

# Guyana

(Continued From Page 1)

than abundance. When that day comes, we may turn for answers to men like Alton Daw, from the tiny South American republic of Guyana.

Daw, who teaches agricultural science to high schoolers in Georgetown, Guyana, is in Lancaster County for a total of three weeks to observe the workings of a vo-ag educational program. He's staying with families in the New Holland area, and working with Garden Spot High School's vo-ag department. Daw is finishing up a six-month stay in the U.S. as an International Educational Development Program scholarship recipient. This is the program formerly known as the Fulbright Scholarship.

"I think we need programs like FFA and Young Farmer groups in Guyana," Daw told Lancaster Farming in an interview this week at the Robert Martin farm, one of the host families he's staying with. "There's not enough contact between our farmers, and our educators and extension people."

Guyana, which was known as British Guiana until May, 1966, has a long history as a European colony. First came the Dutch, who controlled the country from 1580 to 1780. The Dutch left their trademark on the country in the form of elaborate sea defenses and a fertile coastline, much of which is below sea level. The British gave the colony their form of government and their educational system.

"As a colony," Daw says, "we became dependent on handouts. We never really learned to deal with our own problems. Our education system must be changed, because it was too academic in times past. We weren't teaching enough practical knowledge. Here, you do have vocational education programs, and I hope we can

transfer some of your successes to Guyana. I think we have to be on guard, though, that we don't take too much academics out of our programs. Math, science, the arts - these are still necessary."

Guyana is relying on cooperatives to combat many of the problems associated with developing countries. Not only are there farming cooperatives, there are groups formed for building bridges, schools and houses, as well. In America, these needs are usually met with massive infusions of federal, state or local government funds. In Guyana, citizens receive materials from the government, and cooperatives provide management and labor to complete the projects. "We're learning a lot about how these cooperatives should work," Daw said, "and maybe someday we can share that knowledge with you."

Guyana is a small country, with only 760,000 people on 86,000 square miles. Only about 215,000 people are considered part of the country's labor pool, and some 90 percent of the

population live on the republic's coastline.

About one-sixth of Guyana's income comes from agriculture, and the bulk of the rest comes from mining. Gold and diamond mines are factors in the country's economy, but bauxite, or aluminum ore, is by far the biggest revenue producer. The bauxite industry was nationalized some years ago, and the Guyanians are trying to heal the ugly scars left on the landscape by the mining companies.

Rice, sugar cane and coconuts are the principal agricultural products. Daw said his countrymen are striving for self-sufficiency in milk and meat production, but the cattle in this tropical climate are hampered by pests and by the lack of feedgrains. Both dairy and beef animals are pastured throughout the year.

In 1961, Guyana's cattle population was decimated by a foot-and-mouth disease epidemic, and a flood in 1969 wiped out large numbers of animals. The government is now working with 20 cattle ranches in an attempt to build up the industry. Holsteins are being imported from America, and beef breeds such as Angus, Hereford, Charolais and

Santa Gertrudis are being crossed with Zebu, a tropical breed.

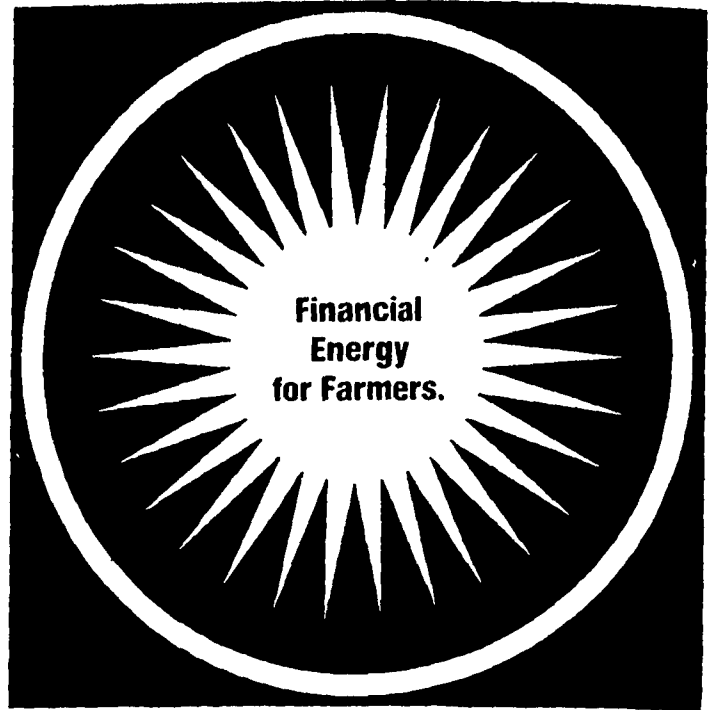
Daw has been impressed by what he's seen of Lancaster County farming. "There are some parallels here with farms in Guyana," he said. "We have many small farms, some as few as ten acres, or even less. Others are more the size of farms here, maybe 50 to 200 acres. Farmers here are both more intensive and extensive than our farmers. They're organized better and they're able to carry out a diversified farm program. We must teach our farmers how to do that."

