

Lancaster Farming

OPINION

And Still No Budget

It makes us wonder, sometimes, why there hasn't been enough criticism of the Rendell Administration.

Schools and other agencies are clamoring for the final state budget that should have been ready in July. As of presstime, still no state budget.

What makes matters worse, those Rendell campaign promises — raising enough money from vice taxation to create property tax reform — have not come anywhere near planning stage. Now, all we see out of the Rendell camp is a proposed House plan to increase the state sales tax to 6.5 percent. Is this the first time that a Republican-controlled General Assembly would actually side with the Democratic governor on an actual tax increase? Could it happen?

We learned that, according to the Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association (www.pamanufacturers.org), the U.S. average sales tax is 4.83 percent. Pennsylvania's proposed sales tax increase at 6.5 percent ranks it right up there with Mississippi, Tennessee, and Rhode Island, at 7 percent.

According to the association, the sales tax is needed to raise \$600 million to \$1.2 billion to cover at least part of Rendell's plans for education spending. The association noted Rendell has the "right" as governor to expect "something" from the Republican lawmakers.

Earlier this year, Rendell proposed raising the personal income tax from 2.8 percent to 3.5 percent.

So where exactly will the solution for the reforms of property tax so heralded by the freshman Rendell governor crew come from?

We were intrigued by the recent introduction of legislation co-sponsored by State Rep James E. Casorio Jr. (D-56th) that would give every Pennsylvania homeowner a \$5,000 homestead exclusion on property taxes, and an additional \$10,000 exclusion to low-income seniors who qualify for the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program. That amount would be subtracted from the fair market value of a home before property tax amounts are calculated.

That proposal sounds like a step in the right direction, but it's just a dent. Real property tax reform is needed, and needed *now*. The state shouldn't simply shift a method of payment from two departments (sales and personal income tax) to the next (property). That is not moving *ahead* — it's moving *sideways*.



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

To Be Aware Of The Threat From The Marmorated Stinkbug

A new species of stinkbug has made itself at home in the Lehigh Valley. Beginning in 1999, an unknown stinkbug was observed as a nuisance pest inhabiting houses during fall, winter, and spring. This insect was behaving like the multicolored Asian lady beetle or box elder bug. In 2001, it was identified by Cornell entomologist E. Richard Hoekes as *Allomorpha haysi* or the brown marmorated stinkbug.

This species had never before been observed in North America, but is common in eastern Asia where it is a pest of tree fruit and soybeans.

In 2002 and 2003, USDA APHIS entomologist Gary Bernon has worked closely with Lehigh County Cooperative Extension's Karen Bernhard to learn more about the brown marmorated stinkbug's behavior. After observing the behavior of this stinkbug for two seasons, these entomologists have concluded that bug indeed does feed on stone fruit and has the potential to cause economic

damage on peaches and apricots. This insect has been found in Lehigh, Northampton, Berks, and upper Bucks and Montgomery counties. Over time, it is expected that the range of this insect will expand.

To Upgrade Your Beef Cattle Herd At The Penn State Beef Cattle Sale

The Penn State Proud! Beef Cattle Sale on Nov. 7 at the University Park campus will share highly desired top-quality Angus genetics with beef producers across the East and reaffirm Penn State's reputation as an institution that maintains a first-class breeding operation.

But those aren't the biggest benefits from the first such sale the university has conducted in 15 years, according to John Comerford, associate professor of dairy and animal science and beef cattle coordinator.

"The most important reason why a university such as Penn State would own cattle is for their educational value," he said. "Sales give us an opportunity to teach students how to prepare cattle for a sale as well as how to create catalogs and advertisements. For that reason, we developed an undergraduate class in livestock merchandising.

"Students in the class will participate in all aspects of the sale activities, including preparing the catalog, submitting advertisements, reviewing budgets, preparing the sale facility, meeting and interacting with buyers and guests, and providing feedback to help improve our sales in the future."

