

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Something To Celebrate: National Farm-City Week

President George Bush reminded us in a recent proclamation that Nov. 22-Nov. 28 was National Farm City Week 2002, reflecting on the fact that "agriculture has always been a cornerstone of our nation's way of life."

In the proclamation, Bush noted that "our dedicated farmers and ranchers improve our well-being by working to ensure a healthy and abundant agricultural supply."

Bush looks at the cooperative network, the way farmers and non-farmers cooperate in this compact, this covenant, that makes this nation the greatest ever.

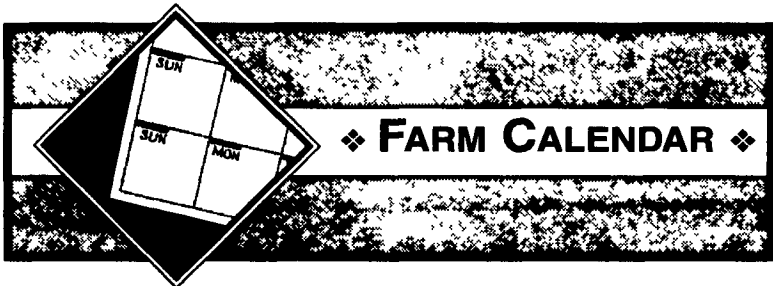
Farming, bush noted, was America's first industry. This industry provides us with the essentials of life.

Bush signed the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 to support workers in the agricultural industry and to strengthen the farm economy. This act stretches opportunities and allows farmers to compete in the international marketplace.

In this week's Farm Shelf on page A28, a book looks at the realities of that national competitiveness. Roger Simmermaker's HOW AMERICANS CAN BUY AMERICAN examines these lofty ideals of what free trade and an open border trade policy has meant to the U.S. — ideals that have been dashed against the rocks far too many times.

Why take one day to celebrate Thanksgiving? Why only one day to recognize mom, for that matter? Why not every day? Why shouldn't every day be a Farm-City day?

And why shouldn't a president dedicate himself fully, day by day, to making international trade fair and responsible for those farm families who buy products?



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

To Explore Business Planning Options For Your Farm

"Tilling the Soil of Opportunity" is a business planning class for farmers who want to explore different production options on their farm. The series of meetings is aimed at teaching small to mid-scale farmers and agricultural professionals the necessary business skills to make decisions that affect their current businesses, or to start a new enterprise.

The course is taught in 12 three-hour sessions, during which farmers develop mission and goals, marketing strategies, financial statements, and other critical components of a comprehensive business plan. Each class session combines lecture, guest speakers, and worksheets to provide the information necessary to complete a chapter of the farm business plan.

People involved in farming and related businesses looking to "fine-tune" their current enterprises, as well as beginning farmers considering the business possibilities, are eligible to sign up for the classes that will begin soon in Lancaster and Gettysburg. The Lancaster class will meet on Monday evenings, Dec. 2 through March 17 at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center. The Gettys-

burg class will meet Wednesday mornings, Jan. 8 through April 9 at the Adams County Agricultural Center.

Contact Winifred McGee, (717) 270-4391 or Lynn Kime, (717) 334-6271, for additional information or to receive a copy of the class registration form. It is still possible to enroll in the Lancaster class. There is a cost of \$150 for the complete program.

To Learn How

White-Tailed Deer Disperse

When scientists from Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences and the Pennsylvania Game Commission began tracking young, male white-tailed deer last winter to learn how they disperse, the researchers weren't sure what to expect.

For years it was believed that deer in Pennsylvania don't move around much. But wildlife experts knew that for genetic reasons, deer populations should minimize inbreeding, so it made sense that the males would leave the area where they were born. Now, almost a year into the study, a fascinating picture of young buck dispersal is emerging.

"Movement of young bucks is certainly not related to quality of habitat of a deer's home range," said Duane Diefenbach, adjunct assistant professor of wildlife resources with the Pennsylvania Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, a joint effort of Penn State, the Game Commission, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, and the U.S. Geologic Survey. "We see young bucks leaving natal home ranges with good habitat and traveling to other areas of good habitat. It's almost like the doe gives them the message that it is time to go."

