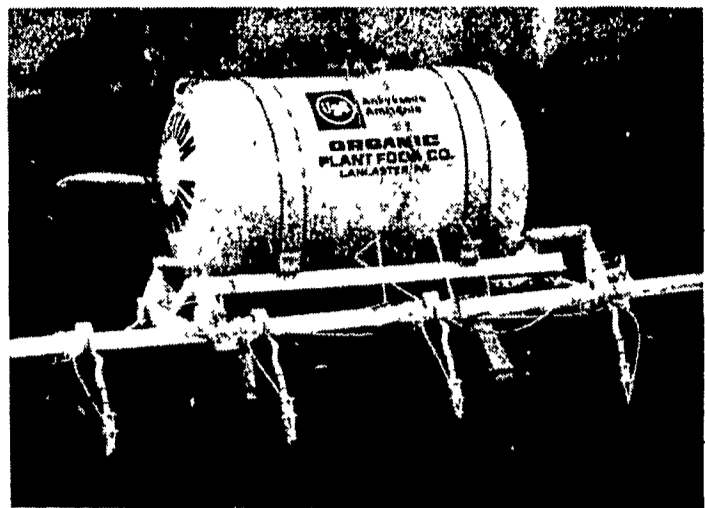


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Efficiency Boosted 1972 Farm Output

More efficient use of such inputs as land, labor, and machinery boosted total 1972 farm output 1 percent over the 1971 record, according to a report from the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The annual pulse-taking by USDA's Economic Research Service revealed that total volume of farm inputs used in production was the same as in 1971, while combined crop and livestock output rose 1 percent.

Production averaged 11 percent over the 1967 benchmark while input volume was up only 2 percent.

Fewer acres were used for crops in 1972 than in 1971, but yields rose 2 percent, raising total crop output 1 percent. Despite one of the latest and wettest row-crop harvest seasons in memory, most regions enjoyed record or near-record output. In fact, corn and soybean yields in the beleaguered Corn Belt were

record high. Farm output in the Northeast, however, dropped a tenth after successive bouts of hurricane, rain, and early frost.

Cotton, soybeans, sugar crops, tobacco, and vegetables all registered production gains, offsetting smaller feed and food grain, hay, and fruit and nut crops. Although citrus fruit output was record large, the non-citrus fruit harvest was the smallest in a generation.

A record level of livestock production was attributed to gains for cattle and calves, broilers, turkeys, and milk, which outweighed declining production of hogs, sheep and lambs, and eggs. Trends to less efficient feed use for cattle, and to more efficient rates for broilers continued.

Farming took less labor than ever—a record-low 62 billion hours. That's because output per hour advanced 3 percent for crops, and 6 percent for livestock. Fertilizer use leveled off for the year ended June 30, 1972. And with fewer farms and bigger and more powerful machines, numbers of major equipment items on farms continued the long-term decline.

A free copy of "Changes in Farm Production and Efficiency, a Summary Report 1973," Statistical Bulletin No. 233, is available on postcard request from the Office of Communication, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250. Please include your zip-code.

Fireballs

In astronomy, fireballs are bits of stone or metal that rain from the sky at all times of the year. A fireball is a brilliant meteor. Any piece of fragment that survives the flight and impact is called a meteorite.

Hay researchers at Sperry New Holland, the world's largest manufacturer of haymaking equipment, say dairy cows may suffer serious health problems if long-fiber hay is not included in the animals' diets.

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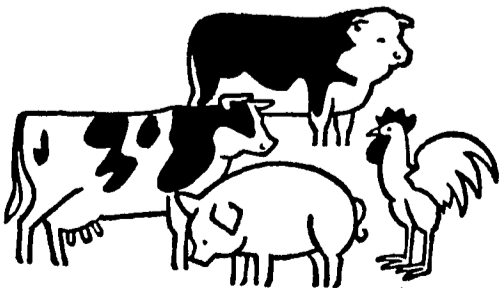


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