



# OPINION

## For Farmers, Every Day Is National Ag Day

We learned from our friends at AgWeb.com (the people who produce Farm Journal) that National Ag Day marks its 30th anniversary on the first day of spring, which was Friday. A day to realize that food is hard to come by, and is perhaps a privilege, not a right.

Quoting President Bush: "A nation that can feed its people is a nation more secure."

Yet we hear the proposed budget cutbacks in the state and nation. Our leaders continue to take the inexpensive, environmentally friendly ways farmers produce food for granted.

War rages in Iraq. In the end, perhaps when it is over, we will see a recovery brought about by less expensive oil. That would be a boost to modern agriculture.

But why take just one day to recognize the value of agriculture? How about those who will now starve in Iraq while we sit in the comfort of our homes, eating popcorn and watching on Fox or CNN what goes on over in the Gulf?

Many organizations are already reaching out, wanting to restore order to a troubled part of the country. How long it will take is anybody's guess.

I only hope Congress takes time out to realize the recovery efforts, after the war ends, will be expensive and to not forget the farmer's contribution to the efforts.

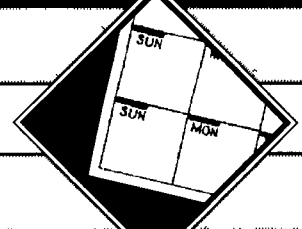
Some happy news:

Did you know that Pennsylvania's 61 commercial trout growers sold 1.64 million pounds of trout valued at \$4.56 million during 2002? This was down from the 1.88 million pounds valued at \$4.89 million sold in 2000, according to Marc Tosiano in his monthly column in *Lancaster Farming*, Agriculture Counts. Only Wisconsin has more trout growers than Pennsylvania, with 65 operations.

But Pennsylvania ranks *first* in the nation for the value of trout distributed for conservation and recreational purposes. With a value of \$10.8 million, Pennsylvania accounts for 16.6 percent of the nation's distributed trout. This includes trout released by state hatcheries, cooperative nurseries, and private fishing clubs.

Also, you think all prices for farm commodities are headed backward? Check out something else from Marc's column. Did you know that in 2002, Pennsylvania honey producers received an average price of \$1.30 per pound, compared to 92 cents the year before?

For some ag commodities, celebrating National Ag Day is, well, honey on the cake!



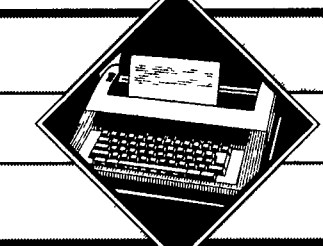
❖ FARM CALENDAR ❖

Saturday, March 22

Atlantique City Spring Festival, Atlantic City Convention Center, thru March 23. Saturday 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Sunday 10 a.m.-5 p.m., (800) 526-2724. Beginning Beekeepers Seminar,

Lysock View Complex, (570) 433-3040. Maple Syrup Production Tour, Bradford-Sullivan Forest Landowners' Association, Dewey Meadow Maple War-

(Turn to Page A31)



❖ FARM FORUM ❖

**Editor:**  
Sixteen farm groups sent a letter to U.S. House leaders and members on Monday in opposition to the fiscal year 2004 budget resolution adopted by the House Budget Committee.

**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@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.

The letter and list of groups follow.  
March 17, 2003  
The Honorable Dennis Hastert  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
Dear Speaker Hastert and Democratic Leader Pelosi:  
The undersigned organizations write to express our concern and strong opposition to the fiscal year 2004 budget resolution adopted by the House Budget Committee.  
As you are aware, farmers and ranchers did not participate in the economic growth and pro-

(Turn to Page A32)




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

**To Improve Pastures With Frost- Or No-Till Seeding**  
Pennsylvania has about 3 million acres of pastureland, much of which is not producing as much forage as it could.  
Bob Anderson, Lancaster County agronomy agent, points out that studies have shown that the productivity of pastures can be improved two or three fold through renovation. Grass pastures can be interseeded with a legume to improve both the total dry matter yield and the quality of the forage based on feeding value.  
Pasture renovation is hindered in many places because the land is too steep and would have a severe erosion problems if plowed for reseeded. Methods whereby this land could be improved without use of tillage would provide a means to improve productivity and profitability without the high risk of erosion inherent in conventional methods of pasture improvement. Two excellent alternatives are frost seeding and no-till drilling.  
Frost seeding, referred to as snow seeding by some, can be used to es-

tablish a legume in existing grass pastures. The legume seed is broadcast on the soil surface in early spring. The normal freezing and thawing of the soil surface at this time of the year combined with early spring rains help to incorporate and germinate the seed. The key to success with this method is to seed at the proper time and to follow up with rotational grazing or mowing in order to reduce the competition from the grass already in the pasture.  
A study in Michigan showed that legume yields were reduced by 50 percent the year following seeding if grasses were not suppressed in the seeding year. Grass suppression is vital for seedling establishment when legumes are frost-seeded into grass sod.  
Red clover is an excellent choice for frost seeding because it is tolerant of cold soil temperatures. In addition, it has good vigor and is one of the easiest legumes to establish. Clover is also more tolerant of wet soil conditions and low soil pH than other legumes.  
For a successful frost seeding, select a site that can be grazed closely to reduce grass competition. Soil test and correct pH and fertility problems before or shortly after seeding. Seeding should be done while the ground is still frozen. Seeding on snow is satisfactory if the snow depth is not great, since rapid melting may cause loss of seed through runoff. A cyclone seeder or seeder attachment on the back of a tractor will work well.  
Recommendations for no-till seeding are similar to the frost seeding. Early seeding is key to the successful establishment of the legume. Seed as early as possible; however, avoid seeding in wet conditions.  
**To Apply Nitrogen To Small Grains**  
Now that most of the snow is gone, it is time to think about the first agronomic job of the spring — top-dressing small grain with nitrogen. The rate and timing of spring-applied nitrogen depends on several factors.  
The first factor is growth stage. If

