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Engineer offers guidelines for on-farm alcohol plants

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Rising costs of fossil fuels and new economic incentives have increased the development of farm-based alcohol plants, says John W. Gird, an extension energy programs specialist and agricultural engineering instructor at the University of Maryland.

Federal loan programs, reduced permit requirements and the availability of commercial systems for producing alcohol fuel have all accelerated the movement, according to Gird.

Success of any alcohol production system depends heavily on management ability and knowledge of the operator. Even the best-designed production plant will not do its job if the operators does not know the chemistry and microbiology of the system, says Gird.

Alcohol fuel production should not be approached as a simple part-time operation. A farmer should do research and assemble good background in-

formation before going ahead.

The Maryland specialist suggests that each of the following factors be carefully investigated and weighed before any on-farm plant is constructed.

Type of crop to be planted as a feedstock for producing alcohol fuel;

Amount of time to be spent operating the plant and the effect this will have on other farm operations;

Availability of storage facilities for a wet by-product;

Amount of by-product which must be fed on a daily basis to livestock and the effect this will have on animal performance;

Methods for feeding the by-product and consequent effect on dry feed-handling systems.

Amount and quality of alcohol fuel to be produced;

Necessary engine modifications and costs of engine conversions for utilizing the alcohol;

Effects of off-and-on or

seasonal plant operation on overhead costs;

Influence on other monetary investments as a result of investing in an alcohol plant;

Long-term potential of alcohol fuel in reducing energy needs and costs.

More information on alcohol fuel production is available from county Extension offices throughout Maryland; ask for a free mimeographed leaflet titled On-Farm Production and Utilization of Ethanol Fuel (Ag Engineering Facts No 126 of August 1980)

Strong markets kill barley, wheat payments

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of Agriculture will make no deficiency payments on the 1980 crops of barley and wheat, according to John Goodwin, associate administrator of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

Goodwin said such payments are not required under the 1980 feed grain and wheat programs because market prices have been well above established target price levels of \$2.55 for barley and \$3.63 for wheat.

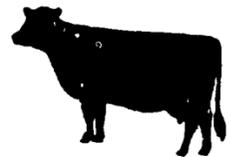
During the June through October marketing period the national average market prices were \$2.59 per bushel for barley and \$3.89 per bushel for wheat.

Goodwin also said the final 1980 national program acreage for barley has been increased from 7.9 to 8.3 million acres and the national program acreage for wheat has been increased

from 70 to 75 million acres. The national program acreage represents the number of acres of a crop needed to meet estimated demand and assure desirable carryover levels, Goodwin said.

He said the allocation factor for both wheat and barley is 100 percent. The allocation factor is computed by dividing the national program acreage for a crop by the harvested acreage.

If 1980-crop deficiency payments for corn and sorghum are required, they will be made next April, Goodwin said.

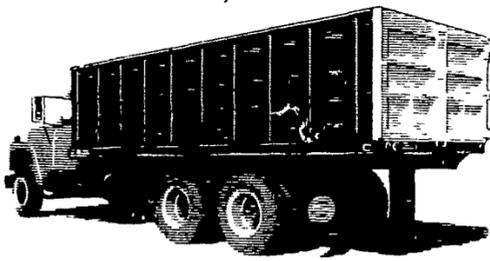


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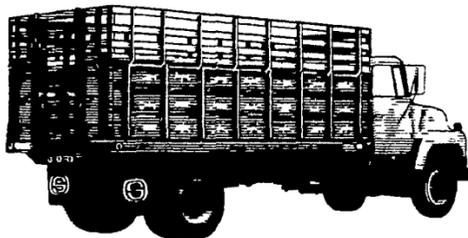
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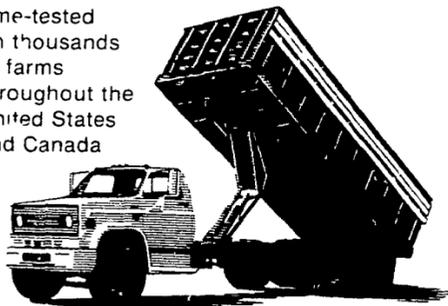
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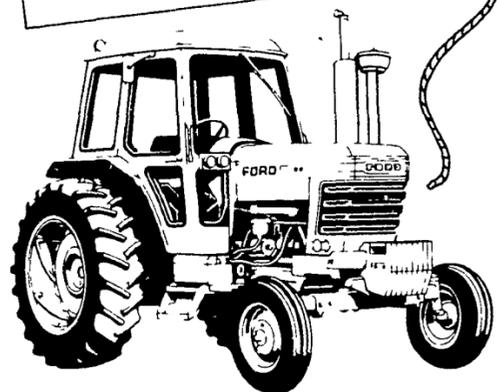
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