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## American farmer not responsible for feeding the world

By DIETER KRIEG

LAURELVILLE, Pa. - The goal of the American farmer should be to optimize production, rather than maximize it with the excuse of feeding the world, says Jon Jantzen of the Mennonite Central Committee, headquartered in Akron, Lancaster County.

According to the volunteer church worker, the North American farmer is not responsible for feeding the world, and to assume such a notion would be dangerous. Instead, Jantzen proposes that regions throughout the world become self-sufficient. He explains that it would be folly for the entire world to rely on one continent for most or all of its food supply.

Jantzen further believes that American agriculture has become too "energy intensified," and that a slow-down in energy intensity in America would help relieve food supply problems in other parts of the world. His reasoning is that in most other parts of the world energy is hard to come by, and raw materials are often siphoned out of poorer countries by more advanced nations. If this were stopped, Jantzen claims, the developing countries would have more resources left with which to improve their own standards.

Having spent 16 years of his life in India with his missionary parents, the young volunteer has seen hunger first-hand. He forms his opinions from his own experiences as well as countless official reports. He presented his views at a recent "Affirmation of Farming Retreat," sponsored by the Mennonite Church. It was held at the Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, here. Interested and concerned agriculturists from five states and Canada participated in the weekend program.

The challenge before the American farmer, as Jantzen sees it, is to have him optimize production within ecological constraints. "I feel that we're on a dangerous path, we have to analyze what we're doing to our land," Jantzen told his informal audience. He believes that a long-

term danger exists with the extreme measures practiced now to maximize production. Contributing to the possible dangers ahead, Jantzen claims, are heavy use of com-

Jon Jantzen, volunteer worker for the Mennonite Central Committee, believes that a less energy intensified agriculture in North America would bring about better standards of living in less advanced nations. Calling Kansas his home state, the Christian worker has spent 16 years in India.



mercial fertilizers, and pesticides energy depletion, and a siphoning of raw materials from less advanced nations.

"What is the price we are paying for our agricultural productivity? And is it worth it?" Jantzen asks. He claims that in this country, eight calories of energy go into the production of one calorie of food on the plate. "Energy in other countries is very high priced and they can't produce because of it," the Christian worker said.

America's energy-intensive agriculture cannot realistically be exported to other parts of the world either directly or indirectly without creating serious problems, Jantzen maintains. Aside from the fact that it "would not be good for the world to look at one continent for its food supply," America's farming methods (if they were to be

exported rather than the products) are not always adaptable in other regions and cultures.

As part of the solution to the menacing hunger problem, Jantzen suggests American farmers become less energy intensive and people abroad be given the opportunity to take better care of themselves. He observes that foreign countries are often growing crops by and for North American and European corporations. This situation creates unequal trade relations, Jantzen says, and contributes to the hunger problem. Allowing foreigners to have more of their own raw materials and training them to utilize those resources would solve part of the problem, Jantzen offered.

"I'm not so sure we should be proud of the statistic that one American farmer feeds 56 people," Jantzen continued. "We're following dangerous trends caused by mechanization and bigness. It's costing us more and more."

Furthermore, Jantzen pointed out that Americans are as reliant on agricultural imports as they are on exported foodstuffs. Intensification of farming in North America would not keep all products flowing. That's one reason he favors programs which would keep agriculture high on the list in many regions of the world. Another more obvious reason is that scattering food producing regions across the globe lessens chances of extremely critical shortages caused by weather or other unpredictable circumstances.

Simply put, to have the North American farmer faced with the responsibility of feeding the world would not only concentrate the food supply into one region, it would make the entire human race vulnerable to mass starvation if disaster struck the world's one and only food basket. That's why the United States and his counterpart in Canada should not be told he must grow more and more food to

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## Tobacco steaming:

# It's nearly unchanged from turn of the century

By JOANNE SPAHR

LANCASTER, Pa. - Almost half a century has passed since the last steam traction engine was made in 1928, but the business of steaming tobacco beds goes on today in nearly the same manner as it did in the early 1900's.

