

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Pennsylvania To Implement Statewide 4-H Fee

We learned this week that Pennsylvania plans to do what Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, and other extension programs throughout the country, have done: initiate a minimal 4-H program participation fee that will be implemented Oct. 1, the beginning of the 4-H year.

According to Roxanne Price, York County extension 4-H coordinator, the fee — \$10 per child per year — is a brand new program for the state.

It's also a sign of the times — decreasing federal and state budget allocations to youth programs, shrinking sources of revenue for these kinds of programs as a whole, and reduced individual contributions. Everyone is expected to start sharing the revenue base to fund 4-H.

Some critics point out that the fee could be a bookkeeping nightmare. But the fee funding could come from a variety of sources — not necessarily from parents of the youth — such as bake sales, craft shows, car washes, or any number of avenues.

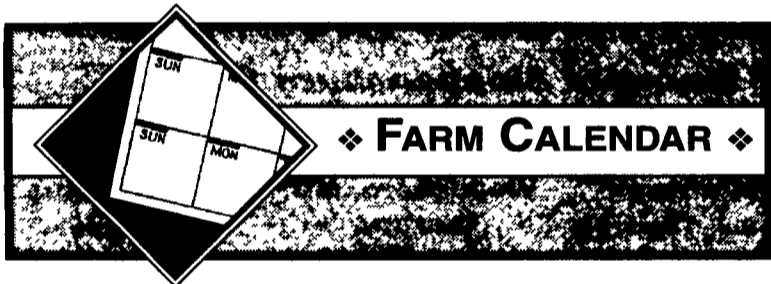
Price noted that many youth benefit from 4-H programs. And the families are accustomed to paying for sporting and other event participation — and some a lot more than \$10 per child.

"We all have to share in ways in this cost recovery program to help keep our programs afloat," noted Price.

While Pennsylvania's fee will be per child per year only, Colorado's fee is set for an initial three-year period, and fees are assessed on the total number of youth enrolled in 4-H clubs and special interest projects. According to Colorado State, most 4-H programs across the state charge a minimal county-level participation fee and recoup costs of printed materials by charging for them. Colorado is implementing a state \$5 charge per club member and an additional \$1 charge per enrollment in a special interest project. Curriculum, such as 4-H record and project books, also will increase in cost an average of 50 cents.

"The participation fees will generate resources to ensure continuity to the program support, management, and special services offered through the state 4-H office," said Milan Rewerts, Colorado State Cooperative Extension director. "The fees will help to provide staff salaries, operating and travel budgets, and Internet technology. Without the fee implementation, the 4-H program would have been negatively impacted with the loss of employees, reduced 4-H projects, and an in-

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FARM CALENDAR

Saturday, September 13

- Pa. German Folklife Festival, Historic Schaefferstown, thru Sept. 14, (717) 949-2280.
- Pa. Shepherd's Symposium and 4th Annual Young Shepherd's Camp, thru Sept. 14.
- Forestry Workshop and Walking Tour, Irish Pines Tree Farm, Spruce Creek, (814) 693-6676.

- Annual Conference Pa. Planning Association, Hilton Pittsburgh, thru Sept. 17, (717) 671-4510.
- Maryland Pasture Walk and Talk Tour, Aist beef farm, south of Upper Marlboro on Rt. 301, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m., (443) 482-2922.
- Value Added Marketing, Pa. Farm

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FARM FORUM

Editor:

The Pennsylvania General Assembly returned to legislative session on Sept. 9 after an extended spring session failed to resolve a political impasse. This has delayed the final adoption of Penn State's state appropriation.

Penn State's budget is funded as a non-preferred appropriation, and by law, the state cannot pass non-preferred appropriation bills, such as Penn State's appropriation, until its General Fund is finalized. While much of the General Fund work is already done, there are outstanding disagreements on such major issues as basic education funding, gambling expansion, and property tax reduction, which have prevented a final budget agreement from being enacted.

