

Across the Editor's Desk

Lighting Up Profits

A recent issue of "Electricity on the Farm" gave the following explanation of how proper use of lighting can make a big difference in profits.

It was supper time and Fred Williams had just finished collecting eggs from his 10,000 hens. As he left the poultry house, he turned the lights off. Doing so may have cost him \$2,000.

Improper lighting can decrease production by over a dozen eggs per bird per year. Even at only 25 cents a dozen, this doesn't take long to add up to a sizeable sum.

The amount of light hens receive has a great effect on egg production rate, egg size and the total number of eggs each hen will lay.

Dr. J. V. Shutze, of Colorado State University's Poultry Science Department, found that lighting plays an important part in a poultry operation's profits — it can make a difference of as many as 16 eggs per hen during a laying cycle.

He ran 12 different lighting tests on white leghorn pullets. Pullets given light for 16 hours

a day had a lower egg production rate than those receiving more light. A group that started on 22 hours of light with a gradual decrease to 16 and then a gradual increase back to 22 hours had a good increase in egg production.

One of the best lighting systems Dr. Shutze studied starts the pullets at 16 hours of light with a slight decrease each day until 9 hours are reached. The day after the pullets reach the nine-hour level, they are abruptly increased to a 16-hour level and kept at this level for the remainder of their laying cycle.

Buds on this 16-hour-a-day schedule showed the sharpest increase in production. They were 168 days old when they reached 10 per cent production and ten days later had reached 50 per cent.

Proper lighting not only delays the first egg until the pullet is mature, but it can also enable the pullets to reach flock production level in a shorter time. Therefore, if you are losing money on small eggs because your pullets start laying when they were too young, controlled lighting may be your

solution. Hooking lights to a time clock will make sure your pullets are getting the right amount of light each day.

Check with your county agent, state college extension specialist or local power supplier. Any one of them will help you decide which lighting system best fits your set-up. Having the right lighting system will mean greater returns from your investment.

Farmer Reacts to Blight

The following report in the November Agri-News, a recently established publication of Geigy Agricultural Chemicals, points out how the Southern Corn Blight hit many Midwestern farmers. While this Lexington, Ill., farmer isn't at all discouraged about the future, he is taking some steps to minimize any possible damage next year from the blight.

"The corn looked wonderful until the first week of August. Then it came. I couldn't believe what was happening. I would walk in the fields each day and watch it move. It was really moving fast."

That's how Ivan Gleeson, Lexington, Ill., describes the invasion of the southern corn leaf blight, which has cost him and his brothers Harvey and Paul at least 25 per cent of their yield.

The Gleesons, who grow 1,800 acres of corn, say they will be lucky to get an overall yield average of 100 bu per acre. That's considerably below their normal yields, but higher corn

prices will likely offset part of the yield reduction. The situation could have been worse, as Ivan related to Agri-News:

"The 240 acres we planted in April were ahead of the blight. You couldn't compare the same numbers planted in April and May. Early planting saved part of our crop."

"Most often in the past corn planted in April has produced a better yield and was of better quality than the same kind planted in May."

"Fields we planted between May 9 and May 17 had the worst blight. We will probably harvest 70 bushels per acre in these fields."

The Gleesons used several varieties of corn this year. There is a world of difference in how blight affected each variety. Some numbers that have been their best yielding corn have been hurt the most.

They don't plan to drastically change their program for next year, but some new kinds of corn will go into the ground, Ivan explains:

"We will be seeking varieties that are resistant to blight. They will probably lower our yield, but we can't afford to take a chance on the blight. Varieties hurt most by blight will not be used any more."

"I think we will see seed companies going back to hand detasseling. This year hand detasseled corn took the blight remarkably well. Stalk quality and yield was good."

"I think plant breeders will overcome blight just like they overcame other problems. After we suffer the losses from this blight we will be better off in years to come. We've had problems before and we've always come out ahead."