Anyone who has grown up on a farm where tobacco is raised has vivid memories of the steamer and his rig, and

some, if they're old enough, remember the traction engine.

The traction steam engines were fired by coal and were self-propelled on huge iron wheels bigger than slate gray mid-April evening, the 15-ton machine would come alive with

belching black smoke erupting from the smokestack, the flaming furnace jumping into every time it was stoked, and the white steam pouring out from under the pans whenever they were changed.

Steaming rigs were used to

sterilize the soil in the tobacco seedling beds, and the process involved was relatively simple.

The coal-stoked furnace on the rig would heat the water in the boiler to create steam. This steam was then routed through hoses to two five-by-ten-foot pans which were

placed over the segments of seedling beds, which were side-by-side. The two pans were steamed together for 20 minutes, and then moved forward. The procedure went on until the beds were completed with a steamer using approximately one to one-and-half tons of coal per

day if the boiler had about 120 pounds of steam in it. During the Spring, steaming would begin as soon as the ground was fit to work, and would be completed by mid-April. During the peak time for steaming, the men would

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## Soybean scarcity sets off 'price rationing'

By DIETER KRIEG

LANCASTER - Soybeans are out of sight in more ways than one. Prices have been jumping considerably during the past few days, but they've always managed to stay relatively high. So high, in fact, that some farmers are looking towards other sources of protein in order to avoid the spiraling prices for soybeans and soybean meal. Earlier this week soybeans touched \$10 per bushel, although they've dropped about 50 cents since then. A year ago farmers were being paid \$4.54 for their soybeans - less than half of prices today.

The reason for the high prices is the tight supply. Soybeans have been on the short side ever since last Fall. A recent shipment of 7.3 million bushels of soybeans to Red China drove the beans further out of

sight. Talk of embargoes followed, but the Carter Administration insists that no such action will be taken.

The United States is expected to export 550 million bushels of soybeans by Aug. 31 when the current marketing year for soybeans ends. That's about the same

as the year before when soybeans were in a much more plentiful supply. It's expected that the U.S. will have only 65 million bushels of soybeans on hand by the time the new harvest season starts, as compared to 245 million bushels the previous season.

The high prices have soybean farmers in a happy mood, but for those who must buy beans or meal as protein sources for their livestock and poultry, it's a different story.

The United Egg Producers (UEP), headquartered in Decatur, Ga., voices the

following concern over the current soybean situation:

"The recent sale of 390,000 tons of soybeans to Red China apparently removed the stopper from a soybean market which was already under great supply

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## Lebanon Co. honors FFA achievers

By JOANNE SPAHR

ANNVILLE, Pa. - Members of five Lebanon County Future Farmers of America chapters gathered last Thursday evening to jointly honor their county-level achievers. The dinner-meeting for this purpose was held at Anville-Cleona High School, the home chapter of county president Jay Bomgardner and county

sentinel, Samuel Heagy. Other chapters participating were Northern Lebanon, Eastern Lebanon County, Lebanon Vo-Tech, and Cedar Crest.

Robert Kreider, Anville RI, started off the evening's special awards presentations when he was honored as the county's first place creed contest winner. Kreider, a member of the

Little Dutchmen chapter, gave evidence of his abilities when he recited the creed to the audience. Ken Masse, from the Lebanon County Farmers' Association awarded Kreider with a \$15 check for his achievements.

The Farmers' Association also gave monetary awards to the second and third place creed contest winners. Earning 10 dollars for second

place performance was Mike Brajkovich, from Northern Lebanon. Dawn Shirk, Cedar Crest, and Susan Heilinger, ELCO, were tie for third, and both received five dollars.

A second ELCO member was the fourth individual to walk away with a cash dividend during the evening. Kirby Horst, Newmanstown RI, this year's Farm Credit

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