



Lancaster Farming

OPINION

What Will Slots Do To/For Pa.?

Probably one of the most divisive issues not only in agriculture but in the general economy is how to solve the \$2 billion budget deficit faced by Pennsylvania. Some of our legislators believe the state needs slots (apparently, the argument goes, Pennsylvania residents gamble out of state to the tune of about \$3 billion a year) or to raise the sales tax.

Gov. Ed Rendell, according to analysts, stands to generate about \$780 million in 2004 from slot machines if the licenses can get to the right people. There is talk about simply giving them away. (Some critics say: Why not sell the licenses and generate income that way?) In the end, there is going to be an onslaught of opposition from groups who traditionally don't favor these sorts of things.

Rendell had some interesting ideas when he decided "vice taxes" could pick up the deficit tab or stand in place of property taxes. Perhaps those who don't smoke or drink could care less and think those are the only things that should get taxed in the first place. At this point, however, we don't favor cutbacks to state educational institutions and don't want to see our kids in school suffer as a result of nothing being decided.

In addition, other methods are desperately needed to replace our outmoded and unfair property tax system.

Recently, we received a news release from the Pennsylvania Tourism and Lodging Association (PTLA) that supports slots at state race tracks. PTLA's 800 members announced that they support legislation to legalize slot machines at Pennsylvania's horse racing tracks.

The reason: the state needs to "enhance its competitive advantage in providing a quality tourism product and experience compared to competing destinations," noted Barry Wickes, PTLA president. PTLA believes slots will increase jobs and revenue to the state.

However, critics point out: What about the inevitable gambling debts and bankruptcy court that having slots will entail? Do tourists come to Pennsylvania and the historic counties to see this kind of thing? Does Lancaster County want to be the next Atlantic City?

In 2001, Pennsylvania was the fifth most visited state in both leisure and business, according to PTLA. Travel was up in 2002. Slots may attract more visitors. Maybe Pennsylvania may gain visitors, but we believe it will have lost what made it special and separate from the rest of the general consumer-driven, strip-mall, vice-exploited public.



Now Is The Time
By Leon Ressler
Lancaster County Extension Director

To Wait For Proper Soil Conditions To Finish Corn Planting

Although Pennsylvania farmers got a good start on corn planting this spring (more than 40 percent complete by mid-May), recent rainy weather has caused planting to fall behind average. Gregory Roth, Penn State associate professor of agronomy, advises farmers not to panic, but to follow a few simple tips in approaching later plantings this year.

"Yield losses are not that great due to later planting," Roth said. "In fact, sometimes when planting has been completed quickly in recent years, we've had low yields, so farmers should wait until soil conditions are right. Weather patterns should grow more summerlike as the jet stream begins its retreat during the next few weeks."

When soils finally dry out after wet-weather planting, Roth said, furrow sidewall compaction can hamper corn growth. So farmers shouldn't panic and begin planting in inappropriate conditions.

Roth has several other tips for dealing with the wet weather as well. First, don't delay planting because of tillage or spreading fertilizer. Consider no-till planting and sidedressing of fertilizer. One should also consider

using Bt hybrids. Recent research has shown corn planted later in May or in early June often encounters more second-generation corn borer damage and has a more consistent yield response to Bt than earlier planted corn.

Reconsider the use of starter fertilizer on later planted corn. Starter benefits are generally small on many manured soils and they decline as planting is delayed. Plant the seed 1.5 to 2 inches deep. Shallow corn planting is more risky later in the season when conditions in the seed zone can quickly change to hot, dry, and cloddy.

To Evaluate Direct Cutting Of Barley For Ensiling

Dairy and livestock producers suffering from the effects of two consecutive years of poor forage production are looking for alternative forage supplies to meet forage and feed needs until the 2003 corn silage crop is harvested.

Penn State Capitol Region agronomy agent Paul Craig reports one alternative that is being considered in many areas is direct cutting of barley for ensiling. In some areas last year, custom harvesters modified existing forage harvesters to speed up this process. Early users have reported highly acceptable feed production and now others are looking into this alternative.

What is direct cut barley? It is barley that is harvested with a small grain head mounted on a forage chopper and then placed in a silo or trench. Cutting height is about 6 inches and there is no wilting of the crop. Harvest is at the proper moisture level for different silo types. Farmers with trenches should shoot for 65 to 70 percent, upright silos at 63-68 percent, and sealed silos at 55-60 percent. This is usually around the soft dough stage, when milky kernels can be easily crushed in your fingertips. Moisture monitoring and determination is critical. Yields range from 3 to 4 tons/acre of dry matter.

Unlike rye which rapidly increases its level of indigestible fiber and lignin after heading, wheat, oats, and barley actually produce more energy and protein per acre after the crop is headed. In studies at Kansas and

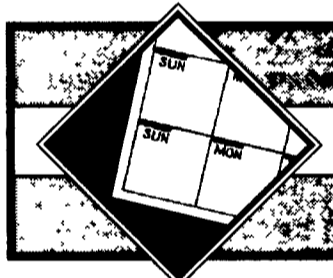
Mississippi State, barley was rated the best choice because of higher grain yields and good digestibility. In general, barley silage quality is good, with energy levels slightly lower than corn silage (TDN 64 percent vs. 69 percent for corn silage) and a protein level slightly higher (9-11 percent vs. 8 percent for corn silage). Stage of maturity, variety, fertility, and harvest management can greatly affect forage quality. Everyone recommends using forage testing to ensure its proper substitution in a ration.

Small grains mature much faster than corn silage. The proper harvest window will be very narrow, at most 3 to 6 days, depending on weather. This requires close monitoring of the crop, coordination with harvesters, and large capacity equipment. Because of hollow stems, a shorter cut, often 3/8 inch, is recommended. However, to optimize fiber in the silage, do not overchop. Good packing, rapid fill, and prevention of air exchange are especially important this time of year because of warmer summer temperatures.

