

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Crop Insurance: Consider It

We received notice Wednesday this week that U.S. Ag Secretary Ann Veneman announced that farmers in nine counties in New York are eligible for USDA emergency farm loans because of losses from weather-related disasters.

Last issue, we reported on page A44 that Pennsylvania Gov. Mark Schweiker asked the USDA to aid farmers in 49 Pennsylvania counties whose crops have been impacted by drought this summer.

Make the best of a poor situation and include some type of crop or whole farm insurance in your marketing plans. They should be part of operating procedures on your farm business.

On page 1 this week we emphasize the need for producers to sign up for crop insurance, in light of droughts happening with every-other-year regularity.

In a letter sent Sept. 25 this year to Veneman from the Independent Insurance Agents of Pennsylvania, based in Harrisburg, Vince Phillips, government affairs, requested from the 113-year-old trade association that USDA expand the whole farm Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) program to all of Pennsylvania, not just the six counties eligible now. Phillips also requested the reauthorization of the additional 50 percent USDA cost-share program in effect this year. Phillips also asked, on behalf of the agent association, to permit eligible crops to be insured as part of the AGR package rather than insured individually with only remaining crops eligible for AGR.

These are great ideas. Producers need all the protection they can get. Let's make this affordable, too.

◆ FARM CALENDAR ◆

- Saturday, November 3**
 Symposium On Textiles, Red Men's Hall, Green Lane, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., (610) 367-8286.
 Sheepposium, Vermont Sheep Breeders Association, Randolph, Vt., (802) 223-9971.
 Bucks County Conservation District, Chasing The Wild Goose, Delaware Valley College, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Chester County Farm-City Tour, Chester County Ag Development, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Sunday, November 4**
 2001 Standardbred Horse Sale, thru Nov. 10, (717) 637-8931.
- Monday, November 5**
 Lancaster Chamber of Commerce 25th Annual Ag Industry Banquet, Willow Valley and Palm Court, reception 5 p.m., dinner 6:30 p.m.
 MEDS meeting, Altoona.
 Pasteurizing Operators Workshop, Atherton Hotel, State College, thru Nov. 7, (814) 863-2959.
 Beef 100, Update On Beef Safety and Products For County Agents and Ag Educators, Farm and Home Center, Lancaster, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Tuesday, November 6**
 Dairy Cattle Rotation Workshop, Holiday Inn, Grantville, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m., thru Nov. 7.
 Pasture Walk, Clarion County extension, Larry and Angel Stone's, Rimersburg, 1:30 p.m.
 Penn State Golf Turf Conference, Nittany Lion Inn, State College, thru Nov. 8, (717) 238-4552.
- Wednesday, November 7**
 Va. Cooperative Extension Seminar, Animal Waste To Energy, New Market Community Center, Shenandoah and Rockingham County, 9:15 a.m.-2:50 p.m., (540) 564-3080.
 Cambria County Cooperative

- Extension Annual Dinner, United Church of Christ Educational Building, Ebensburg, 6:30 p.m.
 Tri-State Dairy Management Conference, Fort Wayne, Ind., thru Nov. 8.
 Pesticide Applicator School, Ohio State University Learning Center, Pikesville, Ohio, 1 p.m.-4:30 p.m.
 Potato Variety Show and Tell, Cornell University, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m., (607) 254-5384.
- Thursday, November 8**
 Eighth Annual National Tree Farmer Convention, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, thru Nov. 11, (814) 797-5198.
 Exploring Opportunities In Agriculture Classes, Carroll County, Md. extension, also Nov. 14, 15, and 20, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.
 National Conversation On Youth Development, Dauphin County Ag and Natural Resources Center, 5:30 p.m.-9 p.m. (includes dinner), (717) 921-8803.
 Somerset County extension annual meeting and banquet, Masonic Temple, Somerset, (814) 445-8916.
 Northampton County Holstein DHIA Association Annual Meeting, Christ Evangelical Church, Stone Church, 7:30 p.m., (610) 498-2280.
 Mosquito-Born Diseases, Lehigh County extension, Lower Macungie Township Community Center, Macungie.
 Pesticide Applicator School, Ohio State University extension, Ohio Ag R&D Center, Wooster, Ohio, 1 p.m.-4:30 p.m.
 Somerset County extension annual meeting, Masonic Temple, Somerset, (814) 445-8911.
 Greenhouse Conference and Poinsettia/Pansy trials, Delaware
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Now Is The Time
 By Leon Ressler
 Lancaster County Extension Director

To Incorporate Crop Rotations Into Your Future Plans
 Historically, crop rotation has been an important part of cropping systems. For a variety of reasons, crop rotations have been used less in our agricultural systems in recent years. Scientific evidence, however, demonstrates that crop rotations increase yields and provide numerous other benefits. Mark Goodson, agronomy agent in York County, provides the following information about rotations.
 Corn following soybeans will often yield 5 to 20 percent more than continuous corn on the same farm. Corn following a hay crop will yield as much as or more than corn following soybeans. Yield responses to crop rotation of 15 percent for soybeans and 10 percent for wheat are common.
 Average yields of corn compared in various rotations at Rockspring from 1990-1995 showed the following results: Continuous corn averaged 122 bushels per acre, a corn/soybean rotation averaged 141 bushels per

acre, and a four years of corn then four years of alfalfa rotation averaged 137.5 bushels per acre.

Additionally, crop rotations also can decrease the cost of crop production. For example, corn following soybeans can be produced with about 40 pounds per acre less nitrogen fertilizer and without a soil insecticide. Therefore, corn planted after soybeans will cost producers about \$25 per acre less than continuous corn. These yield increases and reduced production costs can have a great effect on overall profit.

