

# Germany

(Continued from Page C28)

impact the little plots have on their lives.

Agriculture, too, in the Federal Republic (West Germany) has undergone changes similar to those we are seeing in the United States.

As here, a great many German farmers have left the land to work in the cities.

The German government statistics show that 20 out of 100 Germans worked in farming in 1950. Today the number is 7 in 100.

Over the same period the number of farms with more than a hectare of agricultural area fell from 1.6 million to 880,000 operations.

Small holdings still are the rule in Germany. Their owners try to offset the disadvantages of small scale

operations by cooperating. More than three-fourths of all German farms are linked together in co-ops, the Government says.

Despite the small size of the farms, there is a great deal of modern mechanization. Particularly the specialized operations like poultry, cattle or hogs, are more like mechanized industrial plants than the farms of old.

The German Agriculture

Ministry lists the nation's main crops as flour and feed grains, potatoes, sugar beets, vegetables, fruit, and wine.

Horses are popular. In a city as squeezed for space as West Berlin is, there still is room for a couple of horse farms. And there are about 200,000 horses within the city limits.

The German consumer has the advantage of relatively cheap products

thanks to the government subsidies.

The American dairyman may realize the impact of such subsidies even more than the German consumer, for it is the American who is competing against the subsidized product.

As a member of the European Economic Community, Germany cooperates in EEC trade regulations.

Since the EEC generally sets international ag policy the main field left to national ag policy is rural social welfare

This alone accounts for half of the Federal German expenditure in national agricultural policy, the government says.

Germans see three kinds of farmers: those who want to consolidate their holdings to stay in farming, those who want to get out of farming, and those who feel they can't get out of farming since they have no alternative employment.

Most of the German government programs are for the first group. They help with investment promotion through cheap loans, advancement aids and promotion of farmer cooperatives.

The second group receives social support for switching. The third group can look for transitional aids as they leave farming.

Since those leaving agriculture need new jobs, the government has programs to encourage industry to locate in rural

areas.

The German farmer is just as conservative as the American, and the two share many common concerns. But the German farmer, and European farmers in general, seem to count more on government assistance rather than government interference

There are similar problems. While little deer damage was noted, the northern European grain fields seemed totally infested with rabbits.

No ordinary rabbits, these. Each was the size of a small dog and must have weighed 20 pounds.

Lest the rabbits' size be thought exaggeration, it should be noted they were plainly visible 100 yards away from a speeding train at many points in both Germany and Denmark.

The critters take their toll on production, the same as deer do here in Pennsylvania.

And so, a visitor is left with the impression that things are pretty much the same all over even though there are differences.

The Germans, including our host on the Friendship Force exchange Sebastian Kilian, were fine, understanding, informative, and tolerant people.

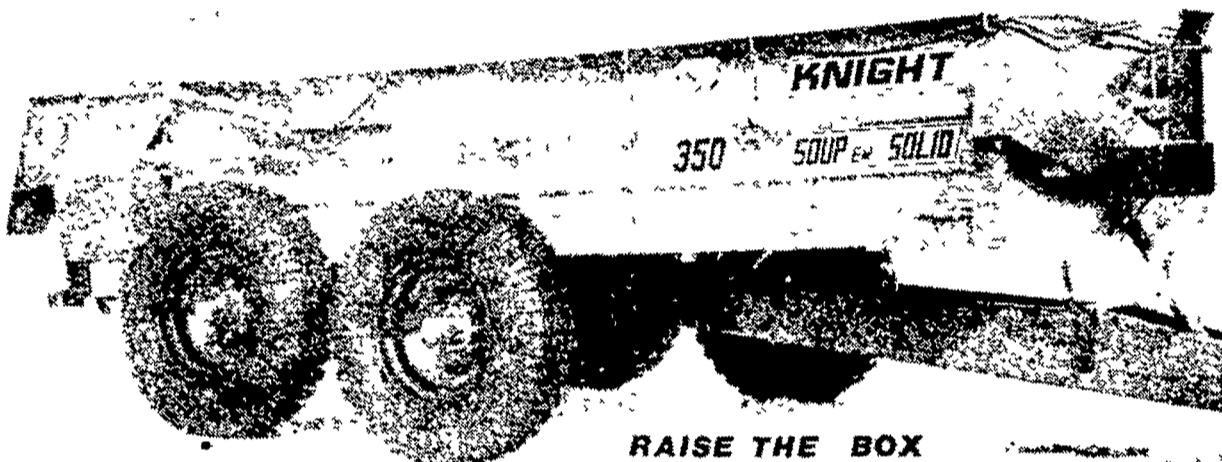
Germany remains a nation where most Pennsylvanians could feel at home. The landscape is the same, the climate is similar, the people are warm and open.

But the cucumbers—now, they're something else.



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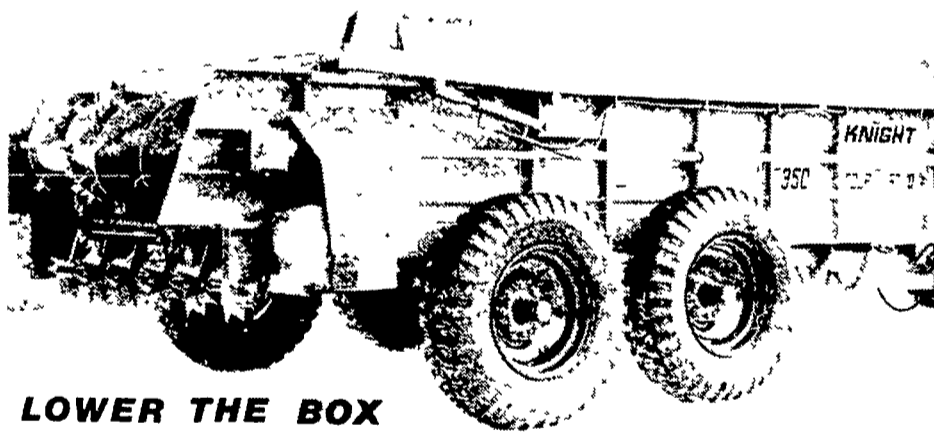
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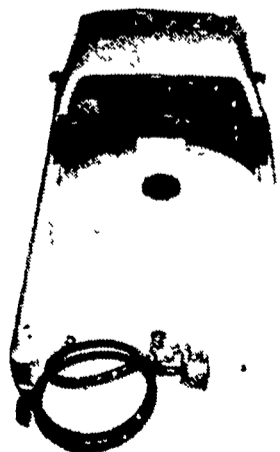
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