

Success Story Agriculture - A Modern Miracle

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa.—vity per farm worker has American agriculture efficiency is one of the most amazing success stories of our time. Average product-

more than doubled in the last 20 years. In fact, productivity has gone up more in the last two decades than in all recorded time prior to 1940.

Dr H R Albrecht, director of the Agricultural and Home Economics Extension Service, The Pennsylvania State University says one hour of farm labor today produces four times as much food and fiber as it did 40 years ago. Crop production is 65 per cent greater per acre, and output per rearing animal is 88 per cent higher.

During the 1950's productivity of the American farm worker increased by 6-1/2 per cent a year, or about three times the increased output in nonagricultural industry, which went up 2 per cent a year in the same period.

Back in 1910, it took a farmer 135 hours to produce 100 bushels of corn, 106 hours for 100 bushels of wheat, and 276 hours for a bale of cotton. Last year, it took about 15 man-hours to produce 100 bushels of corn, 13 for 100 bushels of wheat and 57 for a bale of cotton.

The foundation of this progress in agriculture, Albrecht explains, lies in government and industry research education and the hard work and ingenuity of farmers and ranchers.

Research is constantly improving plants and animals, providing better management of soil and water, seeking new uses for farm products, and devising new and better methods of storing, processing, transporting

and merchandising farm products. Educational services quickly carry this new knowledge to farmers and others who put it to use.

More and better machines continue to replace labor and boost production. Today we have more than four times as many cornpickers on farms as in 1945, more than 14 times as many forage harvesters, and more than 15 times as many pickup balers.

Heavier applications and more widespread use of fertilizers helped greatly to increase crop yield, giving larger output on fewer acres with less labor. Potash use is now three times more than in 1945, and nitrogen use more than five times that of 15 years ago.

More general use of pesticides has cut production losses. A wide variety of products and services, many of them unknown a few years ago, are now in common use on U. S. farms.

How about our future food supply? Albrecht claims if our population reaches 230 million by 1975, as predicted, farmers and ranchers must produce 16.3 billion pounds more red meat, 47 billion pounds more milk,

20.7 million tons more fruits and vegetables and 29 billion more eggs.

To produce these and other foods another 200 million acres of cropland would be required if yields in 1975 are the same as in 1956.

But we don't have 200 million more acres of cropland. And we don't need it, according to Albrecht.

Greater efficiency in crop and livestock production will make it possible to feed 230 million people in 1975 from about the same total acreage now used. Further, today's farmers are applying the soil and water conservation measures needed to protect the land for maximum safe use in 1975—and far into the future.

CHILD FEEDING

Preschool children are keenly aware of the flavors and textures of food, says Louise Hamilton, Penn State extension foods specialist. They are quick to spot milk with a slight off flavor, vegetables not quite up to par, strings in crooked spinach, or scum on hot cocoa.

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