

Lancaster Farming

OPINION



**Sam Hayes (outgoing)
Pennsylvania Secretary of
Agriculture**

Sam

We have a new secretary of agriculture.

That's great news. We wish the new secretary much success in that challenging endeavor.

But I want to remind the fine folks who read this paper that for the past many years, we've been blessed with a great man.

We've heard various names for what we refer now as "outgoing secretary," a true gentleman of agriculture. We've seen "The Honorable Sam Hayes." We've seen "Coach Hayes" from (outgoing) Gov. Mark Schweiker. I've always called him "Secretary Hayes," simply out of respect for who he is and what he does.

But those who read his letters see the indelible signature of "Sam."

But we all know what his massive signature implies: a man obsessed with advancing Pennsylvania agriculture.

First and foremost, I believe Secretary Hayes Sam has been the finest ag secretary this state has ever seen. Why? Well, look at this partial list of his accomplishments as reported during Agro 2003:

- With the aid of the General Assembly, and with key support from various groups, including Farm Show Director Dennis Grumbine and staff, Hayes was able to help allocate \$90 million for the most major additions and renovations to the State Farm Show Complex since the first Farm Show building went up more than 70 years ago. Hayes also was instrumental in the development of the Livestock Evaluation Center near Rockspring and the PDA Greenhouse.

- On the original conference committee for the Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Program, Hayes was instrumental in making Pennsylvania the leader in the nation for preserved acres, making Pennsylvania a model program for the entire country.

- Hayes was instrumental in developing the biosecurity plan for agribusiness, far ahead of most other states. This is part of his boundless enthusiasm and tireless promotion of agriculture in the state.

- During the drought of 1999, Hayes was able to help crop insurance programs that have become national models. The total amount exceeds \$275 million, overtaking the mere \$100 million a few years ago.

What Secretary Hayes has done far exceeds what anybody should expect from an excellent secretary of agriculture. He is now part of what we are and what we will share in generations to come in this state.

We salute Coach Hayes. I sincerely thank Secretary Hayes for all he has done for our state, for our institution, and for our readers.



Thanks!

♦ FARM CALENDAR ♦

Saturday, January 18

Cornell Sheep and Goat Marketing Summit, Cornell Sheep Farm, Harford, N.Y., in conjunction with Quinterly Cornell Sheep Farm Field Day, (607) 255-2851.

Pa. Purebred Dairy Cattle Association Judging School, Pa. Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, 9 a.m., (814) 234-0364.

New Jersey Holstein-Friesian Association annual meeting, Amwell Fire Hall, Ringoes, N.J., 2:30 p.m., (908) 479-4633.

Sunday, January 19

Monday, January 20

New Holland Vegetable Growers' Day, Yoder's Restaurant, New Holland, (717) 394-6851.

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Now Is The Time

By Leon Ressler

Lancaster County
Extension Director

To Attend The Lancaster County Cooperative Extension Association Annual Meeting

For a winter evening of warm fellowship, an opportunity to enjoy a variety of the county's foods, enjoy a top-quality concert, and to learn about Penn State Cooperative Extension programs, plan to attend the Lancaster County Cooperative Extension Association Annual Meeting Jan. 30.

The meeting will be conducted at the Farm and Home Center in Lancaster. The evening will begin with a social hour from 6 p.m.-7 p.m. with food provided by various vendors and commodity groups. As usual, the food will be excellent and plentiful.

Dinner music will be provided by Erin, Amber, and Lindsey Bensing, talented 4-H'ers. At 7 p.m. we will begin the business meeting with introductions, staff program updates, and an election for our board of directors. At 8 p.m. we will be treated to a concert by the McCaskey Gospel choir, which is well known for its excellent programs.

The meeting will conclude with a Penn State report by regional director Michelle Rodgers and awards

and recognitions. A separate children's program will be provided in the downstairs meeting room during the business meeting.

Tickets for the evening are \$4 for adults and \$2 for children ages 6-12, a real bargain! Call the Lancaster County Extension office for more information and for tickets, (717) 394-6851.

To Enroll In Whole Farm Revenue Insurance Plans

Jayson Harper, professor of agricultural economics at Penn State, reminds us the sign-up deadline is Jan. 31 for the whole-farm revenue insurance plans AGR and AGR-Lite. There is a lot of interest in these crop insurance plans, so it is important to make an appointment with a crop insurance agent soon.

When you meet with the agent, you will need copies of your 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001 1040 Schedule Fs in order to apply for coverage.

AGR-Lite is available statewide and AGR is available in 14 counties (Berks, Carbon, Columbia, Crawford, Erie, Fayette, Lackawanna, Lancaster, Lehigh, Monroe, Northampton, Schuylkill, Westmoreland, and York). Fact sheets and other information on AGR and AGR-Lite can be found on the Pennsylvania Crop Insurance Education Website: <http://cropins.aers.psu.edu>. The 2003 version of "Crop Insurance for Pennsylvania Field Crops," "Crop Insurance for Pennsylvania Vegetable Crops," and "Crop Insurance for Pennsylvania Fruit Crops" are available on the Website.

