

# American farmer shortchanged again

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attempted Watergate cover-ups.

The experts and economists tell us that we need the Soviet market to balance our payments in the world trading system. Certainly, and beyond a single doubt, this country has an enormous agricultural potential, and even a moral obligation to help feed less blessed nations of the Earth. However, when we deal with tyrants - and that is what the communist governments are - we should attach some strings of our own: "relax that iron grip on the people within your borders, quit messing with other countries, and live up to your agreements with us!"

American agriculture is naturally a key block in our world trade pyramid. In fact, it is the keystone of it, making up for huge losses encountered in other segments of commerce. In my opinion, politics influences this situation.

The American farmer, who makes up only five percent of the U.S. population, is definitely a political minority. He can produce and must produce. Government knows he can't fight back as effectively as labor unions. So, while the farmer works harder and harder, making up for the slack in other areas of the economy, the big union people relax, and turn out shabby products at high costs which can't compete with foreign manufacturers.

And so the Soviet state scores another triumph. They're benefitting from our technology, both in space and in industry and on the farms, and they can look forward to more wheat and corn from the U.S. to make up for their own shortcomings and frequent bungles.

The American farmers has played a big role in all of that, but hasn't been credited for it nor has he had anything to say about it.

# Timber rattlesnake

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cutting or chewing. Snakes have a powerful digestive system that deals efficiently with whole prey, including hair, feathers, and bones.

Rattlesnakes are opportunistic feeders that take prey as it appears. Since they are "cold-blooded," their metabolism doesn't require daily feeding. Snakes may go foodless for some time without harm. Growth is rapid to the age of reproductive maturity, at four or five years, and slower but continuous after that age. The biggest rattlesnake is also the oldest, and scanty data indicate that they may live for 15 years or more. Increases in size are accomplished by shedding the outer layers of the skin, in a single piece, usually twice a year but at irregular intervals.

### Venom

The two aspects of rattlesnakes that excite the most interest are the venom apparatus and the rattle.

The external part of the venom apparatus is a pair of fangs - elongate, hollow teeth

attached to the roof of the mouth near the front of the head. The fangs are fixed to the bones by a hinge mechanism, so that they fold backward as the mouth is closed and erect forward as the mouth is opened. Since fangs are fragile and may be easily broken or lost, there is a continuous series of replacements behind each functional fang, ready to grow into place when needed.

Internally each fang is connected by a duct to a venom gland, a sac-like structure on the side of the head that actually a modified salivary gland. When a snake strikes, the fangs penetrate skin of the prey like hypodermic needles, and venom is injected by contraction of muscles around the glands. Rattlers may to some extent measure the dose of venom that is injected, or withhold it altogether.

### Rattle

The rattle is composed of a series of interlocking segments of horny skin. Newborn rattlers have only a single, simple segment, the "button." Because of the interlocking structure, a rattle segment remains behind, attached to the preceding segment, each time the snake sheds its skin. The number of rattle segments represents the number of sheddings, provided that the string is complete and terminated by the button. But this is rarely the case in adult rattlers, since terminal segments are

often broken and lost.

The original function of the rattle is obscure. Rattlesnakes vibrate the rattle when annoyed, disturbed, or frightened. They do not invariably provide a warning before striking.

Snakebite is not a major hazard in Pennsylvania. Most outdoorsmen rarely encounter Timber Rattlesnakes, and a few simple precautions can greatly reduce the danger of suffering a bite. Always wear boots or shoes when walking in snake country, especially at night. Never place a hand or foot where you can't see, as on a high ledge or across a log or boulder. Never put your hand or foot into a hole or crevice. If bitten by a rattlesnake keep calm, don't run or walk any distance, and seek medical assistance immediately.




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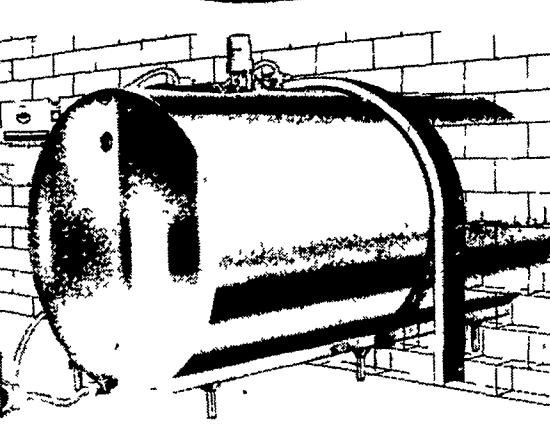
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