The joint three-year study — intended to be the most extensive radio-telemetry study of male deer dispersal, survival, and the effects of antler restrictions for hunting ever attempted in the U.S. — started last December when 141 male deer were captured in Armstrong and Centre counties. Those deer — caught using helicopters, drop nets, walk-in traps, and tranquilizer dart guns — were radio-collared and released unharmed. Researchers have been tracking their movements ever since.

The two sites offer dramatically different landscapes, Long points

out, and that probably accounts for a difference in dispersal rates of young bucks. "At the Armstrong County site near Kittanning, which is mostly rolling hills with patches of forest and open agricultural areas often divided by roads, 44 percent of bucks that were collared left their mothers in the spring. On average they went about seven miles.

"At the Centre County site, which is less fragmented and features continuous forested ridges, 24 percent of young bucks dispersed in the spring," said Long. "They didn't move as far on average about five miles. The maximum dispersal distance we have seen in Centre County, was 13 and a half miles."

Early information yielded by the research dispels some myths about Pennsylvania deer, Long noted. "From a management perspective, we know that we can't manage deer in a small area," he said. "There is a lot of interchange between animals and areas. Landowners should realize that there is a good chance that the bucks they see on their property probably weren't born there. There is a lot more interchange than people were expecting."

This information likely will be of great interest to hunters, Long speculates. "There have been suggestions that landowners could introduce big-racked bucks to pass on their genes to offspring males that will have bigger racks," he said. "But we are seeing now that the young male deer probably won't stay in the area. They more likely are producing bucks for landowners in the next valley, or even the next county."

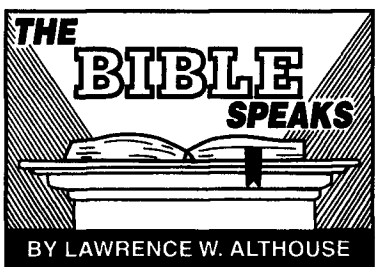
Moreover, Gary Alt, deer management section supervisor for the Game Commission, points out that Pennsylvania deer don't need better genes, they just need to live a year longer. "We know from our research that two-and-a-half-year-old Pennsylvania bucks sport a seven- or eight-point rack with an outside spread of 15 inches," he said.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission's Website, <http://www.pgc.state.pa.us>, is keeping a running journal of the study. For more information, click on "Wildlife" then "Deer in Pennsylvania," and then "Antlered Deer Study."

Quote Of The Week:
"Tact: the ability to describe others as they see themselves."
— Abraham Lincoln

- Saturday, November 30
- Sunday, December 1
- Monday, December 2
- Farm Business Planning Class, Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 12 weeks, Monday evenings Dec. 2 thru March 17, (717) 394-6851.
- Tuesday, December 3
- SOPs for Dairy Industry Professionals, Dairy Alliance, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m., (888) 373-7232.
- Grapevine Pruning Workshop, Clover Hill Winery and Vineyards, Robesonia, 9 a.m.-noon, (717) 394-6851.
- Wednesday, December 4
- ADADC Meeting District 21, Timberwolf Restaurant, Darien Center, N.Y., noon, (716) 492-3659.
- E-Record Keeping for Diversified Market Farms, Carroll Community College, 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., also Dec. 11, (410) 386-8108.
- Thorncroft Clinic, Mental Health and Horsemanship, (610) 644-1963.
- Pa. Milk Marketing Board Hearing, Room 309, Ag Building, Harrisburg, 10:30 a.m., (717)

