



Lancaster Farming

OPINION

Preserve Farmland Preservation

We learned recently from our friends at Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (PFB) exactly how close Pennsylvania may have come to a dangerous precedent.

According to PFB, House Bill 66 — introduced in Pennsylvania's House of Representatives to transfer state-owned farmland in Warren County for use as a Wal-Mart (but defeated by a wide margin this week) — would have set an alarming precedent for the future of farmland preservation in Pennsylvania.

Simply put, if Wal-Mart or other large shopping malls want to go up, let them take established brownfields (old factories or other facilities not in use) and convert them, if need be. Leave good, productive farmland alone.

According to statements by PFB, in the past, government-owned hospitals, prisons, retirement homes, and others allowed patients, inmates, and residents to work on farms owned by those facilities. Regulatory actions halted the ability for this to continue, and many of the farms were leased to area farmers.

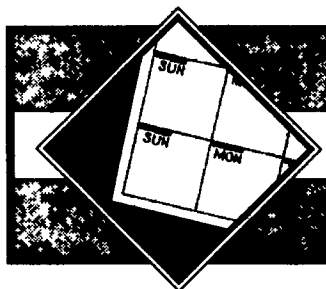
Numerous attempts to sell the farmland for other purposes have occurred over the years, and have always been defeated. If any more bills like HB 66 would pass, noted PFB, that could "set a new direction for the destruction of prime farmland, and will also make it easier to convert farmland in all counties to nonfarm uses."

So those 67 acres of prime farmland in Warren County located at Warren State Hospital are protected for now, thankfully. Last year, Warren County's commissioners decided to sell the land to a commercial developer. The transaction would have required passage of state legislation to transfer the final 29 acres of the property to the county and remove an existing agricultural use restriction on another 22 acres.

PFB reminds us that it has been the long-standing policy of the commonwealth to restrict farmland it owns for agricultural use to the fullest extent possible if such land is sold or transferred. What's more, "Pennsylvania has never before removed an agricultural use restriction once placed on a significant tract of farmland. To make matters worse, the land in question has been actively used for agriculture by a farm family," noted PFB in a recent statement.

The measure was strongly defeated by a very wide margin on Tuesday. Pennsylvania's farmland preservation policies remain strong, and no precedent was set — good for land preservationists, good for farmers, good for the state's agribusiness.

Let's stop these kind of bills before they start. Contact your state senator and representative and ask them to oppose any similar bills and preserve farmland — and keep farmland preservation viable and secure.



◆ FARM CALENDAR ◆

Monday, December 1

Horse Pasture Management, York County 4-H Center, 7 p.m.-9 p.m., (717) 840-7408.

Tilling the Soil of Opportunity, York County Extension Office, 12-week course, 6:30 p.m., (717) 840-7408.

Private Pesticide Applicators' Certification Training Session, Extension Office, Room 7, Cecil County Courthouse, Elkton, Md., 1:30 p.m. and 7 p.m., (410) 996-5280.

Tuesday, December 2

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@lancasterfarming.com
- 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.

Chesapeake Fields Annual Meeting, Black-eyed Susan, Chestertown, 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m., (410) 810-2081.

Wednesday, December 3

ADADC N.Y. District Meeting, Strawberry Fields Cafe, Chaffee, N.Y., noon, (716) 492-3659.

Ag Engineering Workshop for Ag Professionals, Best Western, Sayre, thru Dec. 4, (717) 840-7408.

Custom Operators' Workshop, Berks County Ag Center, Leesport, 7 p.m.-9:30 p.m., (610) 378-1327.

Milk Marketing Areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, Public Hearing, Agriculture Building, 2301 N. Cameron St., Harrisburg, (717) 787-4194.

Pa. Christmas and Gift Show, Farm Show Complex, thru Dec. 7, Harrisburg, (717) 233-5100.

Dairy Business Association Conference, Crown Plaza Hotel, Madison, Wis., thru Dec. 4, (920) 491-9956.

New York AGR-Lite Meeting, Binghamton Broome County, Upper Front St., Cornell University, (607) 785-2222.

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Now Is The Time
By Leon Ressler
Lancaster County Extension Director

To Deal With Increasing Prices For Soybeans, Soybean Meal

The general outlook for the commodity markets is for the corn price to remain steady and the price of soybeans and soybean meal to continue to rise. Since September, the futures market prices for soybeans and soybean meal have risen roughly 20-25 percent, depending on the market report that you read. This rise in protein prices will be reflected in the cost of purchased feed for your dairy.

Lancaster dairy agent Dr. Ken Griswold suggests there are two general ways to work on controlling purchased feed costs.

First, examine your ration for opportunities to lower the total crude protein (CP) level that will not have a negative impact on milk production. The effective use of protein for an individual cow is dependent on a number of factors, including stage of lactation or days in milk (DIM), lactation number, level of milk production, and dry

matter intake (DMI). Cows in early lactation (less than 100 DIM) are more sensitive to changes in CP concentration than later lactation cows. A dairy producer should work closely with a nutritionist to monitor the DMI, milk production, and milk components (that is, fat percentage and protein percentage) of the cows when CP levels are changed in the ration.

The second manner in which you can control protein feed costs is to utilize alternative protein sources. Urea and other nonprotein nitrogen (NPN) sources can be used to replace protein in the diet. However, care must be taken to avoid potential pitfalls associated with excessive protein solubility. Therefore, urea is well-matched with high corn silage and dry grain diets and less well-suited for high haylage diets.

Make sure to have mineral levels adjusted to accommodate the urea in the diet, especially sulfur. Gradually introduce the urea over several weeks' time into the ration, starting at 0.5 percent of the finished feed. Do not feed urea at level greater than 1.5 percent of the finished feed.

