

## A New Memory Bank for USDA

A new computer storage and retrieval system at the U.S. Department of Agriculture may play an important role in bringing us better food, fiber and flowers in the future.

It all began when the Plant Variety Protection Act was enacted in 1970. Under this law, which is similar to a patent system, those who breed, develop or discover novel varieties of plants which reproduce through seeds are provided the exclusive rights to reproduce and sell the seeds.

Before the PVP law was enacted, private breeders had been cautious about putting work and money into developing novel varieties, since competitors could immediately reproduce and sell the same varieties without any research investment. Now, new varieties can be protected from exploitation by

others. Breeders in private industry have more assurance of adequate returns on their investments.

How does the computer system fit into the picture? It is the only known system in the world in which descriptions of plant varieties are being stored in a computer for variety comparison purposes. Pioneering in the use of the "integrated retrieval" system for this purpose is Bernard M. Leese, Chief Examiner of USDA's Plant Variety Protection Office.

Leese has been primarily responsible for devising special printed forms for each crop to describe the plant characteristics in as standard terms as possible so that the data can be stored in the computer's memory bank.

But before descriptions of new varieties are stored in the computer, comprehensive

reviews of available literature must be made to obtain precise descriptions for each known variety for each kind of seed, such as wheat, cotton, soybeans, and lettuce. The reviews may take weeks; but once the information is stored in the computer, a printout of about 200 variety descriptions can be obtained from the computer in about three minutes. An answer to one question can be obtained in seconds.

When a breeder applies for protection of a novel variety, he records the plant characteristics on the appropriate descriptive form. The information on the form is then fed into a computer and compared with the information for other similar varieties.

As variety descriptions for the different crops become standardized, it will be easier to determine whether a variety is new. When a variety is deemed novel, certificates of protection

## Neppco Show Info Package is Available

A packet of "hard-to-resist" data on the Northeastern '73 exposition and the premier resort in which it is being staged — Chocolatetown, U.S.A. — is ready for distribution by the Northeastern Poultry Producers Council.

Geared to its theme, "Tomorrow ... will wake you up to the new era in agriculture", the kit prepared by NEPPCO will be mailed to anyone making inquiry about the 1973 Convention & Exposition to be staged in this renowned resort community October 30 through November 1. Preferred accommodations at the famed Hershey Hotel and its sister motor lodge are being accepted on a first-come basis.

The 14-state show will feature special seminars on the problems just around the corner for producers and allied industry men — and will show them how to meet these concerns with new merchandising ideas, cost-controls, planning precision and insight into both price expectations and anticipated government regulations. The commercial exposition of the latest in poultry technology and services has been expanded to take over the spacious Hersheypark Arena, here.

The fun-and-games aspect of the highly-favored Hershey resort area was not overlooked by NEPPCO officials. They have scheduled activities around the famed arboretum, the Hershey museum, the well-known chocolate tour, the golf course, as well as their own banquets, parties and industry luncheons within the resort hotel itself.

The free information kit contains an early registration form for the show which carries special discounts. Early registrants can save \$9 and will be awarded preferred accommodations at the elegant Hotel Hershey.

Also contained in the information supplied will be hotel reservation forms and complete travel directions for those arriving by air or auto.

With an expected attendance of over 1500, NEPPCO's quota of rooms is sure to be filled long before the show opens on Tuesday, October 30.

The free information kit is available from NEPPCO, 322 Oxford Valley Road, Fairless Hills, Pa. 19030.

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are granted to the applicant.

Leese's system will speed up the process of determining whether a variety is novel or distinct because it eliminates a field test used by most countries to determine it.

Everyone can benefit from the Leese innovation. More new varieties should result in food, fiber, and flowers that are more disease and insect resistant, reducing the amount of pesticides needed. New varieties may also be more drought resistant and last longer after harvest for shipping. Food plants may also be more nutritious and produce higher yields.

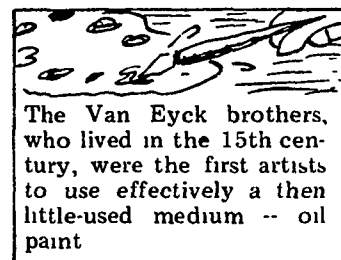
The computer system, therefore, will not only facilitate the work of examiners and breeders. It is also good news for farmers and consumers.

## Prevent Home Burn Accidents

One of the most painful accidents in the home is a burn. And the kitchen's a likely place to get one. Here are a few reminders from Extension specialists at The Pennsylvania State University to help you avoid accidental burns.

A flapping curtain hanging near the stove is a sure invitation to fire. So are towels, wooden racks, cookbooks and other flammables that you really should not keep close to the burners. When cooking, the Extension specialists advise that you use potholders instead of towels for grabbing hot pans. And make sure that pot handles are always turned away from the edge of the stove. This is especially important if you have small children around, who might tip the pots over. And don't try to cook when wearing garments with long, loose sleeves.

In case you have a grease fire, use a fire extinguisher suitable for grease fires, or use baking soda to put it out. Never pour water on a grease fire, remind the Extension specialists. To smother a fire in a frying pan, cover the pan with a lid or throw baking soda in the pan.



The Van Eyck brothers, who lived in the 15th century, were the first artists to use effectively a then little-used medium -- oil paint

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