

## 'Fill 'er Up'

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the six-week period needed for complete digestion of the organic wastes.

Experimental data show 10 cubic feet of methane can be generated from two-to-three pounds of dry animal waste. It has about two-thirds of the calorific value (BTU's per cubic foot) of natural gas.

Although the first gas from their digester was used to light a gas mantle, it can also be used for heating, lighting, or to fuel farm machinery. The old refrigerator compressor proved to be quite suitable to force the methane gas into a storage tank which could be mounted on a garden tractor. Subsequently, it was not difficult to design a carburetor adapter to run the tractor which Bair uses to mow his lawn.

"We hope we have done a lot of the ground work so that some enterprising farmer attending Ag Progress Days will pick up where we leave off and really adapt the idea," Bair says. "Farmers are

very enterprising people," Miller adds. "We are sure the idea will be picked up and improved upon -- and that is our whole purpose."

In addition to the fuel benefit, research indicates that the residue which remains after gas production has a slightly higher nitrogen content than does the raw waste. Ton for ton it has greater value to crops.

But Dr. Harter cautions, "Most U. S. researchers claim that the economics of converting agricultural wastes into useable fuel at present is a highly marginal endeavor at best. The additional capital and labor costs involved do not now seem to be offset by the value of the fuel produced. However, as the price of fuel increases and as environmental costs are calculated into the equation -- for particular sizes of farm enterprises methane production should some day reach a competitive position, he adds. "And many professionals already believe that cheaper methods of conversion can be found."

## Maryland Signs Milk Agreement

Maryland has become the 14th state to sign a reciprocal milk inspection agreement with Pennsylvania, it was announced last week by Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Jim McHale.

This means that Pennsylvania dairymen no longer have to support duplicate inspections and fees when their products are sold to states covered by these agreements. The Secretary has the authority to negotiate reciprocal inspection agreements with other states under Act 120, signed into law last year.

Last fall Ohio was the first state to enter into a reciprocal milk inspection agreement with Pennsylvania. It has been estimated that western Pennsylvania dairy farmers selling to the Ohio market have been realizing savings of \$75,000 a year under this arrangement.

Besides Maryland and Ohio, states which have signed agreements with Pennsylvania are: New York, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Georgia, Missouri, Wisconsin, Arkansas, Maine, Vermont, West Virginia and Rhode Island.

McHale explained that previously farmers selling out of state had to pay inspection fees charged by the states receiving their produce as well as comply with inspection regulations in their own counties and municipalities.

Since Act 120 came into effect, Pennsylvania's milk sanitation standards have been amended to reflect provisions in the Federal Milk Sanitation Code.

"Now with statewide standards," said McHale, "other states will accept our certified inspections and we will accept theirs. And so the dairy farmer is no longer burdened with multiple inspection fees."

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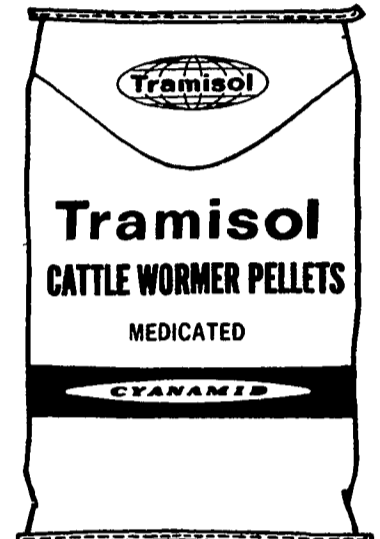
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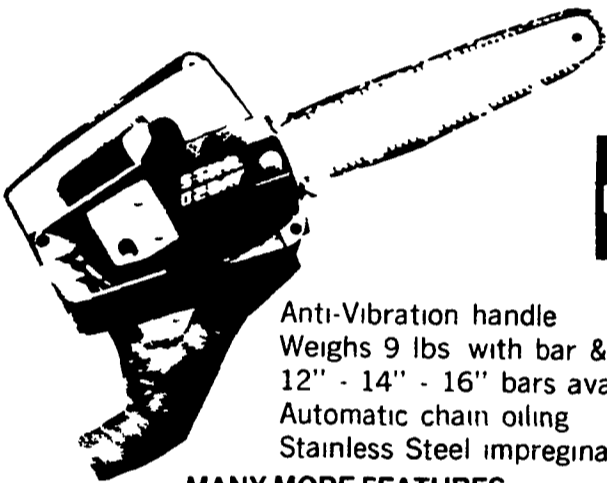
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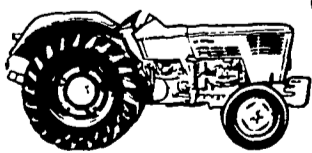
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