

Butz addresses York meeting

YORK — U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Earl Butz, made an appearance in York a week ago yesterday (Friday), to speak before the 13th annual Agribusiness Seminar, sponsored jointly by the York County Agricultural Extension Service and the York Area Chamber of Commerce.

Displaying a sense of humor — much of it "canned" since he uses the same jokes over and over again at different speaking engagements — Butz had the audience laughing intermittently. Although this paragraph is not intended to be an editorial column, it could be said that the Secretary's presentation was more entertaining rather than revealing of agricultural policies. More than anything, it was, perhaps, a talk stressing the importance and potential of agriculture. The reader is invited to judge for himself, as we present the bulk of Butz's speech:

"It's a real pleasure being here — I commend you for this agri-business seminar that I understand the Chamber of Commerce sponsors," Butz said. Upon learning that the Extension Service was also involved with it, he quipped: "I should know that anything worthwhile, Extension takes credit for." After a burst of laughter, he acknowledged: "And usually they deserve it too."

A minute or two of small talk followed, then he focused for a time on agribusiness.

"Agribusiness has kind of a bad connotation in this country. The word agribusiness has kind of a bad connotation," he continued. "When I was up for confirmation four years ago the liberals in there beat me over the head without mercy because I had had some association with

agribusiness. This was evil. It's not at all — I think it's great. We are all part of this great food and fibre complex in America." (The audience was divided nearly half and half between farmers and agribusinessmen.) "And anybody who tries to send one sect of that against another is doing a great disservice to this whole agricultural complex in America.

"Because this milk that came from a Holstein cow out here this morning — one of these farms — doesn't have much value until it's packaged either as milk or butter or cheese or whatever it may be and attractively displayed in a supermarket counter in Philadelphia or New York. That's agribusiness. The bushel of wheat produced on a Kansas farm doesn't have much value . . . until it's an attractive breakfast roll in a Philadelphia pastry shop. That's agribusiness. When I was on a farm back in Indiana we used to produce our own power . . . we had a colt or two foaled each year. We produced our own fuel — we raised oats and hay. We produced our own nitrogen and we hauled it out of the cow stable. Now somebody supplies it much more effectively than we did it then, and at much lower cost. That's agribusiness. It's all a part of this food and fibre complex. And somebody says: 'Yes, but they make a profit.' I say: 'I hope they do.' Like farmers, they deserve to, that's what they're in business for.

"The other day I was in a news conference somewhere out here in one of the larger cities and some woman who must have been the food editor — she asked a question with a kind of a sneer in her voice. She said: 'Well, aren't farmers making money?' I said 'I hope so, I think that's what they're in business for.

"You can't convince me that some of you chaps in this room get up at five o'clock in the morning, seven mornings a week and go out to the cow stable because you like to associate with Holsteins. I think you have a higher motive in life than that. As somebody said: 'I think you're not that queer.'

"So it's good that we sit down together and examine this whole food and fibre complex, or somebody has called it the 'food chain.' That sounds like a grocery store, doesn't it? It starts clear back here at a gas well from which we make nitrogen . . . from which we make grain, from which we make milk and meat, and then it goes right on to those who

process it and merchandise it. It's all part of that business. There's only about five per cent of us in America on farms now, but agribusiness means that many, many more of us are involved in that food and fibre chain than that. For every one (worker) on farms there is another worker making production inputs for American agriculture. For every worker on farms there are two more workers processing and

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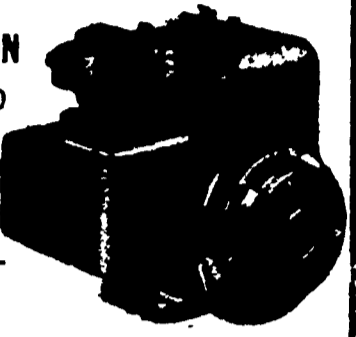
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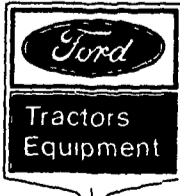
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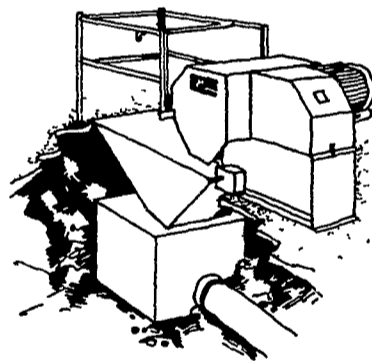
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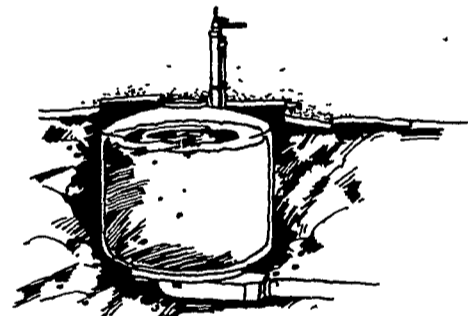
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