Crop insurance is a valuable risk management tool that allows farmers to insure against losses because of adverse weather conditions, fire, insects, disease, irrigation water supply failure, and wildlife. Crop insurance is federally subsidized and is sold by private crop insurance agents. During 1997-2001, Pennsylvania farmers with crop insurance were paid \$61.7 million for crop losses and received \$4.32 for crop losses for every \$1 they paid in premiums.

Crop insurance is increasingly being adopted by farmers for risk

management. In 2002 there was a 20 percent increase in the number of crop insurance policies sold (14,603 for 2002 vs. 12,218 for 2001). The covered acreage increased from 977,000 acres to 1.16 million acres this past year (a 19 percent increase).

A minimum level of crop insurance called CAT insurance is available to all farmers regardless of size at no premium cost (all premiums are paid by the federal government). Higher levels of crop insurance (buyup protection) are also federally subsidized, with farmers paying only 33-62 percent of the actual cost of the insurance (depending on the level of coverage selected).

The commonwealth of Pennsylvania is a strong supporter of crop insurance and has allocated funds since 2000 to help farmers buy crop insurance. This money will be used to pay the \$100 policy application fee for CAT insurance and the \$30 application fee for buyup protection. An additional 10 percent of the total cost of buyup protection will also be paid by the state, so Pennsylvania farmers pay only 23-52 percent of the actual cost of this coverage (a 16-30 percent discount). The end result is that CAT insurance is free and buyup protection is discounted in Pennsylvania.

Multiperil crop insurance is available for at least one commodity in every county in Pennsylvania; a total of 22 crops are represented across the state. Whole-farm Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) insurance is available in 14 counties and AGR-Lite (for farmers with revenue protection needs of \$100,000 or less) is available statewide in 2003. For more information, contact Jayson Harper at (814) 863-8638 or e-mail jharper@psu.edu.

Quote of the Week:

"Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bonds. As long, therefore, as they can find employment in this line, I would not convert them into mariners, artisans, or anything else."

— Thomas Jefferson to John Jay, 1785

THE BIBLE SPEAKS

BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

QUID EST VERITAS?

Background Scripture:

John 18:31-38; 19:12-16a.

Devotional Reading:

I Timothy 2:1-6.

In his native language, Latin, Pontius Pilate asked Jesus that immortal question, "Quid est veritas?"—"What is truth?" It would appear from John 18:37,38 that Pilate received no answer from Jesus, for, as soon as he asks, John goes on to say, "After he said this, he went out to the Jews again..."

I believe, however, that Jesus answered this question before Pilate even asked it. When Pilate asked, "Are you the King of the Jews?", Jesus tried to avoid the semantics trap, explaining that his "kingship is not of this world" (18:36). But Pilate persists and Jesus says, "For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth."

Jesus has already indicated that truth is not something you have, but what you are and do. He does not have in his human brain all the knowledge and truth of the universe, but he is the truth in that he leads us

to God, the source of all truth. In Christianity's earliest days, his followers were concerned not with systematizing the ideas of Jesus, but following the example of their Lord. The truth was demonstrated in their lives individually and corporately. Jesus had said, not understand me, but follow me!

Little Box Of Brains

For one thing, completely comprehending the truth may be impossible because we can apprehend, but not comprehend it with our finite minds. In one of H.G. Wells' works, a Bishop converses with an angel and says, "You can tell me the truth." The angel gently grasps the Bishop's head in his hands, and the Bishop asks, "But can this hold it?" "Not with this little box of brains," says the angel. "You could as soon make a meal of the stars and pack them into your belly. You haven't the things to do it with inside this."

The Bishop is not unique, for none of us have the mental equipment to entertain in ourselves the full truth. "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" God challenged Job. "Tell me, if you have understanding" (Job 38:4). Job then understands his human limitation and answers: "... I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know" (42:3b). Instead of finding answers to his questions, he finds God: "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees thee" (42:5).

Jesus told Pilate that his purpose in coming to the world was to "bear witness to the truth." The way in which Jesus conducted himself before Pilate was a witness to the truth of God. The whole drama from the

Praetorium to the hill of Calvary was a pageant of the truth of God through the witness of Jesus Christ.

Truth's 'Companion'

We are never further from the truth then when we think of it as something to be possessed. I have it and I will let you have it! But, like Jesus, we need instead to point people to God so that they may experience the truth, not in lofty human ideas but in the experience of God's eternal source of truth.

Charles Caleb Colton once said that "The greatest friend of truth is time, her greatest enemy is prejudice, and her constant companion is humility." This is what so unsettled Pontius Pilate when Jesus stood before him. Humbly, Jesus embodied the truth.

Some years ago an Old Testament scholar wrote a book in which he expounded a radical theory on the authorship of the book of Isaiah. He admitted that he dreaded the criticism that was sure to follow, but he said, "There is a worse fate than being misunderstood; it is to be to truth a timid friend." Jesus was a humble, but not timid, friend of truth. Pilate asked, "What is truth?" and Jesus showed him:

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O God of Truth, deliver us."

— (An ancient prayer)

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