



Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Editor's note for all Guest Editorials: Please keep in mind that the opinions of the writers don't necessarily agree with the editor's. For the benefit of our diverse readership, we strive to provide a balance of opinion in Lancaster Farming.

Guest Editorial By
 Senator Noah W. Wenger
 36th Senatorial District
 Lancaster and Chester Counties
 Senate Majority Caucus Chairman
 Vice Chairman of the
 Senate Agriculture And
 Rural Affairs Committee

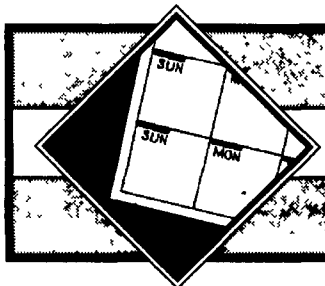
Recently, there has been much discussion regarding Senate Bill 1413 in this publication as well as other media outlets around the commonwealth. Many of the positions expressed attempt to "formidably instruct" readers as to why this bill is "so dangerous to the democratic process." Additionally, these opponents are claiming that this legislation is dangerous because it seeks to destroy "family farms" and "strip local control."

The leaders and catalysts of those opposing SB 1413 claim they are here to defend agriculture and will use any tactics to see the defeat of this legislation.

Well, I would love to spend the next several paragraphs refuting these claims and reemphasizing the fact that this legislation would not even be necessary if there were not several local governments here in the commonwealth that have decided to ignore the democratic process and pass ordinances that directly violate state law. I would love to task the reader to sit down and write a definition of a family farm. What is it?

If everyone who reads this would send in their definition, I venture to say I would get as many diverse definitions as Pennsylvania is diverse in our agriculture economy. Family farms come in all shapes, sizes, colors, and successfulness. I think a family farm is a family that

(Turn to Page A41)



FARM CALENDAR

Saturday, November 16
 Nittany Lion Holstein Fall Classic Sale, Ag Arena, State College, 11 a.m.
 Montgomery County 4-H Equine Awards Banquet, 4-H Center, Creamery.
 Southwest Pa. Woodland Growers' Association Field Trip, (724) 627-6624.

Benefit for Ben and Annie Ebersole Family at Airville Community Fire Hall, York County, and at Holtwood Supply, Rt. 372, Holtwood, Lancaster County, (717) 456-7372.
 Mercer County Holstein annual meeting, Hempfield Fire Hall, Greenville, 7:15 p.m.

(Turn to Page A39)



FARM FORUM

Editor:
 First let me say that I am a member of the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA). This is the organization that Brian Snyder is the executive director of.
 I am proud of my association with this organization.

Second, let me also say I am a farmer whose only source of family income is from the farm. We live in an area that is changing dramatically and expansion of the farm to include my children is seemingly hopeless.

Somedays I think we should have a billboard erected that says, "Beware — This is a real farm." So I can understand and respect the positions offered by Walt Peechatka.

Thirtieth and most important — I am a member of my community. I have a vested interest in all the development that occurs here and the effect that it will have on the quality of life in my community. Two important factors in the quality of life include clean air and water. I am not willing to sacrifice the loss or risk that potential loss to the expansion of

(Turn to Page A41)

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@lannews.inf.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.



Now Is The Time

By Leon Ressler

Lancaster County Extension Director

To Continue To Conserve Water

Gov. Mark Schweiker reduced the drought emergency declaration for Lancaster County to a drought warning recently. However, we still have a serious rainfall deficit and we are a long way from replenishing our groundwater supplies.

In October we had 6.36 inches of rain, 3.36 inches above normal. For 2002 this still leaves rainfall 8.40 inches below normal. More serious is the cumulative rainfall deficit over the last five seasons. Going back to January 1998, Lancaster County has suffered a rainfall deficit of 42.16 inches. Forty-three of the last 60 months have been below normal in rainfall.

Surface water flows have improved with the recent rains. On Nov. 4, the Susquehanna River at Safe Harbor had a flow rate of 23,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) compared to a seasonal normal of 28,900 cfs. The Conestoga River at Lancaster was above the seasonal normal of 209 cfs with a flow rate of 287 cfs.

Surface water flow rates tend to respond more quickly to rains than groundwater levels but they drop more quickly as well after the storm flow passes. So while we are no long-

er under a drought emergency, we need to continue to work hard to reduce water consumption in every aspect of our operation.

To Clean Up Waste Plastic On Our Farms

Before the weather turns colder we have an opportunity to pull up any remaining plastic mulch in our fields and recycle it.

This is a good time to clean up other waste plastic on the farm, including bale wrap, silage bags, trench silo covers, plastic mulch in horticultural production, and shrink-wrap for palletized supplies.

Burning this waste plastic in open fires is an unacceptable disposal method since it creates a tremendous amount of pollution both as particulate matter in the smoke and as petroleum by-products left by this low temperature burning.

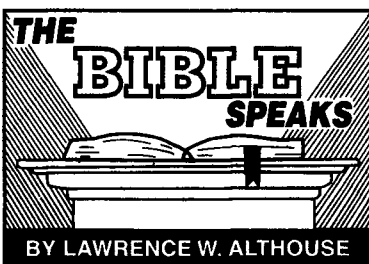
This material is again being collected and baled in Lancaster County for use in the production of plastic lumber. The bales of recycled plastic material will be hauled to the Trex company factory in Virginia for this purpose. There it will be mixed with waste wood chips and sawdust to produce a product for use in plastic decking.