Not since 1988 have Penn State students experienced a cattle sale. "Our department made a strategic decision a few years ago to begin having regular beef sales," Comerford said. "We have been producing more cattle to get ready for this one.

"We have received animals from endowments, gifts, and donations," Comerford said. "We must have a certain number of cattle available to have a sale, because we could gut our program if we sold too many and

didn't have enough animals to meet teaching and research needs. But we decided if we are going to produce cattle at Penn State, then let's produce good cattle, and then we can use them to make a contribution toward education of our students as well as making a contribution to the beef industry."

In addition to purebred Angus cattle, some crossbred animals from the college's commercial herd also will be sold, including Simmental crossbreds and 4-H steer prospects.

Starting at noon at the Beef-Sheep Center off Orchard Road, approximately 65 head of cattle will be sold. Many of the cows will have calves at their side and all females will have been bred to top AI sires. A few bull calves will be auctioned, along with one 2-year-old bull. The sale is being managed by one of the college's alumni, Dick Beck, originally from York County, who is in the cattle sale management business in North Carolina.

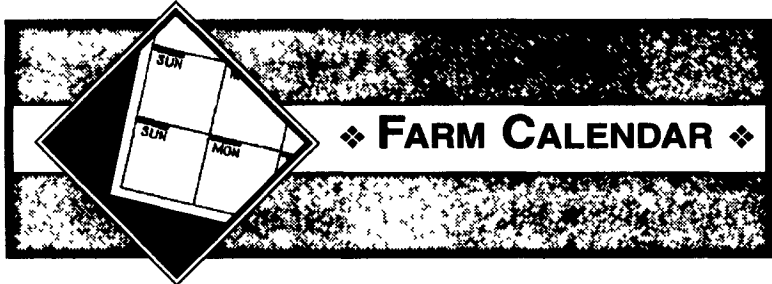
Beef unit manager Don Nichols stresses that sales are great for students. "We are developing students who will be qualified to merchandise cattle," he said. "They will learn marketing techniques and the subtle things we do to prepare animals for sale. This will teach them something that they can take home. They'll meet people in the business and hopefully make merchandising contacts that might help them later."

Nichols hopes this year's sale will be the first of many during regular intervals at Penn State. "Sales help us to control our cattle inventory and they allow us to offer our genetics to other Angus breeders throughout the country," he said. "With the number of cattle we have and the long-range plan, we could have sales every two or three years. It is something that we have to build on. Sales attract students and help other breeders."

For more information about the beef sale, call (814) 863-0831 or visit the Web at das.psu.edu/beefsale.....

Quote Of The Week:

"If everyone is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking."
— George S. Patton Jr.

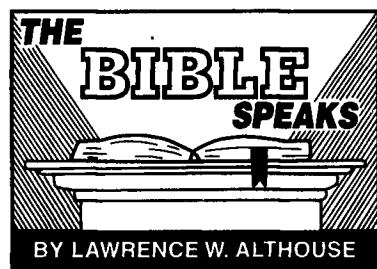


Saturday, October 25

- Pa. Sheep and Wool Growers' Association Annual meeting, Penn State University Park.
- State 4-H Model Horse Show, Farm Show Complex.
- Pa. State Grange Conference, thru Oct. 28, Inn at Chester Springs, Exton, (800) 552-3865, 10 a.m.
- Schuylkill County Fall Compost

- Workshop, cooperative extension building, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., (717) 622-4225.
- Dauphin County Cooperative Extension Annual meeting, Ag and Research Center, Dauphin, 6 p.m., (717) 921-880.
- Delmarva Driving Club's Fall Harvest, Pepperbox, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., (302) 875-4971.

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THE LATE GOD

Background Scripture:
2 Peter 3.
Devotional Reading:
Hebrews 10:19-25.

The above title could be taken in two different ways. First, as an allusion to the traditional complaint that God is slow to carry out his promises. Or it could allude to the popular theological tempest of some decades ago over the "death of God." Actually, both are appropriate for what we will be discussing today.

