



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.

Agriculture's Decline In Pennsylvania Is Exaggerated

H. Louis Moore
Professor Of Agricultural Economics
Pennsylvania State University

It has become common in discussions in urban and rural areas for folks to comment, "Since agriculture is declining in Pennsylvania, we must make adjustments to emphasize the importance of other segments of the economy." Even in academic circles we accept the mistaken concept that agriculture is declining. These folks measure the decline in many ways. They look at the decline in farm numbers, the decline in students enrolled in agricultural programs, and the loss of land to housing and other nonagricultural uses.

These are not measures of the decline in agriculture. Farm numbers are a poor measure of the status of agriculture for a number of reasons:

- As farm numbers decline, remaining farmers become larger in order to efficiently use the labor and equipment on the farm
- It is difficult to accurately measure farm numbers over long periods of time because the definition of a "farm" has changed nine times since the mid-1800s.

The census people are always trying to develop a farm definition that measures the rapid changes taking place in agriculture. Currently, a farm is "any establishment from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were sold or would normally be sold during the year." This includes many operations we would not consider to be farms, yet this definition is an improvement on the previous definition. That definition listed a farm as "any place which comprised 10 acres or more." That definition was abandoned because many suburban houses sit on 10 acres or more of land and greatly overestimated the farm numbers.

Farm numbers have declined sharply since the 1930s, when there were about 6.5 million in the U.S. Today there are less than 2 million farms. In 1970 there were 74,000 Pennsylvania farms. By 2000 the number had declined to 59,000, a 20 percent drop. Total acres in farms declined 24 percent during the same period. Many acres went into nonfarm development, but some unproductive and highly erodible land was abandoned.

We begin to measure the value of farming when we look at farms based on sales generated, rather than farm numbers. About 60 percent of Pennsylvania farmers have annual sales of less than \$10,000 and are considered part-time operations. Another 28 percent have sales of \$10,000 and \$99,999 per year. These two groups comprise 49,500 or 88 percent of the total. Those 9,500 farms with annual sales exceeding \$100,000 control 41.6 percent of the farmland, and the average size of their farms is 337 acres. Those with sales of less than \$10,000 average 64 acres per farm.

The best measure of an area's agriculture is to tabulate total cash receipts from farm marketings over time and then compare to other states. Pennsylvania's cash receipts from farm marketings totaled \$4.46 billion in 2001, the latest date for which figures are available. Sales were up \$392 million from the previous year. About 70 percent of the total comes from the sale of livestock products. Since much of our crop production is sold through livestock, the crop business is much more important than the 30 percent of sales shown for crops.

Pennsylvania's ranking among the states in agricultural sales has held steady at 18th for the last decade. Pennsylvania is the most important state in the Northeast with sales of \$1 billion annually higher than New York, the other important state in the Northeast. (The nation's three most important agricultural states are California, Texas, and Iowa.) There is a strong network of processors and other agribusiness serving Pennsylvania, which contributes to a strong agriculture.

In summary, it appears that farming and agribusiness are alive and well in Pennsylvania and preparing for the competitive challenges of the decades ahead.



Now Is The Time
By Leon Ressler
Lancaster County Extension Director

To Use The Global Positioning System To Map Your Farm

Global Positioning System (GPS) mapping can serve numerous functions in your operation. It can be used in determining acreage, to accurately record pesticide or pest control applications, to record manure application locations, and to serve as a base layer for yield maps. It can also be used to determine the amount of open space in a development or watershed.

If you are interested in learning the techniques to do GPS mapping, Penn State Extension is offering one-day training that will provide what you need. This training will teach you the techniques of using a Compaq Handheld Computer and GPS unit to map fields or orchards.

Come to this training and learn the techniques you can use on your farm or in your business. The training is will offered in the following counties on the dates listed: Cumberland (Feb. 27), York (March 13), Dauphin County (April 3), Franklin (April 7), Lancaster (April 14), and Lebanon (April 17). For more in-

formation and to register, call Lynn Kime, Penn State Cooperative Extension in Adams County, at (717) 334-6271.

