

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Where's The Assistance?

Remember the old Wendy's commercial with the old lady asking, "where's the beef?"

Poultry producers aren't asking where the white meat is these days, but they need some real help.

Much large-scale livestock building has gone on indefinite hold in some communities because green groups, environmentalists, and others who think we can feed the overpopulated world out of thin air are stopping the construction of facilities.

The page 1 story we have features prominently in the minds of public officials: anti-agriculture ordinance legislation. A lot of it comes from Tom Linzey, staff attorney for the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF), outfitted in Chambersburg.

It seems that Linzey spends a lot of time working to ensure that what he calls "corporate farms" are kept out of backyards.

Linzey calls ag production in the hands of a few corporations "catastrophic to consumers, family farmers, and our environment."

Like many who are ignorant of farming, Linzey believes in the Disneylike, gradeschool-embellished, Rockwell-inspired bucolic farm scene of a happy farmer who is taking care of just a few cows on a few acres and making a great living from it. And those days — if they ever were — are long, long gone.

The reality of trying to make a living in farming in the double-oughts: big is not only better, it may be the only way for a farm to survive.

In a videotape made by CELDF, Linzey insists that he is "flooded" by requests from his help from 60 townships. There are about 2,800 townships in the state. How is that "flooded?"

The big issue: Linzey noted in a press release that in November 2001, agribusiness interests brought suit against a Fulton County municipality in attempt to overturn an ordinance. A Washington, D.C. law firm, Arnold & Porter, offered to represent the municipal government pro bono, noted Linzey. Thousands of dollars were spent in the process — and ag producers are stuck with the bill.

Clearly, big poultry production companies have to realize what is happening and must find a way to help defray these costs. In the end, it's their chicken, eggs, beef, and other products that will rely on these large-scale family-owned enterprises to survive — they have a stake in this too and should come to bat.

So where are they?

Will we hear from them?

Stay tuned.

❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

Saturday, September 14

Berks County Land Aid Concert and Raffle, Pat Garrett Amphitheater, Strausstown. Gates open 3 p.m.

Pa. German Folklife Festival, Alexander Schaeffer Farm, Schaefferstown, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., thru Sept. 15.

Woodland Management Workshop, Warrior's Mark, Huntingdon, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., (814) 355-4897.

Lumber from Your Woodlot, Ada, Ohio, (614) 688-3421.

Penn State Poultry Science Alumni and Friends first annual meeting, Poultry Science Affiliate Program at Penn State Ag Arena, (814) 865-3411.

How To Reach Us

To address a letter to the editor:

- By fax: (717) 733-6058
- By regular mail: Editor, Lancaster Farming P.O. Box 609, 1 E. Main St. Ephrata, PA 17522
- By e-mail: farming@lancnews.infi.net

Please note. Include your full name, return address, and phone number on the letter. Lancaster Farming reserves the right to edit the letter to fit and is not responsible for returning unsolicited mail.

Open Youth Horse Schooling Show, Northampton County 4-H Center, Nazareth, 10 a.m., (610) 837-7294.

Pa. Horticultural Society "Rock 'N' Roll" Harvest, Horticulture Center, Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, thru Sept. 15, (215) 988-8833.

Sunday, September 15

Beaver Community Fair, thru Sept. 21.

Gratz Fair, thru Sept. 21.

Monday, September 16

Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation 75th Annual Golf Tournament, Oakmont Green Golf Club, Hampstead, Md., noon, (410) 939-9030.

From Farm to Table, Council on Foundations Conference Center, Washington, D.C., 1 p.m.-4 p.m., (202) 362-8889.

Tuesday, September 17

Harmony Grange Fair, thru Sept. 21.

Farm Science Review Farm Show, London, thru Sept. 19, (614) 292-4278.

Phosphorus Index Training, Myers Farm, Centre County, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m., also Sept. 19.

Stray Voltage In-Service, Bradford Extension, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

3rd National Small Farms Conference, Albuquerque, N.M., (505) 852-2668.

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Now Is The Time
By Leon Ressler
Lancaster County Extension Director

To Prevent West Nile Virus On Your Farm

With the increasing presence of the West Nile Virus this summer and fall, farmers should take steps to reduce the risk of contracting the virus on their property.

Based on surveillance findings, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection assumes the virus is present throughout the state. In other words, the potential for disease is present. The case of a 66-year-old man in Lancaster County brought an increased awareness of this possibility. Although the virus is commonly transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito, it only takes one. However, not all mosquito species carry the virus and not all mosquitoes in a given swarm carry the virus.

Jay Smoker, Lancaster County West Nile Virus coordinator with Penn State Extension, points out that farmers and residents should be proactive in removing places where mosquitoes breed. Theoretically mosquitoes can breed in any standing water, but they generally do so where there is decaying organic matter that serves as food for the larvae.

An often overlooked habitat on the farm is the water trough. Animals

drop bits of forage in the trough and this provides an ideal breeding spot. Larger troughs that have no outlet are more prone to cause problems.

The simplest solution is cleanliness. Clean out the trough every few days. Brush down the sides and bottom of the trough to get out all debris. For those larger troughs where water must be conserved, another way to control larvae is with a biological pesticide, an IPM approach. This product comes from a naturally occurring bacteria found in the soil. The product releases a protein that floats on the water surface and disrupts the larva's feeding process, causing it to starve and die. It is safe for animals and humans. These are marketed under the trade names Mosquito Bits and Mosquito Dunks in many hardware stores and farm supply houses. The dunks are doughnut-shaped and can be thrown into any standing water. One dunk will treat 100 square feet.