Diseases such as gray leaf spot in corn, take-all in wheat, and sclerotinia in soybeans can be partially controlled with crop rotation. Where these problems occur, the disease-reduction benefits of crop rotations should be considered in the profitability analysis.

Rotations also can help control insects and weeds. Western corn rootworm larvae are a problem when corn was the previous crop. Corn rootworm insecticide is only recommended in fields where corn is planted following corn. Rotations with a small grain can provide a late summer or fall herbicide application opportunity to control most perennial weeds.

A well-planned rotation can contribute to the more efficient use of plant nutrients. In a three-year corn/alfalfa rotation, for example, manure can be applied during the corn rotation, resulting in efficient use of N and often a buildup of soil P and K levels. During the alfalfa phase of the rotation, when manure is not applied, the forage crop will utilize the soil P and K levels that were built up during the corn phase of the rotation. This combination of nutrient management and crop rotation can reduce or eliminate the need for purchased fertilizer.

Sound crop rotations are often the foundation of a profitable cropping system. There are some initial costs for implementing crop rotations, such as extra equipment, but in the final analysis these costs may be more than overcome by the reduced inputs, timeliness, and higher yields.

For more information about the benefits of crop rotation, ask for the extension publication, "Crop Rotations and Conservation Tillage Series Number One," written by Dr. Greg Roth, Penn State associate professor of agronomy. Additional information is also available at the following Website: <http://www.agronomy.psu.edu/Extension/CT/CT.htm>.

To Attend The Future Of Food And Farms Summit

The third annual Future of Our Food and Farms Summit is scheduled Nov. 29-30 at the Renaissance Hotel-Philadelphia Airport. The theme of this year's conference is "Spreading the Bounty, Safeguarding the Future."

This year's summit will include four special events. First, four secretaries of agriculture from Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and New Jersey will keynote the opening session — and will be facilitated by Rick Foster, vice president of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

Second, a pre-summit Hunger Congress, put together by the Food Resources Alliance (FRA) with invited state and federal legislators, will highlight evolving public policies impacting hunger in our region. JoAnn Connelly, president of the Greater Philadelphia Food Bank, will moderate this session. Third, Thursday's dinner will feature locally grown foods put together by some of the region's top chefs. Finally, with this year's summit will be the initiation of an annual award to be given to the person, organization, or business that has done the most to benefit the Mid-Atlantic food and farming system.

For more information, visit the Summit Website at www.foodfarm.org or contact Meredith Stone at the Farmers Market Trust, (215) 568-0830, ext. 10.

Quote Of The Week:

"He who permits himself to tell a lie once finds it much easier to do it a second time."
 — Thomas Jefferson

BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

COMPENSATING THE ALTRUISTIC

Background Scripture:
 Matthew 5:1-16.
Devotional Reading:
 Psalms 24.

The Mount of the Beatitudes on the Sea of Galilee between Tiberias and Capernaum is probably my favorite spiritual spot in all the world. It is both physically beautiful and spiritually uplifting. It is traditionally the site where Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount.

I quite realize that Jesus may never have set foot there — but that doesn't diminish it one little bit. I also realize that the so-called Sermon on the Mount was probably not a sermon at all, but a series of teachings which Jesus may have delivered all at one time or on separate occasions.

Matthew tells us that, sitting down on the mountain, Jesus began not to preach, but "opened his mouth and taught them, saying . . ." (5:2). Even Jesus' seated posture is the proper one for a teacher of Israel in Jesus' time. The term, Sermon on the Mount, is not mentioned in any of the four gospels, but is a name that came to be applied to this passage at a much later time.

While I realize that some sermons can teach us and some teachings may inspire us, the purpose and methods of preaching and teaching are generally different and generally call for different responses from us.

Many years ago, I came to what was initially a disturbing discovery about Matthew 5. One of the strong themes that runs through the Sermon on the Mount as well as other teachings of Jesus is the principle that altruism — giving without the expectation of reward — always brings us some compensation. No giving in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ goes without reward. Virtually nothing that Jesus asks us to be or do does not give us something in return.

Meekness is rewarded with the inheritance of the earth (5), giving mercy results in receiving mercy (7), "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven . . ." (12). And so on.

Getting In Giving

So what is wrong with that? Nothing, except that I had thought that the way of Jesus Christ meant total self-sacrifice. But I have come to realize that I was wrong on both counts.

Self-sacrifice can never be total self-giving, even if our reward is simply the knowledge that we have done the right thing. Jesus himself was rewarded by God for his sacrifice on the cross. So there is always some "getting" in "giving," for God has designed the cosmos that way. Jesus' teachings put "giving" and "getting" on a much higher plane.

Followers of Jesus are promised blessedness — but what is it? The Greek word which Matthew uses here when used in pagan literature denotes the highest stage of happiness and well-being. The comparable Hebrew word means "how happy."

How happy are those who are poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Living by the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount require a great deal of self-denial, but each gives us in return more than that is asked of us. Walking the way of Jesus brings us a blessedness and high happiness that the world can neither match nor take away from us.

Already Blessed

So, we give of ourselves because the grace of God has already been given us. We try to live as Jesus taught, not to earn God's blessings, but out of gratitude for having already received the promise of blessing.

Whatever we do in response to the good news of Jesus Christ is done not to amass merit for ourselves, but to bear witness to the goodness of God. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (16). We witness to the power of the gospel not so that we may be blessed, but because we are already blessed.

You have heard of the practice of matching gifts: you give \$100 to a cause and someone else will match your gift with the same amount. But God not only matches our giving, he infinitely exceeds it. What this means for us is that it is impossible for the follower of Jesus Christ to give away too much. For whatever we give, we have received and will receive far more of God's blessings than we could ever give away.

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