

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Support SB 1413

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
Guy F. Donaldson, President
 Pennsylvania Farm Bureau

Somehow we have reached the point where a few townships have decided it suitable to adopt a local ordinance that defies statewide public policy and threatens the future of farming in the commonwealth. When one strips away the misleading (or uniformed) statements about agriculture by those advocating unrestricted local control of farming, we get to basic questions that Pennsylvania's farm families are asking our neighbors (as well as our state lawmakers). Questions such as:

- We have responsibly worked with lawmakers to adopt some of the most stringent and progressive laws and environmental safeguards for agriculture in the nation (such as the Nutrient Management Act). When did it become OK for a few township officials to declare these state laws null and void, and impose their own version of regulations and limitations on agriculture?
- Farm families have nowhere to go for relief. The ordinances can be overturned in court (and have been), but farmers don't have the tens of thousands of dollars for the legal battles. When did it become OK to expect farm families to bear the cost of ensuring compliance with state law by localities?
- Many sons and daughters of farmers want to continue in agriculture, but they need the potential for a decent living, which often requires expansion of the farm. What's the chance they will choose a future in agriculture if a local ordinance means they can't grow their enterprise?
- Pennsylvanians have spoken loudly and clearly about the need to preserve farmland and the rural character of the state. How is that achieved without preserving family farms?
- Agriculture, the state's largest single industry, not only provides fresh products of high quality, but also generates substantial employment for other business and industry. Do Pennsylvanians agree with the few local officials who are promoting a patchwork of policies and predicaments across the commonwealth for farming? Shouldn't these laws be dealt with uniformly at the state level?

Legislation (Senate Bill 1413) that addresses this dilemma for farm families earlier passed the state Senate. Its provisions are simple. Municipalities are reminded that they can't pass ordinances that are contrary to existing laws and overall best interests of the commonwealth, or otherwise discriminate against agriculture. Courts may require townships to pay the legal costs of a farmer's challenge to an ordinance if the court finds that the township officials knew their action was illegal. Likewise, courts may require farmers to pay legal fees if a lawsuit is found to be frivolous.

The legislation is languishing in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives as the General Assembly nears adjournment. Pennsylvanians can stand up with our farm families by calling your state Representative today to urge passage of Senate Bill 1413

❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

Saturday, November 23
 Jusuquehanna County Farm City
 Feast and annual meeting,
 Mountain View High School,

7:30 p.m.
 Sunday, November 24
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❖ FARM FORUM ❖

Editor.
 The Pennsylvania House of Representatives should just let SB 1413 die. It is bad legislation. We don't need it. We already have a Right To Farm Law in Pennsylvania. It's a good law.

It's not broken, so why "fix it?"
 Like so many other laws already on the books, the Right To Farm Law just needs to be enforced. If some townships are violating the state Right to Farm Law, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture should haul them into court and sue their pants off.

Our rights as farmers include responsibilities as good citizens. The fact that we have a Right To Farm Law does not give us a blank check to do whatever we want on our land. We are still bound by the same community standards that we expect our neighbors to abide by.

My family raises vegetables in Lehigh County, where builders pay up to \$80,000 an acre for land and have waiting lists for homes costing \$400,000 to \$600,000. With that kind of building and business boom, local governments might bend over backward to accommodate builders.

They're not. Why? They know

How To Reach Us
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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.

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Now Is The Time
 By Leon Ressler
 Lancaster County Extension Director

To Use Biological Fungicides In Greenhouse Vegetable And Floriculture Crops

Cathy Thomas, with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Integrated Pest Management Program, reports diseases in greenhouse vegetables and floriculture crops can be managed effectively with biological fungicides (biofungicides).

A biofungicide is composed of beneficial microorganisms, such as specialized fungi and bacteria that attack and control plant pathogens and the diseases they cause. These specialized fungi and bacteria are microorganisms that normally inhabit most soils. Biofungicides can be a viable alternative to chemical fungicides and can be used as part of an integrated disease management program to reduce the risk of pathogens developing resistance to traditional chemical based fungicides.

An example of a widely used commercial biofungicide in the greenhouse industry is *Trichoderma harzianum* (TH) strain T-22 (Plantshield). TH protects plant roots from pathogens such as *Pythium*, *Rhizoctonia*, *Fusarium*, *Sclerotinia*, and *Thielaviopsis*. TH will also suppress foliar diseases such as *Botrytis* and powdery mildew.

To optimize the effectiveness of TH or any other biofungicide, apply before the onset of disease development (preventative treatment) since

they will not "cure" preexisting pathogens. Early application of the biofungicide protects the roots against bad fungi, allowing for better development of root hairs. Always use biofungicides in conjunction with standard disease cultural controls including sanitation, and weekly scouting.

There are four mechanisms by which a biofungicide controls other microorganisms. The first of these mechanisms is direct competition. Before root infection can occur, pathogens must gain access to the zone closely associated with the root called the rhizosphere. A biofungicide "shields" the root by growing a defensive barrier around the roots, thus preventing the harmful fungi from attacking the root.

The second mechanism is antibiosis. The biofungicide produces a chemical compound such as an antibiotic or other toxin that kills the target organism.