For larger applications, the granules are applied with a lawn seeder or motorized backpack blower to tire piles, retention ponds, and marshy areas. The trade names for these are Vectolex CG and VectoBac CG. The effectiveness for all these products is three to four weeks depending on inflow and outflow. Always consult the label for each product.

Old buckets and containers lying around the farm are places where mosquitoes breed.

Often overlooked habitats are rain gutters that are clogged or do not drain properly. Old tires are still the biggest breeding ground for mosquitoes. Drilling holes in tires and splitting the tires are effective ways to keep water from collecting in the tires. A third way to control mosquitoes in tire piles is the use of the larvicide material previously described. Regulations permit the use of old tires to cover bunker silos. But the growing need to remove mosquito-breeding places in the community raises the importance of being good neighbors by controlling mosquito-breeding in your tire piles.

To Be Aware Of West Nile Encephalitis In Horses

Horses are the farm animal species most susceptible to this virus. Jay Smoker points out the virus can affect the central nervous system and cause encephalitis.

Clinical signs may include one or more of the following: loss of appetite and depression, fever, weakness of hind limbs, paralysis of hind limbs, impaired vision, ataxia, head pressing, head tilt, aimless wandering, convulsions, inability to swallow, circling, hyperexcitability, or coma.

Since there are other similar diseases that may exhibit similar signs of encephalitis, it is important to have a definitive diagnosis. A positive diagnosis of West Nile encephalitis can be made by examining the blood from an infected horse.

Some horses exposed to the virus may not show any signs, or only vague signs of the disease. To date there is no treatment for horses infected with West Nile; however, the symptoms in weakened animals may be managed and they should be protected from injuring themselves.

A conditionally licensed vaccine for horses is available. The efficacy of the vaccine is still under review. It is important that a series of two doses be given 3 to 4 weeks apart. Owners should keep records because current testing methods cannot distinguish between vaccinated and infected horses, especially in regards to international shipping of horses.

Chickens have not shown any ill effects from the West Nile virus. In fact they are used as sentinel birds to detect the presence of the virus. They develop antibodies to the virus which is confirmed through blood tests. However, the meat poses no danger to the consumer. Cattle also do not show any symptoms of West Nile encephalitis.

An information sheet for West Nile Encephalitis in Horses is available from your local extension office or online at www.pested.psu.edu/spWestNile.html.

Quote Of The Week:

"Trust in organizations depends on the reasonable assumption by followers that leaders can be depended on to do the right thing."

— Max De Pree

THE BIBLE SPEAKS
BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

A PLACE FOR THE COMPLACENT

Background Scripture: Zephaniah.
Devotional Reading: Isaiah 55:6-11.

We can learn a lot about Zephaniah in just his first sentence: "The word of the Lord which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah" (1:1).

Remember, Hezekiah was the king of Judah who instituted sweeping reforms. He was followed by his son Manasseh and grandson Amon, both of whom uprooted virtually all of those reforms. Zephaniah, thus, is the great great grandson of Hezekiah, a prince of the royal household and the second cousin of Josiah, the present ruler, whose reforms are even more extensive than Hezekiah's. Furthermore, we may assume that his ministry preceded and helped Josiah's reforms.

Remember also what was happening on the stage of the Middle East. Assyria still dominated this world and was in control of Palestine. Under Manasseh, Judah had become

Assyrianized, adopting Assyrian lifestyles and religious practices. Essentially, they took a little bit here and a little there, mixing these diverse religious practices into one great cultic stew: worshiping the Baals in the "high places," practicing the Assyrian worship of the stars ("hosts of the heavens"), participating in the cult of the Ammonite deity, Milcom, and copying Philistine worshippers in "leaping over the threshold" (1:9).

Homogenizing Faith

This was not toleration of other religions, but an indulgence in them. The danger to faith is not in tolerating others, but in adopting bits and pieces of them for ourselves.

As Dwight Stevenson warns, "When there are many faiths, the people tend to have little faith." This does not mean that we should not sometimes borrow from another faith — Christianity has done that from the beginning — but that we do not fail to commit ourselves solely to Christ because we fear that perhaps that faith is not enough.

During World War II, just prior to battle, a certain U.S. soldier was observed taking communion in a Protestant service, attending Roman Catholic Mass and counseling with a Jewish rabbi. "I didn't want to take any chances," was his defense. But that's what faith is: taking chances, betting your life that the faith to which you have committed your life is for you the right one.

Nor should we evaluate the progress of other peoples solely on the basis of how much they become like us. A McDonald's on every corner is not the same as the kingdom of God.

Numbed By Complacency

Zephaniah's prophecies were directed at the peoples in his own day,

yet they have surprising relevance for us today. The wrathful judgment of God is imminent, says Zephaniah, not only upon the Jews, but all peoples, because of the evil rampant everywhere: violence, fraud, the homogenization of various religions into a lowest-common-denominator social cult, corruption in high places and exploitation of those in low places, a selfish indifference to the plight of others, and a soul-numbing complacency.

At this time, the dreaded Scythians were spreading through the Middle East like a swarm of locusts. Possibly his prophecies were inspired by fear of them. He sees a cataclysm from which only a remnant of faithful people would emerge, and not just a remnant of Hebrews, but faithful people from other lands: "... that all of them may call upon the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord." (3:9b). From it would emerge a golden age in which the centrifugal force of the Tower of Babel would be reversed.

It was not many years later that disaster came upon Judah and its neighbors, but it was not the Scythians, but the Babylonians. And there was a restoration and new beginning for the people of Judah, but it was not a golden age, which was postponed until the coming of Christ and the kingdom of God. There is always the judgment of God and, after the judgment, always the grace of God to those who will receive it.

And for the complacent, there is also a place for them!

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