Until the Governor and Legislature end this stalemate and finalize Penn State's 2003-2004 appropriation, the university will be forced to borrow funds to replace the state's monthly payments of more than \$25 million. Interest charges will quickly exceed \$100,000 per month if the impasse extends through the fall.

The message to the Governor and your state legislator is simple: quickly resolve your differences, and restore full funding at last year's level to critical services, including higher education.

The current language contains a 5 percent cut for Penn State, including the agricultural research and extension line items. This will result in an approximate \$4.4

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Now Is The Time

By Leon Ressler

Lancaster County Extension Director

To Harvest Corn Silage At The Proper Moisture

With the delay in corn maturity this year, it is really tempting to get in a hurry and harvest your silage before it is ready. But it is important to remember that harvesting corn silage at the proper moisture is one of the most important steps in producing quality silage.

The ideal moisture for your operation will be determined by what kind of storage structure you will use. For sealed airtight silos, the ideal range is 60-65 percent; for upright silos, 63-68 percent; for silage bags, 60 to 70 percent; and for trench silos, 65-72 percent moisture is the desired range.

Chopping at higher moistures often causes too much acid production (which reduces palatability), DM loss, and seepage. Valuable nutrients will be lost from the crop through seepage, which can also harm the environment.

Ideally, one should test moisture during harvest to stay within the optimum moisture range. If this is not practical, you can monitor moisture by the stage of crop development. There is a simple method you can use to determine this optimum stage

for harvesting your corn silage. When the kernels reach early dent stage, a separation can be seen between kernel starch and milk.

Take an ear and snap it in half. You will see the firm starch deposited in the outer part of the kernel while the milk will occupy the base of the kernel. This gives the appearance of a whitish line separating the two areas. As the kernels continue to mature, the milk line moves down the kernels. When this line reaches the midpoint, 90 percent of the kernel dry weight has been achieved. When the milk line reaches the base of the kernel, a black layer is formed separating the kernel starch from the cob and the crop is mature.

When the crop reaches full dent and the milk line first appears, the crop is usually about 70 percent moisture. When the milk line reaches the midpoint, silage yields should be at their maximum and the moisture is at 65 percent. When the milk line reaches the base of the kernel, the crop moisture is usually about 60 percent. By observing the development of the milk line, one can determine optimum harvest time.

The one limitation of this method is the weather variation. If you have experienced extremely wet or dry conditions for a few weeks before harvest, the moisture can vary by as much as 5 percent from the predictions given above. There are also wide variations in hybrids, so testing is still important. It is best to monitor plant moisture using a microwave oven or a Koster tester. If you do not have a Koster tester, check with your nutritionist who may be able to run the test for you.

To Harvest All Mature Pumpkins Promptly

Penn State Horticulture Specialist Mike Orzolek considers 2003 to have been the most challenging pumpkin production year in the 22 years he has been with the university. Rain, rain, and more rain along with the cooler-than-normal weather across the commonwealth have caused problems from day one.

Delay in planting the pumpkins, lack of weed control, high populations of cucumber beetles, and now diseases — mildews and phytophthora — have combined to make this

season more difficult than many. A number of growers have reported infestations of phytophthora in the last two weeks. Since there are not many options for effective fungicide applications other than Acrobat and no resistant pumpkin varieties, this disease can be very devastating this time of year if observed in your pumpkin fields.

Orzolek's recommendation for most growers is to harvest all mature pumpkins that are orange or mostly orange, disease free, with green stems and place them in a dry storage with forced air blowing over/through them for the first two weeks. Be sure that all pumpkins placed in storage are disease-free. For insurance, pumpkins could be dipped or sprayed with 150 ppm chlorine prior to being placed in storage. Any phytophthora-infected fruit placed in storage has the potential to rot other fruit near it in storage.