Predation or parasitism of the target organism occurs when the biofungicide attacks and feeds on the pathogen. For this mechanism to be effective, the biofungicide must be present in the rhizosphere at the same time or before the pathogen appears.

The fourth mechanism is induced resistance to the host plant and this occurs when the biofungicide triggers the plant to turn on its own defense mechanisms.

Biofungicides like chemical fungicides must be registered by the EPA. Growers must read and follow the label to determine if the intended use has been approved. Always read the label. A few examples of biofungicides used in the greenhouse industry include AQ10, Companion, Mycostop, Plantshield, Bioworks, and Soilgard. A list of commercially available biological fungicide products can be found at this Website, www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/apsbcc/productlist.htm. For more information, contact Cathy Thomas at (717) 705-5857.

To Participate In A Study Of Deer Hunter Movement

Sprout State Forest again will be the focus of a joint study of deer hunter movement and behavior this fall by Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences, the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry, and the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Starting on Saturday, Nov. 30, and Sunday, Dec. 1, researchers and students from Penn State and Bureau of

Forestry personnel will be visiting campsites in Sprout State Forest to solicit participation in the study. As was the case last year, researchers will ask hunters to carry global positioning satellite units and mark maps to learn how hunters move through and use habitat.

Similarly, on Monday morning, Dec. 2, through Wednesday, Dec. 4, researchers will stop hunters entering the forest to ask them to carry GPS units or to mark maps indicating their hunting activities during the day. Stations along Rt. 144 west of Renovo, near Beech Creek Road and near State Line Road on the western side of the forest will be open from before dawn until after dark.

"Last year the research teams enjoyed great cooperation from the hunters using the Sprout," said Jim Finley, project team leader from Penn State. "It only takes a couple of minutes to receive instruction on using the GPS units and convey information to the team, and every cooperating hunter will have his or her name entered into this year's drawing for three Garmin GPS units used in the study."

"We continue to analyze last year's data from the GPS and maps as well as the survey sent to hunters who used Sprout State Forest last year for hunting," said Finley. "We've learned that hunters use the forest in different ways. Some hunters travel long distances through diverse habitats, while others tend to find one spot and stay put. Do different hunting styles yield different success? This is the question that we will focus on this year. We hope that hunters will continue to support the project."

The Penn State research is aimed at providing information to better understand how hunters use large forested areas such as Sprout State Forest. The data hunters provide, Finley points out, will move the state's deer and habitat management program into the national spotlight.

"No other researchers anywhere in the country are using the type of technology that this project uses and no other studies have enjoyed cooperation like we've received from the Sprout hunters," he said. For more information about this study, contact Finley at (814) 863-0401.

Quote Of The Week:
"We have always held to the hope, the belief, the conviction that there is a better life, a better world, beyond the horizon."

— Franklin D. Roosevelt

THE BIBLE SPEAKS
 BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

A HEART TRANSPLANT

Background Scripture:
 Ezekiel 36 through 37.
Devotional Reading:
 Jeremiah 32:36-41.

We sometime make the mistake of thinking that grace is the invention of the New Testament. Although the English word "grace" occurs only six times in the Old Testament, God's grace is often present there. Ezekiel 36 is just one of those places where we find grace in the Old Testament.

"Thus says the Lord God: it is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to..." (36:22). God will restore Israel, but not because they deserve it. They cannot afford God's justice, for it will keep them in captivity.

What God is going to do for these people, whose forbears repeatedly violated this covenant, is nothing short of a miracle. "For I will take you

from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land." (vs. 24,25). What a deal!

Undeserved Mercy

Their "abominable deeds" broke the old Sinai covenant. Now God is making make a new covenant with them, a new relationship between God and Israel. They cannot make themselves clean. Only God can do that: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness..." (v. 25). That is grace — something given to us, although we don't deserve it. Something we can't do for ourselves.

Grace, however free and undeserved, is not cheap. God is not downplaying one bit what the people have done. He is not saying, "Don't worry, it doesn't matter." The sins of Israel mattered a great deal to God! As he outlines their sins, it is apparent that these sins were not little pranks and failings he could overlook, but willful disobedience which he could not and did not ignore.

Grace is not just an indulgent pat on the head, but requires repentance on our part: "Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominable deeds... Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel" (vs. 31,32)

If we do not have the capacity to be "ashamed and confounded" by our ways, we will be unable to experience his grace. It is a free gift, but the ticket by which we claim this free gift is our own remorse.

Beyond Forgiveness
 The free gift of grace does not stop with forgiveness: "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (v. 26).

Ezekiel signals here a significant change in God's relationship with his people. The commandments of the original covenant at Sinai were written on stone tablets. But the commandments never seemed to be translated from the stone tablets to the hearts of the people. It wasn't that they didn't understand these laws, but that they did not take them into their hearts of "stone."

So, although the old covenant was with the whole nation and would continue to be so, by his spirit the new covenant would also be established with each individual. A heart of stone cannot change, but a heart of flesh can. It was not enough for God's commandments to be written on stone; they needed to be written on human hearts as well. This new and intimate relationship with God is also a gift of grace. By themselves they cannot achieve it, but "I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances" (v. 27).

Medical heart transplants have saved many, many lives. Spiritual heart transplants have saved and will save trillions of souls. Will yours be among them?

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