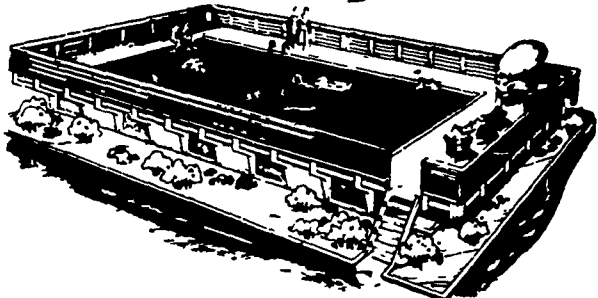


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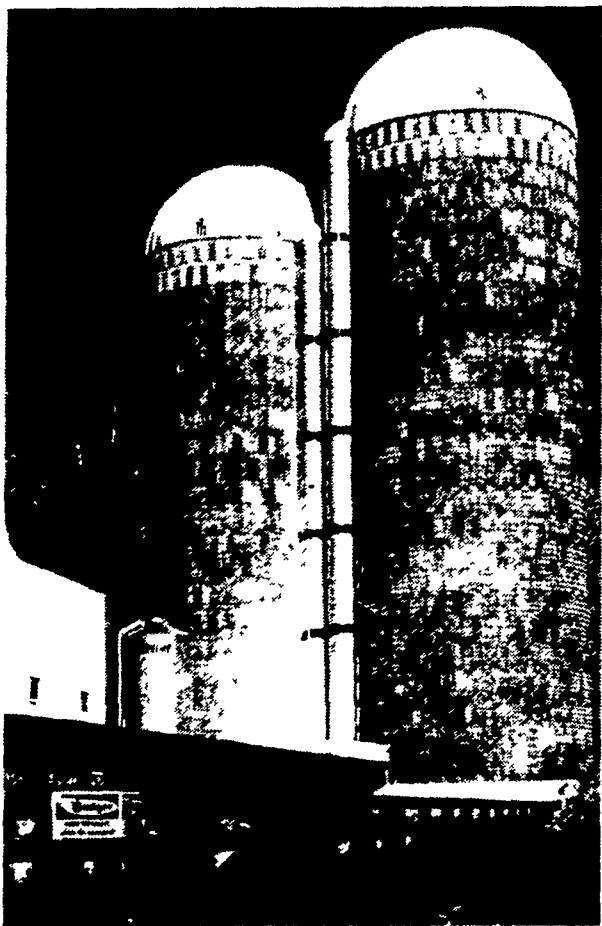
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India wasp joins fight against bean beetle

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Just three years ago, Maryland farmers were spending \$500,000 annually for pesticide foliar applications to protect their bean crops from the ravages of the voracious Mexican bean beetle. Last year, says the Maryland Department of Agriculture, these farmers maintained the same high level of production while reducing foliar application costs to approximately \$50,000. This accomplishment is directly attributable to a highly successful biological pest control research program Federally funded and undertaken by the University of Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station.

Now, says Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Young D. Hance, the results of that laboratory and field research are being applied in a continuing pest

management program conducted jointly by the Maryland Department of Agriculture and Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, with the cooperation of the soybean growers.

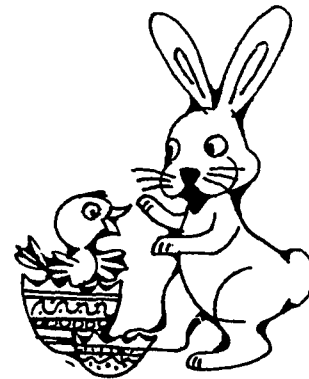
The University's team of entomologists demonstrated that a tiny wasp, harmless to humans and bearing the tongue-twisting name, *Pediobius foveolatus*, could control the Mexican bean beetle quickly and dramatically. The insect, native to India, preys on the plant-eating beetle by depositing its eggs on the larva of the beetle. When the eggs hatch, the larva of the wasp destroys the beetle larva. This is one way by which nature can maintain an ecological balance.

Convinced that laboratory and field test results could be duplicated in a viable pest control program, the

University enlisted the participation of MDA's Pest Management Section, which has now implemented such action. But, because the wasp, native to a tropical climate, cannot survive Maryland Winter (beetles do so by hibernating), NDA is currently maintaining colonies under greenhouse conditions. Later, at appropriate times during the growing season, the agency with the cooperation of county Extension agents, will transfer colonies of the parasitical insects to farmers growing beans. And, once established in the fields, they will spread rapidly to infest and reduce the Mexican beetle population.

Describing the program as a "scientific breakthrough," Hance said that it holds great promise for Maryland's important soybean crop. Soybeans are

the State's second most valuable field crop, with an estimated value of more than \$46 million last year.



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