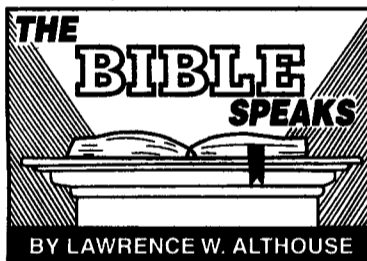
If more rainy weather returns, leaving pumpkins in the field would be hazardous to the health and marketability of the fruit. After talking with growers and traveling across the state, Orzolek estimates that many pumpkin fields have 20 to 30 percent less fruit in 2003 compared to 2002. This occurred because bees do not like wet, cloudy days and mature female pumpkin flowers are only receptive to pollen for fertilization for 6 hours before they close permanently. What fruit you find in the field this year, you may want to treat like fresh eggs.

To Purchase Crop Insurance For Fall-Seeded Wheat

Crop Revenue Coverage is available on fall seeded wheat for the first time in Pennsylvania this year. This type of coverage has been very popular with corn and soybean growers because it guarantees revenue based on the Chicago Board of Trade prices rather than on yield. See your crop insurance agent for details. The enrollment deadline is Sept. 30.

Quote Of The Week:
"Conservation is the foresighted utilization, preservation and/or renewal of forests, waters, lands and minerals, for the greatest good of the greatest number for the longest time."

— Gifford Pinchot



A MILD DOSE OF CHRISTIANITY

Background Scripture: James 1:19-26; 5:7-20.
Devotional Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:5-11.

As a school-age child, I was inoculated against several childhood diseases. I found it difficult to understand that, in order to keep me from becoming ill with these diseases, they were injecting small amounts of bacteria into my bloodstream. It took me some time to understand that these bacteria would stimulate the production of antibodies that would protect me from these diseases in the future.

Similarly, we can also apply this same principle to the effect of our Christianity. A mild dose of the gospel may inoculate us against experiencing a more severe case of it. Unlike a physical disease, however, it is the more severe or deeper dose of the gospel that is to be desired.

Jesus did not call his disciples to a mild dose of discipleship. The rich young ruler was attracted to the teachings of Jesus, but when Jesus told him the cost of discipleship, he went away sorrowfully, for he didn't want a faith that demanding.

The beguiling thing about a mild

dose of the gospel is that it often allows us to count ourselves as followers of Jesus without actually doing so. As nominal Christians, we permit ourselves the delusion that we are true disciples. We have baptismal certificates and church membership status to support that illusion. Our mild dose of Christianity becomes an acceptable substitute for the real thing.

No Nominal Disciples

This problem has existed since the earliest days of the church. The only difference between nominal Christians today and the rich young ruler is that Jesus forced him to realize that a nominal relationship would not be any relationship at all.

Jesus made it clear that his mission was not to call people to approve of him or to simply believe in him and his teachings, but "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

It was this concern with which James is concerned. Perhaps they key verse for his whole letter is 1:22, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." Coming to church on Sundays and hearing the word without doing it is only nominal Christianity. Nor is it enough for us to merely talk about our faith.

If we want to talk the talk, we must also walk the walk that Jesus walked. Talking the talk only allows us to deceive ourselves into believing that we are Christians. I'm not suggesting that we should not talk like Christians, but that so many of us never get beyond the talking.

James gives us a simple but powerful example. The commandment is: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (2:8). That means showing no partiality. "For if a man with gold

rings and in fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and you pay attention to the one who wears fine clothing and say, 'Have a seat here, please,' while you say to the poor man, 'Stand there,' or 'Sit at my feet,' have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?" This is evidence of only a mild dose of the gospel.

'A Right Straw Epistle'

Martin Luther saw this passage as a contradiction of Paul's doctrine of grace alone, faith alone, and called it "a right strawy epistle." But James and Paul are only in superficial disagreement based upon different perspectives and different understandings of the word "faith." James asks, "What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but has not works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?" (2:14-16).

When James speaks of "faith," he means a belief that is only ideas and words. However, by "faith," Paul means a conviction and trust that motivate the way we live. Paul affirms that we are saved by our trust in God, not our good deeds. James affirms that a "faith" that does not produce fruits is not a real faith. Paul would not deny that.

Belief without fruitful works is nothing more than a mild dose of the gospel.

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