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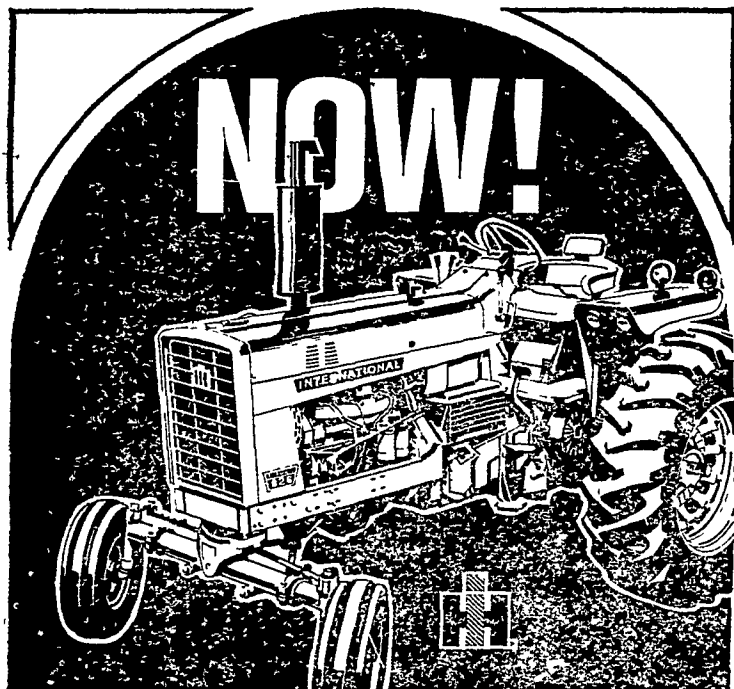
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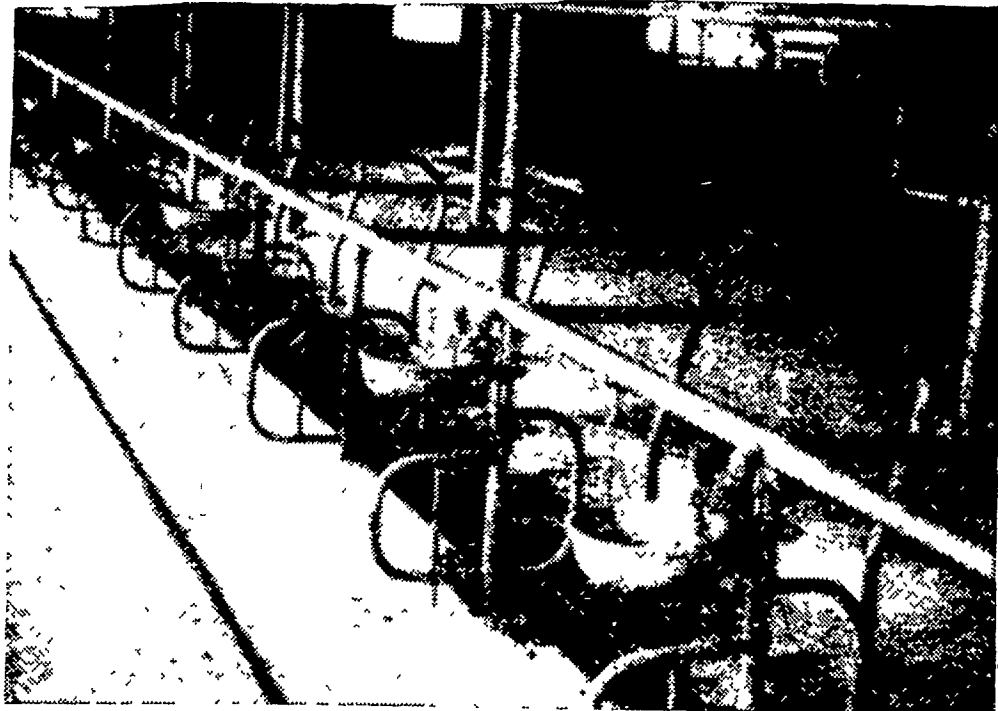
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