The waste material is being collected at the Dan Zook farm at 183 South Farmersville Road in Leola. Any polyethylene product will be accepted, which includes plastic mulch, agricultural plastic bags, bale wrap, silage covers, greenhouse covers, and shrink-wrap. Materials that are not acceptable include plastic twine, row covers, molded plastic such as greenhouse trays and pots, milk jugs, and pesticide or other containers.

A \$30-per-ton tipping fee will be collected when the material is delivered to the farm. This is less than half of what it would cost to take the material to the municipal incinerator in Lancaster County.

If you have a collection of waste plastic, take the time to remove it while the opportunity is still available. Call Dan Zook at (717) 656-4422 to make arrangements before delivering your material. This will insure you can be unloaded in a quick and efficient manner, saving time for all.

To Enroll In The New Crop Insurance Plan Called AGR-Lite
 Most producers across Pennsylvania



THE BIBLE SPEAKS

BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

WHOSE FAULT?

Background Scripture:

Ezekiel 18.

Devotional Reading:

Romans 6:17-23.

The book of Ezekiel is an ancient text, but the problem in chapter 18 is very contemporary. In Exodus 20:5, God says to Moses: "... for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."

In Ezekiel 18:20, God says through the prophet: "The soul that sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself."

For generations, the Hebrews, largely on the basis of Exodus 20:5, believed that the sons of several generations would have to suffer for the sins of their father. But Ezekiel was saying that the reverse was true:

sons shall not suffer for the sins of their parents, nor parents for the sins of their children. Which represents the mind of God?

Not Which, But Both

I believe that we might say that both represent God's word to us. We know with a certainty that one generation may have to suffer because of the deeds of a previous one. A child born out of wedlock may suffer because of the act of his mother and father.

If you are brought up in the home of an alcoholic, it cannot help but shape your life. These, and many more, are the natural consequences of the way we live and the things we do. The child of the alcoholic suffers, not because God has imposed a punishment, but because the alcoholic parent has poisoned his or her family life.

The problem with thus attributing our present circumstances is that it breeds irresponsibility. Sometimes you hear, "I am what I am because someone else made me this way." That is one of our problems today: no one ever seems responsible for anything. When did you last hear anyone say, "I was absolutely wrong and I take full responsibility"?

At the same time, we also know that it is unthinkable to us to believe that God will punish the unborn for the sins of a parent. There may be natural consequences to what the parent does, but the relationship between God and the offspring will not be damaged. God will not hold the offspring accountable for the sins of a previous generation.. That would be unfair.

Lancaster Farming

An Award-Winning Farm Newspaper

- Keystone Awards 1993, 1995
- PennAg Industries 1992
- PACD Media Award 1996
- Berks Ag-Business Council 2000
- Recognized for photo excellence throughout the years by the Northeast Farm Communicators

nia will have the opportunity to buy total farm revenue protection for 2003. The new pilot insurance plan, named Adjusted Gross Revenue-Lite (AGR-Lite for short), has the potential of providing meaningful crop insurance protection for virtually all kinds of crop and animal production for the vast majority of Pennsylvania's 59,000 producers.

The plan was developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) and approved as a new insurance plan by the USDA's Federal Crop Insurance Corporation Oct. 22. This is a new opportunity for Pennsylvania producers, which was the result of cooperation between PDA and USDA according to PDA Secretary Sam Hayes Jr.

Under this plan, all crops and animal production including by-products (that is, milk production) can be protected with one policy and only one set of historical records (as opposed to writing a policy and coming up with actual production history records for each crop). This increased simplicity will make it easier for producers to understand their options and improve enrollment decisions. The policy is limited to a maximum protection of \$100,000 annually; therefore, the target market will be to farms with a five-year average of \$200,000 or less of gross sales.

AGR-Lite premiums will be reduced significantly by cost-sharing funds from USDA and the Pennsylvania state crop insurance assistance grants that pay 100 percent of the fee and about 20 percent of the producer's net premium.

Whole farm coverage will make the producers more credit worthy because many lenders will recognize the increased loan security of an assignment of loss proceeds of this plan.

Enrollment deadline is Jan. 31, 2003. Purchase will be made through approved insurance agents. However, producers are reminded that program details to make individual quotes are not expected to be available before early December, because this is a new program. More producer information will be made available as details are finalized.

Quote Of The Week:

"You are only as good as the people you hire."

— Ray Kroc (Founder of McDonalds)

Is God Fair?

Ezekiel is helping us to see this problem from the perspective of paradox: two apparently conflicting perspectives on the truth, both of which must be acknowledged. Remember that there are often natural consequences of what we do and say and very often God does not spare us those consequences — although we can always count on him to see them through. At the same time, we are responsible for ourselves alone in our relationship with the Lord.

In other words, we may have to pay a price for the sins of our parents or others, but maintain a saving relationship with the Lord. Ezekiel lays it out clearly:

1. The righteous person shall live by God's grace (18:5-9).
2. The wicked offspring of the righteous parents shall die (18:10-13).
3. The righteous son of the wicked son shall live (18:14-20).
4. The wicked man who becomes righteous shall live (18:21-24).

This is probably the best news of all, for it means it is never too late for us to take responsibility for ourselves, repent, turn, and live righteously. If we turn to God, we are not only free of our family past, but of our own.

If there is something wrong with our lives, the acts of our forebears may have set us on a particular road, but we cannot blame them because nothing keeps us on the wrong road but ourselves. Ultimately, it is our fault, but also our opportunity to let God transform our lives.

Lancaster Farming

Established 1955
 Published Every Saturday
 Ephrata Review Building
 1 E. Main St.
 Ephrata, PA 17522
 —by—
Lancaster Farming, Inc.
 A Steinman Enterprise
 William J. Burgess General Manager
 Andy Andrews, Editor

Copyright 2002 by Lancaster Farming