To Maintain Your Ventilation Fans

Now that we are in the midst of winter, this is a good time to examine your fan cooling systems. Capitol region poultry agent Dr. Gregory Martin recommends periodic cleaning and inspection of the cooling system while the systems are not in high demand to insure that when they are needed, that they will be in good repair to perform to expectations. It is also important to examine the fans to help reduce the chance of fire in a poultry house, because of frayed wiring, frozen fan parts, or obstructed motor cooling fins.

Dirt reduces the fans ability to move air for cooling, moisture removal, and ventilation. Engineers have placed the reduction in air movement at between 20-40 percent, depending on the dirt load on the fan blades or fan housings. Bent fan blades, worn bearings, and worn drive belts and pulleys can also contribute to poor fan performance.

Examine the fans after preventing them from starting by locking them out at the control or breaker box. Remember to label the controls as locked out with date and name. Then remove guard grills and brush off any adhering dust on the fans and shutters if so equipped.

Examine the front and rear bearings for leakage of lubricant or bearing noise as the unit is turned by hand. For those fans that have oil ports, drip a few drops of oil sparingly into the motor. Too much oil will attract dust and will soak into motor windings. Motor housings should be tight in their mounting frames and should not show signs of arcing or burnt paint.

If the motors are fitted with a reset button (usually red), the button should not be stuck and move easily. If these faults are apparent, replace the motor and have it inspected by a motor service for review and repair. Replace any bent or missing fan blades and tighten any loose fan blades you may find.

Cleaning fans can be done quickly by the use of a long-handled dairy brush to knock down any adhering dust on the fan blades, fan ducts, and shutters. Shutters should be dusted and checked for range of motion. Lubricate the shutters with dry lubricants (such as graphite or Teflon powders) to minimize dust accumulation on the shutters.

Belt drive fans should have belts that are not showing any significant wear, such as frayed or exposed cords or cracked and glazed sidewalls seen when there is belt slippage. The belt should fit well into the drive pulleys and should not have any side play in the pulley. Replace drive pulleys when they lose shape or show other signs of uneven wear. Drive pulleys should always be in alignment and should be of the proper size when replacements are made to keep the fan in proper operation for its motor rating.

Examine wiring to the fan motor for any frayed or worn components. Any cracks on the insulation or signs of overheating should be fixed. All wiring for fans should be done to make sure that the fans are properly grounded to keep stray voltage in the houses to a minimum. Particular wear points in wiring are found where wires connect to motors or other junction points in the circuit.

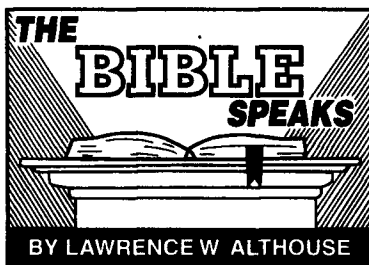
Cartridge type fuses should be inspected for corrosion in their mounts. Circuit breakers should be worked back and forth to help break up corrosion. Lastly, controllers and thermostats with open coils should be cleaned with either compressed air or the use of a refrigerator brush or any similar soft bristle, cone-shaped brush.

All fans should be numbered as to their location in the house and all maintenance should be logged. The ventilation system should be periodically inspected and the cooling system maintained on a semiannual basis, as needed. Refer to your manufacturer's guidelines for further maintenance and safety guidelines.

Quote Of The Week:

"If a man could have half his wishes, he would double his trouble."

— Benjamin Franklin



THE BIBLE SPEAKS
BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

PARTNERSHIP

Background Scripture:

Acts 18:1-4, 24-26; Romans 16:3,4; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19.

Devotional Reading:

Devotional Reading: Ephesians 4:1-13.

Throughout its two thousand-year history, the gospel has grown and endured under the efforts of individuals whose names are written large in the saga — Paul, Peter, and Augustine, to name just a few. Yet today we are no less indebted to others whose names are not so well known or remembered, including Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos.

Unless you have already read the suggested Background Scripture, these names are not likely ring a bell with most of you. We look at them now not just so we can remember some ancient Christians, but because their example has much to say to us.