Producers with larger acreage may choose to start harvesting earlier, but harvesting silage too wet results in the loss of plant nutrients and produces undesirable, unpalatable, high butyric acid silage. Harvesting too dry causes oxygen to be trapped in the silage, prolonging the aerobic phase of fermentation and results in a poorly fermented product. Some have suggested mixing higher moisture alfalfa haylage with barley silage that's too dry. Either way, monitoring moisture is critical.

Harvesting barley as silage also provides an opportunity for earlier double cropping. This usually leads to higher corn silage yields. Dr. Greg Roth at Penn State estimates that planting corn silage following barley silage harvest in our region would yield about 83 percent compared to full-season corn silage. Waiting until grain harvest, yields were only 65 percent.


Quote Of The Week:
"This isn't a Keynesian recovery produced by big-spending bureaucrats. Instead, the recovery was created by the incentives of tax rate reductions, which shifted resources away from government back to American producers, savers, and investors."
— President Ronald Reagan (1984)



FARM CALENDAR

Saturday, May 31
Penn State Garden Forum, University Park, Penn State University, (814) 863-0918.
North Star Prospect, Clinton County Fairgrounds, (570) 321-5653.
Composting Seminar, Northbrook Orchard, West Chester, 10 a.m., (610) 696-3500. Also

Pete's Produce, Westtown, 1 p.m.
Sunday, June 1
Rabbit Show, Penn State Ag Arena, (814) 863-0835.
New York State Dairy Foods, Inc. and Pa. Assoc. of Milk Dealers combined conference,
(Turn to Page A29)



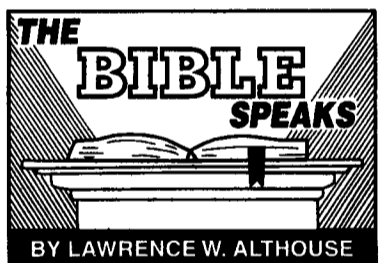
FARM FORUM

Editor:
At a time when prices paid to area dairy farmers have dropped to the 1976-1977 era, one would think that the U.S. Congress would step in and take corrective

measures.
Since April 1, 1981, when congress and former President Reagan, prevented an upward adjustment on the support price of manufactured milk products, dairy farmer's prices have bounced around like a yo-yo, usually on the downward swing.
Subsequent action taken by congress since 1981 has cost taxpayers billions of dollars and usually their actions meant lower prices to dairy farmers. There are three things congress has never tried:

1. Pricing milk on the dairy farmer's cost of production.
2. A true milk supply management program.
3. Giving dairy farmers a fair share of the retail market price.
Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA),
(Turn to Page A27)

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THE BIBLE SPEAKS

BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

THE EXILE

Background Scripture:
Ezra 1.
Devotional Reading:
Isaiah 52:7-12.
Beth, her daughter, and son-in-law are estranged. The son-in-law has told Beth she is never welcome in his house again — ever!
Turner and his wife, Anita, live together in the same house, but they each go their own way and they are husband and wife in name only — there is a wide gulf between them.
Vickie has been recuperating from a rare ailment for almost a whole year. Her job and her office have been given to someone else and, while she has been welcomed back, it is not the same.
Art wanders the city streets, holing up in a warm alley at night and scrounging food from the leftovers of other people. Once a successful merchant, he succumbed to the escape of alcoholism.
All of the above have something in common: they are all in exile. According to my dictionary, it means

prolonged separation from one's home or country. People may be sent into exile, but many of us, like the prodigal son, manage it without any help.

Into Captivity
In 722 BC, the Assyrians devastated Israel. Most of the captors were carried off to Assyria and no one knows what happened to them. By the sixth century BC, the Assyrians had been superseded by the Babylonians, both situated in today's Iraq. In 598 BC the Babylonians overran Judah and many of the people were carried into captivity. This was especially hard for the exiles, because their religion had been totally centered in the Jerusalem temple, which lay in ruins.

It was in the Babylonian exile, however, that their religion showed its adaptability. Bereft of the temple, the exiles focused on the scriptures which were collected, edited, and distributed among the exiles. Then, in the middle of the sixth century BC, the Babylonian Empire eventually gave way to another, Persia (today's Iran), under the leadership of Cyrus. Jewish messianic hopes began to rise and Cyrus was sometimes regarded by the Jews as a messiah ("anointed one") by whom Israel would be restored. (See Isaiah 45:1; Daniel 9:26).

Cyrus, unlike his predecessors, followed a policy of tolerance and wisdom. In 536 BC, "the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom..." (Ezra 1:1.) Cyrus also encouraged them to return to their homeland so that the temple might be rebuilt. And

he backed up his invitation with the provision of funds for that purpose.

Making Changes
When we experience exile, like the Jews, we can adapt our faith to meet the challenge of change in our circumstances. When you can't change the conditions that surround you, you can change the way you react to them.

Take a look at your own life. Are you in exile and, if so, what changes do you need to make in order to maintain your faith?

Secondly, often the possibility to return from exile appears in an unexpected form or place. God continues to send us people like Cyrus who present us with the opportunity to end our exile.

Third, when we have the opportunity to end our exile, we must grasp it. We must seize the chance to be reconciled with someone, to undo the harm we have done or that has been done to us, to return humbly to that which we have neglected.

God permits us to make the decisions that lead us into exile, but it is his will that we return. "Then rose up the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, every one whose spirit God had stirred..." (1:5).

It happened there with them, and it can happen here with us. But first, an exile has to realize that he or she is an exile

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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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