"One problem we've been having is that the smaller farmers are often over-mechanized. They're selling their oxen and buying tractors which are too big for the number of acres they have. We hope that through cooperative buying, many of these small farmers will band together to buy tractors and share them."

Daw will be in the county another week, then he'll go to Penn State for a week, then to Washington, D. C. for another week and then home. The first four months of his U. S. stay were spent at the University of Texas in Austin.

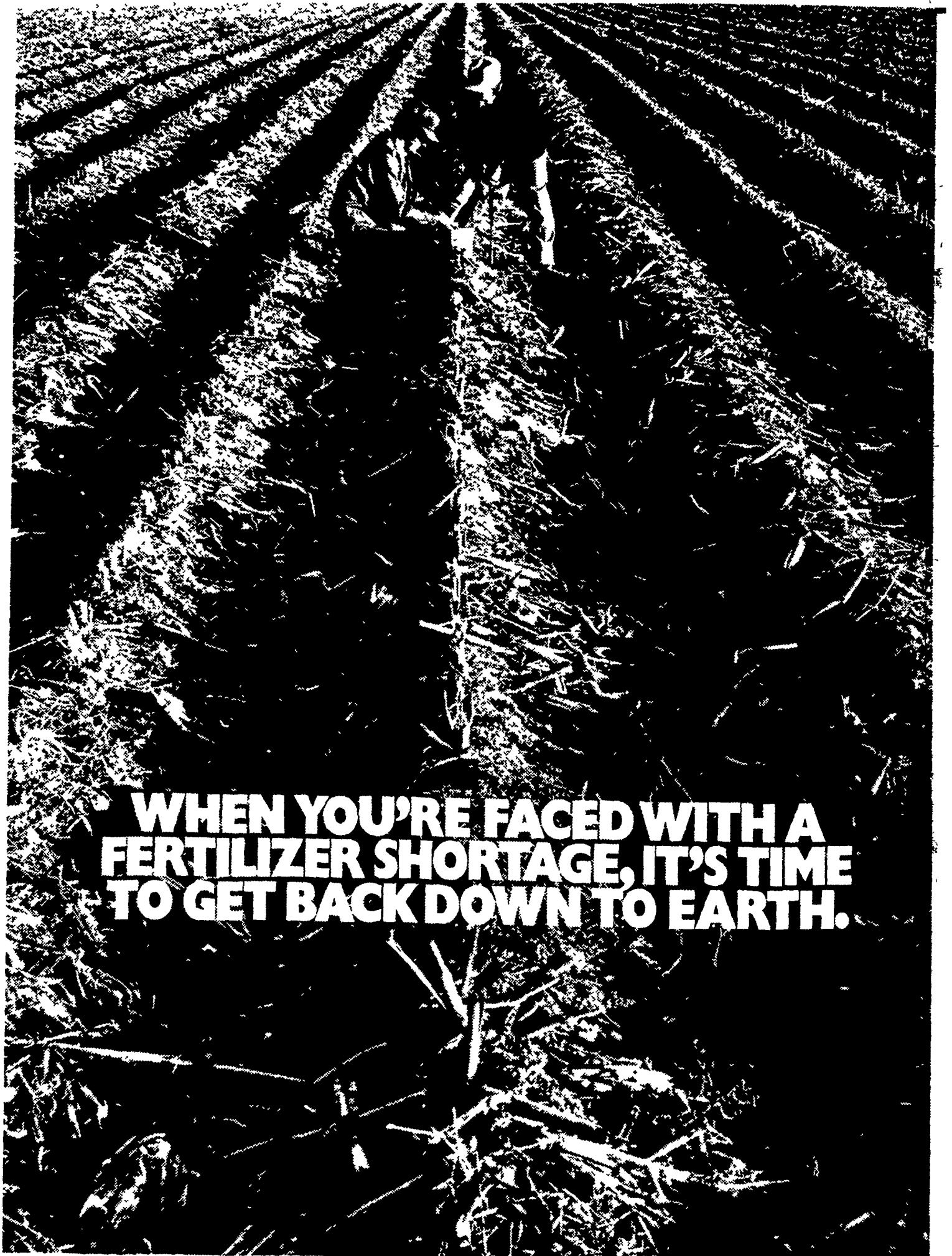
When he returns home, Daw will see for the first time the twin boys his wife bore in November, while he was in Texas. "I was only

expecting one," he laughed, "like the first time." The Daws also have a 22-month-old son. "Maybe next time it will be three."



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