

The Sixth Plate - Will We Have Food To Fill It?

by Clair Gerberich
Executive Assistant
Lebanon County
Conservation District

Today there is an increasing world population of nearly 4 billion people! Increasing world population, perhaps a population explosion would better describe the upward trend in population. Today there are some 213,000 more mouths to feed than were fed yesterday! 213,000 more to feed tomorrow than were fed today! By the year 2000 there will be approximately six (6) billion mouths to be fed in this world.

A fifty (50) percent increase in population to feed! In other words, Clair Gerberich, Executive Assistant, Lebanon County Conservation District, says there will be six plates to fill for every four that are kept supplied today.

The American farmer is admirably stocking the supermarket shelves of the world. Political consideration by nations that intercept distribution channels are the major cause of starvation deaths around the world today. Restrictions on exports of food stuffs, with the thought of holding down domestic prices will cloud the production picture of the future.

American farm land has

been and will continue to be the bread basket of the world. Undeveloped nations experienced an 0.3 percent increase in food production in the decade 1962-1972. In developing countries American agricultural expertise has been largely rejected. They prefer to develop industrially and depend on the American farmer to fill their food shopping carts.

Given an equitable political and economic climate the American farmer will respond to world food demands. Meeting the demands for domestic and export food needs will place unprecedented demands on the soils of the country.

To maintain the productivity of the soils, to fill that sixth plate of the future, will require the application of wisdom, skill, financial resources and technology.

One of the technologies available to farmers today is that of soil conservation. Soil conservation concerns itself with using the decreasing land resource as efficiently as possible while protecting the soil from erosion. The soil conservationist, a trained professional in the many disciplines of the environment, will devise methods to produce crops and at the same time protect the soil from the elements. Techniques that increase

yields do not necessarily prevent erosion. As yields have been increased, so have the tons of soil eroded from our farm land.

Annual soil losses of 12 tons of soil per acre from cultivated crop land are excessive. Just because a soil is deep and well drained and produces a good crop today does not assure that this soil can produce indefinitely. An all-out effort on the part of everyone is needed to conserve the soil resources, and achieve a favorable, political, and economic climate. This unified effort will assure the capacity of the land to produce, and the commitment of the farmer to produce the food for that sixth plate.

The Lebanon County Conservation District will assist all landusers in developing conservation plans for their land at no charge. So that they too can make a commitment to fill the sixth plate of the future, the Lebanon County Conservation District can be reached at 272-6621, Extension 407.

WORKING MAD

Aunt Eliza bounced cheerily up the walk, greeting her young nephew "Good morning, Willie. Is your mother in?" "Sure she's in" frowned the lad "Do you think I'd be working in the yard on Saturday morning if she wasn't?"

Farm Youth Calendar

Thursday, April 3
FFA Dairy products judging contest at the Penn Dairies in Lancaster 1-3 p.m.

Friday, April 4
Pequea Valley FFA Banquet at the Pequea Valley High School 6:30 p.m.
Silver spurs 4-H Horse Club meeting at the home of Sue Baker.

Saturday, April 5
York 4-H Hort Club clean-up meeting at the 4-H Center in Bair.

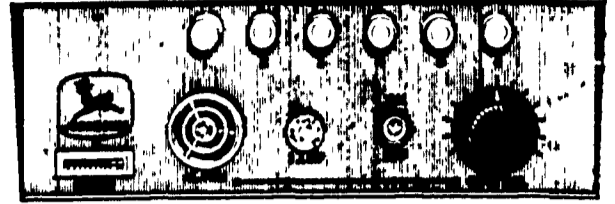
Thursday, April 10
Lititz - Manheim Community 4-H Club meeting at the Fairland Elementary School at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 12
Lancaster County 4-H Council hoagie sale.
Feeder Pig sale for 4-H members at the Lebanon County Fairgrounds.

Mondy Management
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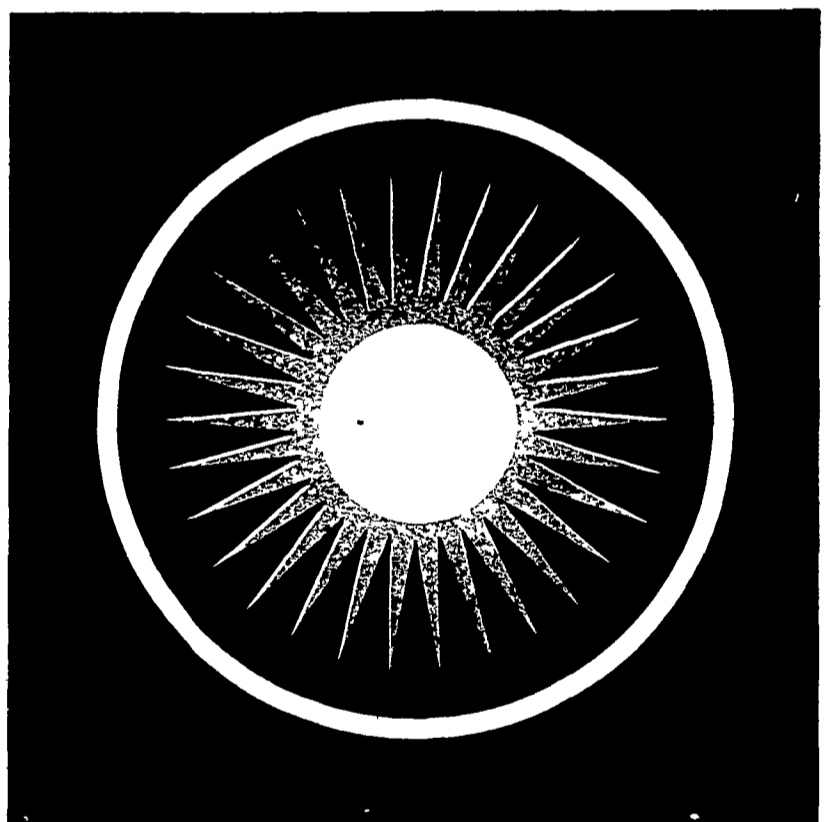
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