

Beef industry

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Chohlis cited Ralston-Purina research figures which point to the end of the cheap grain era. "It is indeed over," the speaker emphasized. But in spite of all this, the beef industry has tremendous potential and a bright future.

"The Midwest farm belt has the potential to maintain a beef herd by simply harvesting and preserving the corn land roughage that now goes to waste," Chohlis announced. Research has shown that these now wasted feedstuffs can be fed with very good results and Chohlis predicts that economic pressures will force the industry into making use of these resources.

Under semi-confinement, a farmer can raise a beef animal at a cost of \$140 if corn stalks are used in a properly supplemented ration.

"The 'Roughage Revolution' will gain the upper hand," announced the grain marketer in a triumphant and confident tone.

In discussing American agriculture further, Chohlis praised the "productive superiority of the U.S. farmer, pointing out that it takes the Yankee farmer five minutes to produce 100 pounds of grain, compared to five days for the average of the rest of the world. Furthermore, U.S. farmers export enough of their goods to pay for 80 per cent of the oil imported into this country.

Chohlis also said that there is no food shortage in the world - just a situation wherein not everyone has enough money to buy it.

Still considered to be the dominant form of agriculture in the United States is the family farm which many people fear is being threatened. Chohlis disagrees, claiming that large corporation farms are losing money and that the

efficiency of individual family farms and ranches "can beat the pants off of large corporations."

But these family farms which Chohlis speaks of aren't necessarily what we think of today. "The farms of today will become bigger because they have to," stated Chohlis.

Some predictions he had along this line include: a minimum cow-calf operation of 600 head; a minimum dairy herd size of 300 head; a minimum feeder operation of 3000 head; and a crop farm of no fewer than 1000 acres. Chohlis envisions such farms by 1980 - just three years into the future.

Genetic engineering is a tool which will come into even stronger focus in years to come, the Purina marketing director affirmed. "We're going to be seeing more changes in the next ten years than we've seen in the past 100," he promised.

Another portion of the livestock business which is going to see significant changes is nutrition. The 'Roughage Revolution' is one example. More precise feeding programs is another. "If we feed 'em as well as we breed 'em, we'd really have something," Chohlis announced.

Concluding his remarks, Chohlis said his firm is so convinced these changes and trends are in the cattleman's future that substantial programs geared to these concepts have already been launched at Purina.



Higher yielding alfalfa being studied

HOUSTON, Tex. - Alfalfa plants differ widely in their ability to produce high yields and tolerate frequent harvests, according to scientists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS). This discovery could lead to the development of more productive, vigorous alfalfa varieties.

Tests conducted at ARS's Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville,

Md., by plant physiologists Dr. N. Jerry Chatterton and Dr. Gerald E. Carlson, show that differences in yield and stand survival can be genetically controlled independently of one another. This factor makes it possible for a plant breeder to combine both high yield and stand vigor in a single variety. Current alfalfa varieties do not fully combine both traits.

The scientists were able to trace the higher yields and frequent-harvest tolerance to certain internal plant mechanisms which produce higher concentrations of carbohydrates, phosphorus, and nitrogen in the superior plants.

"We discovered that there are great differences in the physiological and biochemical characteristics

among the various alfalfa genotypes," Dr. Chatterton said.

High-yielding plants in effect have a longer growing season because the photosynthetic processes which convert light, carbon dioxide, and water into dry plant matter continue later in the year. Greater starch accumulation in the crowns and roots of the harvest-tolerant alfalfa during this period may provide a reserve for early spring regrowth.

"It is clear that many plants within current alfalfa varieties have a relatively low yield and are reducing crop yields through inefficient use of natural resources. By selecting only the higher yielding plants which make the best use of light and nutrients, we should be able to bring about a significant increase in alfalfa yield," Dr. Chatterton said.

Alfalfa is a major forage crop in the United States. Approximately one-tenth of all U.S. farmland is used to produce it.

Dr. Chatterton presented these findings at the annual meeting of the American Society of Agronomy on December 1.



New tax law explained

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Easier transfer of farms between generations is one important result of the Tax Reform Act of 1976, according to USDA. This and many other provisions affecting farmers are explained in a report released recently by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service (ERS).

In addition to major revisions in estate taxation, other changes affecting individuals that are important to farmers include: Capital gains and losses - long term gains and losses are affected by a longer qualifying holding period and an increased limit on deductible losses. Income tax reduction - a tax credit and other means will reduce the tax bill of many farm families. Tax shelter

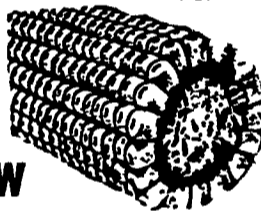
provisions - new restrictions will affect those seeking to shelter taxable income through "tax-loss" farming.

As business managers, farmers will be affected in many other ways. Important changes will affect: Drought-induced livestock sales - in eligible areas, cash-basis farmers may defer tax liabilities on income received from livestock sold because of drought. Disaster payments - cash-basis farmers can report disaster payments as income received during the year in which the crop would have been harvested. Tax credit - the 10-percent investment tax credit was extended through 1980. Family corporations - after five years, "subchapter S" corporations may be expanded to include up to 15 stockholders.

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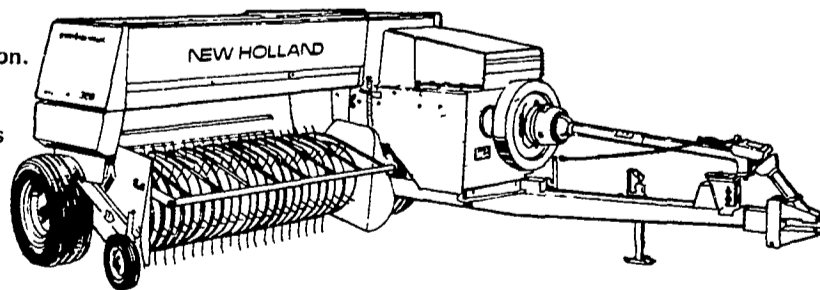
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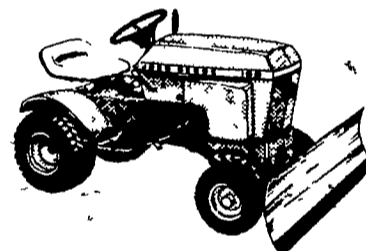
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