It is obvious that 2 Peter is reacting to criticisms by outsiders: "... scoffers will come in the last days... saying 'Where is the promise of his coming?'" (3:3,4). The rest of this chapter is a rebuttal to those who are pointing out that early Christian expectations of Christ's imminent return were in error. The scoffers suggest that either they were wrong in expecting it or that God had not kept his promise to them.

In studying 2 Peter 3, it is important that we understand its context. First, many in the early church ex-

pected the imminent return of Jesus (including Paul), an expectation that was not fulfilled. Some of Paul's teachings are based upon the belief that they were living in the last days before the Second Coming. This includes his passive attitude to slavery and advice that couples should not marry unless they couldn't control themselves. These were essentially interim teachings. In reading his later letters, we can see that in time Paul realized that the "end of all things" was delayed. Considerably later, when 2 Peter was written, it was obvious that they had been wrong about this matter.

The Apocalyptic Vision

Secondly, many early Christians were deeply influenced by the apocalyptic, a type of religious thought believed to have originated among Zoroastrians in Persia, incorporated into Judaism while the Jews lived in exile there, and influential in the early church. Stoic philosophers were also influenced by it. The language of the apocalyptic is visionary, similar to what occurs in dreams. The book of Revelation (English for the Greek "Apocalypse") is the most prominent example in the New Testament, although 2 Peter also has obviously been influenced by it.

Apocalyptic thought and writing is usually hopelessly pessimistic about the present time, but hopeful of a cataclysmic future scenario in which God will justify the righteous and destroy the wicked — along with, in some cases, the world. Today, apart from some Christian Adventist groups, apocalyptic literature is not important to us because (1) its language is not compatible with the con-

temporary mind and (2) the failed expectation of Christ's imminent return has left us to be less specific and dogmatic about the Second Coming and the Day of Judgment.

Finally, in the time of 2 Peter, there were Christians who, believing salvation was already secured, were teaching and living in emancipation from moral law: we are saved and, while we're waiting for Christ's return, we are free to live as we choose! (They were not the last aberrant Christians to have preached moral anarchy.)

On What We Can Agree

So, if today we are not of one mind as to when, how, and where the Second Coming will take place, or whether it will mean "the end of all things," what can 2 Peter 3 say to us today? The key is in 3:11. "In view of the fact that all these things are to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be? Surely men of good and holy character, who live expecting and earnestly longing for the coming of the day of God." (J.B. Phillips). For whatever his purpose may be, God's delay (only from a human perspective) gives us time to live righteously in his world.

Regardless of how we may agree or disagree concerning the Second Coming, while we wait for God's promised fulfillment, we all need to heed the challenge: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (3:18).

Lancaster Farming Editorial Staff: Your Source For Ag News

Our time and talents are invested heavily in bringing news from the region's ag events to your home — and we've been doing so a long time. The *Lancaster Farming* editorial staff has been recognized by various organizations with:

- 2 Northeast Farm Communicators Association first-place awards.
- 2 Keystone Awards.
- Ag Journalist of the Year.
- Dairy Council and NEAFCS Honors.

• **Andy Andrews**, editor, about 14 years of service to *Lancaster Farming*, 22 years in the journalism field. Winner of the 1992 PennAg Ag Journalism of Year honors, winner of 1993 Keystone Press Award; honorable mention, 1995, Keystone Press, first-place award for special project category. Northeast Farm Communicators Association (NEFC), 2003

• **Lou Ann Good**, food and family features editor, 16 years of service to *Lancaster Farming*, 17 years in the journalism field, winner of the Dairy Council Inc. Friend of Nutrition Education and National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences honors.

• **Dave Lefever**, staff writer, about three years of service to *Lancaster Farming*, five years in the journalism field.

• **Charlene Shupp Espenshade**, staff writer, four years in the journalism field

• **Michelle Kunjappu**, sections staff, three years of service to *Lancaster Farming*, four years in the journalism field. Kunjappu is the winner of a first-place photojournalism award from NEFC



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

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