

Ray of Hope

(Continued From Page 1)
 efficiencies, with no regard for the health of the soil.
 "For a soil to be healthy, it needs a lot of humus, three to five percent, because that's the only way you can get all the micro-organisms that occur naturally in the soil. These micro-organisms are the agents that make all the

elements available that a plant needs."
 Cox and others in the organic movement feel that the proliferation of agricultural chemicals and mechanization has produced an ecological imbalance which will eventually destroy the life-support system of "space ship earth". He says that in areas where the soil isn't "healthy", the people aren't healthy either.
 "Organic methods, where a man farms with nature instead of against her, are the only means

we have to stop our race to extinction," Cox said. "We've got to get people back to producing more of their own food and fiber."

Cox admitted that organic farming was a lot more work than chemical farming, but added that he felt the effort was worth it.

Manure, compost and grounds rocks were mentioned as the organic means of building soils. Chemical fertilizers and pesticides have no place in the organic barn. "Actually," Cox said, "it takes an act of faith to become an organic farmer. And the first year you really take a beating."

"On our farm in Emmaus, the first year we used organic methods the bugs ruined just about everything. A chemical farmer would have reacted to the situation by buying a lot of bug spray. But on an organic farm, you want as many bugs as you can get, so they eat each other instead of the crops. Pesticides put everything out of whack, and it takes a while to get the natural balance back into the land."

Most farming authorities feel that an abrupt abandonment of agricultural chemicals would result in calamitous food shortages. Cox said, "The

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agribusiness companies tell us that if we made a total switch to organic methods, we'd have massive starvation, and one-third to one-half of our people would die. They say we need all those chemicals to keep our people alive. I have to disagree with them. In China, they're farming land that has never seen any kind of chemical, and there are some fields that have been in continuous production for nearly forty centuries."

One reason Cox feels that McHale is good for the organic movement is the fact that the secretary has instituted a study of the market potentials for organically grown food. The year-long study also includes development of a certification program for organic foods, and the publication of a handbook of organic methods.

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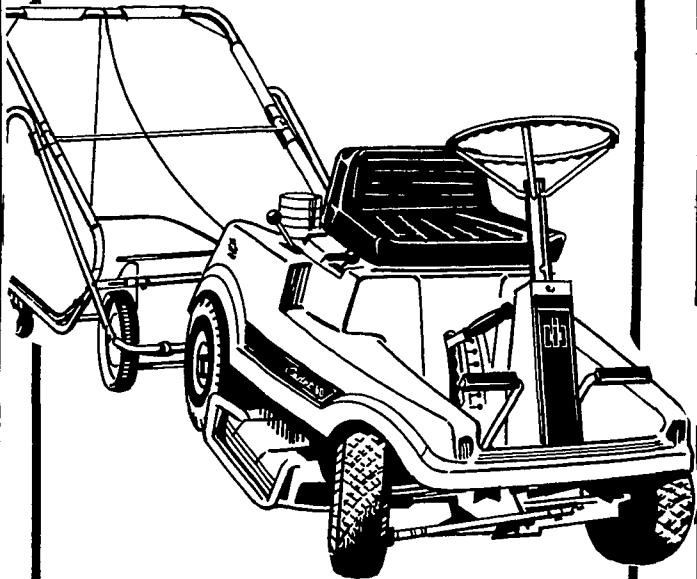
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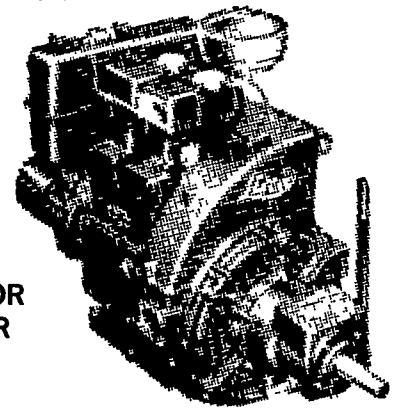
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