- 787-4194.
- Thursday, December 5
- Ohio Sow Management Short Course, N.W. District Extension Office, Part 1 of 3, 7 p.m.-9 p.m., (614) 292-8254.
- Our Future Grows Here: Future Of Our Food And Farms Summit, Wyndham Hotel, Wilmington, Del., thru Dec. 6, (215) 568-0830, ext. 10.
- Maryland Grain Marketing meeting, Dutch Family Restaurant, Millington, Md., 7:30 a.m.
- Goddard Forum: Biodiversity, Days Inn, State College, (814) 865-9390.
- Friday, December 6
- Pa. 4-H Leadership Conference, Hartman Center, Milroy, thru Dec. 8.
- Saturday, December 7
- Waterloo Boys Annual Christmas Banquet, Family Cupboard Restaurant, Intercourse, 5:30 p.m., (717) 292-0104.
- Auction hosted by Washington County Junior Fair Board at Washington County Ag Center, Sharpsburg, 6:15 p.m., (301) 582-2116.
- Thoroughbred Charities of America Annual Fundraising Event, Candyland Farms, Middletown, Del., 6 p.m.
- Ohio Forestry Workshop, Lumber From Your Woodlot, Peace Lutheran Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., (614) 688-3136.
- Sunday, December 8
- Maryland Farm Bureau Annual Meeting and Convention, Carousel Resort Hotel, Ocean City, Md., (410) 922-3426.
- Monday, December 9
- Md.-Va. Milk Producers Coop. district meeting, home of Jacob Fisher, Mechanicsville,



DON'T BE AFRAID

Background Scripture:
Luke 1:5-66.
Devotional Reading:
Isaiah 40:3-11.

For Zechariah, one of Israel's 20,000 priests who ministered in the Jerusalem Temple, it was like winning the lottery. There were 20 divisions of priests and they alternated responsibility for conducting the morning and evening sacrifices for the whole nation.

Within each division, the person presiding over these rituals was decided by the drawing of lots. Many priests might live a whole lifetime without ever gaining the privilege of offering the temple sacrifice. Those who did counted it the greatest of their lives.

Finally, it was his division's turn and the lot fell on him. What joy he must have felt. His whole priestly life had been focused on this day. Then, at last, after so many years, that day arrived. But Zechariah was unprepared for what he would experience.

Sometime after he uttered the traditional invocation—"May the God of mercy enter the sanctuary and be pleased to accept the sacrifice of his

people" — Zechariah saw something he had not expected: "... there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him" (1:11,12).

No Child Was Given
Isn't that a bit strange? Zechariah was a priest and both he and his wife, Elizabeth, were "righteous before God." So why should he, a man dedicated to serving in the spiritual realm of life, be "troubled" and afraid at the appearance of one of God's messengers?

Why would he invoke the presence of the Lord and then be struck with fear when God revealed his presence? It was not because he did not believe in God, but that he did not believe that God believed in him. For so many years he and Elizabeth prayed for a child and, despite his rank and their righteousness, no child was given.

Childlessness in a marriage was regarded as a sign of God's disfavor. It was even a valid ground for divorce. At the very least, it was a public embarrassment. Zechariah believed that God answered prayers, but he no longer expected God to answer his prayers! The embarrassment was of greater consequence than his trust in God's grace.

What about us? We believe in a God who does wondrous things in response to prayer, but not to us. Maybe we think we're not good enough (and we're not), don't have enough faith, don't know how to pray, or that this is simply our fate or God's will. So we go through the motions as Zechariah did and we are equally unprepared when at last God sends a message that says, in effect,

to us: "Do not be afraid... for your prayer is heard..." We need to learn with Zechariah that God not only hears prayer, but he hears our prayer.

A 'Holy Fear'
The late Walter Russell Bowie discerns in the nativity narratives of Luke a pattern of fear. When the angel appeared to Zechariah, "fear fell on him." When Gabriel came to Mary in Nazareth, she was "greatly troubled." When the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem experienced the angelic chorus, "they were filled with fear."

And the message of the angels in each case was directed at this holy fear. "Do not be afraid," the angel said to Zechariah. "Do not be afraid," Gabriel said to Mary. And to the shepherds abiding in their fields, the angels proclaimed, "Be not afraid."

So there are two kinds of fear that Luke lifts up for us. There is the fear that keeps me from believing that God will respond to my prayers. That kind of fear means that we do not really trust God to come, care, and provide for us. We lack faith because we believe the promises of God are not valid for us. Nothing is more paralyzing than that craven fear.

But there is another kind of fear, a holy fear that comes as a sudden recognition of the reality of God in my life. This is a sense of overwhelming awe and wonder that says to us, if we listen with any attentiveness, "Do not be afraid."

How To Reach Us
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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

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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

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
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