Other protein sources are normally distinguished by the level of protein they contain. Intermediate protein sources include brewer's grains, corn gluten feed, and whole cottonseed. High protein sources include distillers' dried grains with solubles (DDGS), corn gluten meal, cottonseed meal, and animal proteins such as blood meal, fish meal, or feather meal. All of these protein sources have some drawbacks to their use based on nutrient content, palatability, antinutritional factors, or price, so consult with your nutritionist or feed representative prior to making dramatic changes to your feeding program.

For example, currently DDGS are well underpriced based on nutritive value, but the rest of the diet must be balanced to provide adequate lysine, especially for the early lactation cow. Furthermore, there

can be a great deal of variability in the quality of DDGS depending on the method of processing. Always seek the advice of your nutritionist for options in feeding program.

To Plan Your Farm Transfer

Planning for your successor, or someone to take over your farm, is the most important task you need to complete if you want your farm to survive into the next generation. Yet, according to some recent statistics, many farm families have not identified a successor for their family business or even talked to family members about what will happen to the farm when they die.

To assist you in this process, Pennsylvania Farm Link and Penn State Extension will conduct a Passing on the Farm Workshop at the Lighthouse Restaurant, 4301 Philadelphia Avenue in Chambersburg, on Dec. 16 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

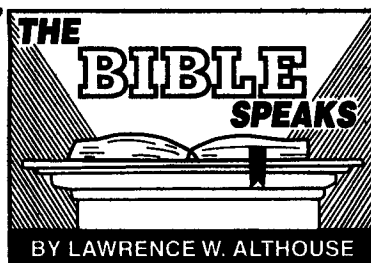
Farmers seeking ideas for successfully passing their farm to family members, or those interested in locating interested, unrelated farmers to take over an operation, should attend. Beginning farmers are also urged to participate to glean ideas for building their businesses. The workshop will conclude with a panel of local farmers discussing how they transferred their own farms.

Lunch at a cost of \$10 per person will be served in the restaurant. Reservations are required by Dec. 9. Please mail your reservations to Pennsylvania Farm Link, 2708 N. Colebrook Road, Manheim, PA 17545. Questions about this workshop or farm transfer issues can be answered at (717) 664-7077. The Lighthouse Restaurant is located on the left one-quarter mile north of the intersection of Philadelphia Avenue and Sunset Boulevard in Chambersburg.

Quote Of The Week:

"Failing organizations are usually overmanaged and under-led."

— Warren G. Bennis



BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

HOLY WARS?

Background Scripture:

Jude.

Devotional Reading:

Galatians 6:1-10.

Back in the 1940s, when I was a youth, the morality scene was much different from today. My home church was against the use of tobacco, alcohol, dancing, and recreational activities on Sunday. Sexual relations were sanctioned only within marriage and babies born out of wedlock were a major scandal. (A recent report indicates that 30 percent of American babies are illegitimate.) Not that our society then measured up to them, but those were the standards.

Even then I believed the standards to be too legalistic and often hypocritical. For example, one woman in our church stopped cigarette smokers on the street to advise them of their immorality. Her husband, however, smoked cigars and for some strange reason that was not "immoral." Square dancing was acceptable, but not any other type.

I noted that the sins of the flesh were often much more openly and consistently condemned than the sins of the mind and spirit. Sexual sins were almost always of greater importance and condemned more

loudly than lying, cheating, fraud, gossip, covetousness, materialistic idolatry, and prejudice.

As theologian Reinhold Niebuhr observed, "If there were a drunken orgy somewhere, I would bet 10 to 1 a church member was not in it. But, if there was a lynching, I would bet 10 to 1 a church member was in it."

The Extremes

This observation was accurate when it was written, but maybe not today. The possibility of church members participating in a drunken orgy are not as slim as they once were. In the 1940s, the churches represented a more conservative morality than the rest of society. In the years since the 1960s it is often difficult to discern a Christian morality different from that of society. Now, anything goes!

Americans find it impossible to understand that Islamics are so critical of our society, but should we be surprised? Our licentious way of life today stands in sharp contrast to fundamentalist Islamic society. They believe we are obsessed with sex, addiction, and sheer hedonism. While I believe they are far too moralistic, I cannot escape the conviction that our society is far too immoral, including not only those listed above, but also business corruption, rampant injustice, consumeristic materialism, and a disdain for those who cannot help themselves.

Some Islamic societies seem out of control from a different perspective. Yesterday, I read that the Islamic appeals court of Nigeria had determined that Amani Lawal, a woman accused of adultery, will not be buried in the ground up to her neck and then stoned to death. I felt elated because I had joined with many others in writing letters to the Nigerian ambassador pro-

testing this barbaric sentence. Yet today, some Nigerian Muslims are now protesting her release as a deterioration of morals.

Both Hypocritical

We have one society out of control and another stifled by control — with hypocrisy at both extremes. So how do Christians establish a moral stance between the extremes?

The Letter of Jude, the most intense and vehement book of the New Testament, is a call to action, not a reasoned treatise, against immorality. Worst of all, this crisis is coming from inside the church. "For admission has been secretly gained by some...ungodly persons who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness."

Not only are they immoral, but their hedonistic practices are adversely influencing church members. "These are blemishes on your love feast, as they boldly carouse together, looking after themselves" (v. 12). And so that this is not taken too lightly, he compares them to waterless clouds, fruitless trees, wild waves of the sea, and "...wandering stars for whom the nether gloom of darkness has been reserved for ever."

"... Build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God; wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And convince some, who doubt; save some, by snatching them out of the fire; on some have mercy with fear..." Jude is calling, not for a holy war, but a holy witness.

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—by—

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Lancaster Farming

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