It shall not stand, and it shall not come to pass" (7:7).

You can't get a much better guarantee from the Lord that what you fear will absolutely not happen. I know that, if I were facing some tragedy in my life and I got a message from God, saying "... it shall not come to pass," I would definitely believe it — no matter how fearful I might be.

King Ahaz, however, cannot bring himself to believe it, so Isaiah says to him, "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." In other words, don't hesitate to ask for something tremendous. "But Ahaz said, 'I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test'" (7:10,11).

The first time I read these words of Ahaz, I thought to myself, he said the right thing. We're not supposed to put God to the test, to insist that he jump through hoops for us. Isn't that what Jesus told "the tempter"?

"... it is written, 'you shall not tempt the Lord your God'" (Mt. 4:7). It sounds as if Ahaz is responding with orthodox theology.

Ahaz, however, although he replied to the challenge with sound theology, was probably just using it as an excuse to refrain from trusting the Lord. When we read more of Ahaz, as scholar R.B.Y. Scott puts it, we realize "his idolatry, fearfulness, unbelief, and disobedience to the divine word." His fine-sounding reason was simply a cover for his lack of faith and trust. This is why, then, Isaiah responds so vehemently, "Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also?" (7:13). Ahaz exhausts the patience of both God and men with his insipid faith.

#### Take My Word For It

That's when Isaiah delivers both the good news and the bad news of God. The Good News: since Ahaz will not designate a sign, God will give him a very simple one — a young woman bearing a son and calling him Immanuel, a name that means "God with us." This is the promise of the Lord, that he will be with Judah despite the disbelief of the king and some of his subjects.

Both Syria and Israel will suffer: "For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before who two kings you are in dread will be deserted. Terrible consequences will fall upon these two evil rulers."

Now, the bad news: because Ahaz was so unbelieving, grave consequences will be suffered by Judah also. "In that day every place where there used to be a thousand vines, worth a thousand shekels of silver, will become briars and thorns" (7:23). Faithlessness has its consequences, in the lives of nations and in our lives as well.

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