Who were they? Aquila (OCK-will-uh) and Priscilla (also known as "Prisca") were husband and wife. He was born a Jew in Pontus near the Black Sea in a section of what is Tur-

key. He went to Rome until the anti-Semitic edict of Claudius in 49 AD forced out all Jews. Because Acts does not mention her as a Jew, it is commonly believed that she was Roman.

Hospitality

In Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla plied their trade as tentmakers. Because that was also his trade, Paul sought them out and joined them. This is our introduction to their exemplary Christian hospitality. Paul was thus able to support himself while, on the sabbaths, he went to the synagogue to witness to his faith. Later, when he left Corinth for Syria, he took them with him, leaving them in Ephesus when he departed for Antioch.

After Paul left Ephesus, an Alexandrian Jew named Apollos arrived there. His qualifications were somewhat mixed. On the one hand, he was "an eloquent man, well versed in the scriptures," and spoke with great fervor concerning his Alexandrian Christianity. But apparently there were some gaps in his knowledge, namely the practice of baptism in the name of Jesus and the experience of the Holy Spirit. Still, Apollos was receptive to Aquila and Priscilla and, later in Corinth, he built upon the spiritual foundation which Paul had previously established.

Tradition tell us that he became bishop in Corinth and also that he was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, particularly because it is quite consistent with his Alexandrian background. But other traditions name Priscilla and Aquila as authors of Hebrews. What we do know about

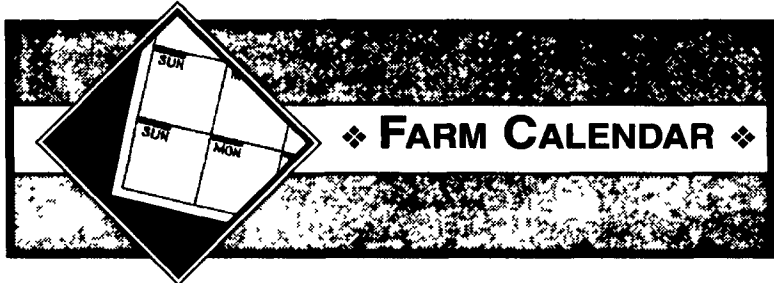
these three people, however, is sufficient to suggest qualities which we could well manifest in our own lives.

The Church In Their Home

Their hospitality endeared them to Paul. They opened up their home to him, shared their trade with him, and later opened their home as a meeting place for Corinthian's Christians. When Apollos arrived in Ephesus, they welcomed him and took him under their wing to expand his understanding of the gospel. When Paul asked them to go with him, they followed him gladly to Corinth and then remained behind to nurture the church there. Paul tells us also that these two "risked their necks for my life" (Ro. 16:4), although we do not know when or where. Apparently, they were willing to put the gospel before their own well-being.

We must admire Apollos for his willingness to open his mind to the somewhat different understanding of the gospel as presented by Aquila and Priscilla. That is no small or insignificant quality. It is very hard to teach anyone who thinks they already know all that is to be known. But, despite his eloquence and fervor, he was also humble enough to listen and learn from others. What a rare quality that is!

Paul was a charismatic apostle by himself, but with the partnership of people like Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos, God was able to accomplish much more.



◆ FARM CALENDAR ◆

- Saturday, February 22
Youth Leaders Seminar, Arena Restaurant, Bedford, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Bedford County Extension, (814) 623-4800.
Regional Christmas Tree Seminar, Novasel Civic Center, Indiana, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Pruning Seminar, Western Maryland Research and Education Center, Keedysville, Md., (301) 972-0848.
4-H Horse Clinic, 4-H Building, Troy Fairgrounds, 7 p.m.
Sunday, February 23

- Pa. Game Breeders Conference, Days Inn State College, thru Feb. 26, (814) 865-5523.
Penn State Cooperative Extension's Open House, Stroudsburg, 4 p.m.-7 p.m., (570) 421-6430.
Monday, February 24
Soil Fertility Workshop, 118 ASI Building, Penn State, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
York County Pesticide Update, Extension Office, 10 a.m.-noon
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An Award-Winning Farm Newspaper

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- Keystone Awards 1993, 1995
- PACD Media Award 1996
- Recognized for photo excellence throughout the years by the Northeast Farm Communicators
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