the plants are at growth stage 2 (main stem and one or two tillers) or less, apply the nitrogen as soon as plants start "greening up." If the plants are past growth stage two, the nitrogen can be applied from "green-up" to growth stage 5 (early erect growth). Refer to the "2003 Agronomy Guide," available at your local extension office, for a description of growth stages. The 2003 agronomy guide is available on the Internet at <http://agguide.agronomy.psu.edu/>.  
The nitrogen rate will depend on anticipated yield, previous crop yield, previous fertilizer amounts, and frequency and amount of manure applied. Each bushel of wheat grain produced will require 1.3 to 1.5 pounds of nitrogen. Estimating the amount that will be supplied by the soil is important. Excessive nitrogen applications effect profitability, increase disease pressures, increase lodging potential, decrease yields, and increase the potential for nitrogen leaching. Inadequate nitrogen also affects profitability since it will result in reduced yield.  
One of the major factors affecting soil available nitrogen is frequency of manure applications. Research indicates that when fields are manured every one or two years, one should apply 0 to 30 pounds of nitrogen per acre. If applied every three to four years, one should apply 30 to 60 pounds of nitrogen per acre. When applied less frequently, one should apply 60 to 90 pounds of nitrogen per acre.  
Winter barley has less resistance to lodging than wheat; therefore, the nitrogen rates should be reduced accordingly. Keep the nitrogen rates between 45 and 60 pounds per acre when manure is not applied frequently to the field. When manure is frequently applied, use only 0 to 30 pounds of nitrogen per acre.  
**Quote Of The Week:**  
*"The road to underdevelopment is paved with good intentions. The worst thing that aid does is destroy initiative and create a sense of entitlement."*  
— Author Paul Theroux writing on the challenges of western relief work in Africa.

**THE BIBLE SPEAKS**



BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

**WHERE IS YOUR AUTHORITY?**

**Background Scripture:**  
Mark 6:1-13.  
**Devotional Reading:**  
John 12:44-50.  
In some ways, since Jesus' times, the world hasn't changed as much as we might expect. For example, in Mark 6:1-6, Jesus' countrymen were both amazed at the authority he exuded and incredulous that such authority could reside in someone local. "Where did this man get all this? . . . Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon?" How could a local boy make good on such a high level? So, although they were intrigued by the authority with which he spoke, "they took offense at him."  
That happens today, too, doesn't it?  
Many years ago when I was an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania, I was a member in the campus drama group. There was one fellow thespian who never seemed to do much in this busy organization, just sat around and plinked on the piano a lot. "Boy, there's one guy

who will never make it in the entertainment world," I opined. It seemed like a very safe prophecy, but 10 years later I saw his name as director of some of the movie industry's most successful films. I was both amazed and chastened, just as Jesus' countrymen would be today.  
**In Our Own Country**  
Jesus' response is still as true today as it was then: "A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and in his own house" (6:4). He was right about many of his neighbors and also about his own family. Mark tells us that, when he went to his own home, his friends "went out to seize him, for they said, 'He is beside himself'" (3:21) and John tells us "For even his brothers did not believe in him" (Jn. 7:5).  
Halford E. Luccock said, "They had all the physical facts about this strange man, his birth, his occupation, his home and family. That is all they needed the obvious facts." But, as both Jesus' neighbors and his family would learn, there is usually a lot more to a person we think we know than the obvious facts. "Our world is riddled with 'factfinders'" who look no further than the facts.  
Eventually, his family and friends would realize that this local boy, whom they thought they knew so well, carried an authority in himself that was messianic. But they also were to learn that Jesus could bestow authority on his disciples who came from the very lowest levels of society. These men seemed the least likely to share in the mission of the messiah. Still, Jesus sent "them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits" (6:7). Jesus first called them to "come," but now the command is to "go!" Lots of people

like the first part of that, but never get around to the "go" part.  
**Badge Of Authority**  
This is important for us to remember: the authority of Jesus is his not only to keep, but to share with those who follow him. That's us. But, let's make certain we understand what this authority is: to preach, to heal, and to cast out evil.  
Our authority is not to act in an authoritarian manner, but to use our authority to help others. And this is what they did: "So they went out and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them" (6:13). That is and has always been the church's badge of authority. If we are not doing those things today, can we be the Church?  
Mark tells us, "And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief." (3:5,6). Despite the authority of Jesus, he was limited in what he could do by the lack of faith on the part of the people.  
Mark says Jesus "could do no mighty work there," while Matthew makes it "did not do." I think Mark's "could" is more helpful for us, because we too often forget that the power of God in Christ needs to work in the context of faith. I have always observed that the greatest results are respondent not to disbelief, but faith.

**Lancaster Farming**  
An Award-Winning Farm Newspaper

- PDA Friend of Agriculture Award, 2003
- Keystone Awards 1993, 1995
- PACD Media Award 1996
- Recognized for photo excellence throughout the years by the Northeast Farm Communicators
- PennAg Industries 1992
- Berks Ag-Business Council 2000

**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 2003 by Lancaster Farming