

**OUR READERS WRITE,  
AND OTHER OPINIONS**

**Saving our farmland**

America's position as world leader in agricultural productivity has never been questioned. Our farmers continue to produce food and fiber with an efficiency that is unprecedented in human history. Today's farm operators possess the knowledge and highly technical skills to meet the food production challenges of the nation and world for years to come.

Despite my optimism for the future and my confidence in America's farmers, I am deeply concerned by the rate at which our prime farmland is being converted to other uses. Secretary of Agriculture John Block has called this problem "a crisis in the making". Indeed, with perhaps three million acres of precious farmland lost every year, our farmers may eventually find themselves hard-pressed to meet world demand for U.S. agricultural products which could increase by 80 percent during the next 20 years. If current trends continue, several states, including New York, Florida, West Virginia, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, may lose much of their farmland during that same time period.

Having lived in an area adjacent to a large city, I have witnessed a creeping urban expansion which has resulted in an irreversible loss of fertile farmland to housing developments and highways. As a

former local government official, I believe that state and local leaders working with the cooperation of private landowners have traditionally been best able to deal with the conflicting goals of urban development and agricultural land use and preservation.

The most often used approach in preserving land for agriculture has been zoning. This approach has sometimes proved to be too restrictive and has often resulted in an unfair reduction of the value of a farmer's land.

In New York state, the agricultural district law is designed to ease the pressure of development on prime farmland. It provides that farmers may join agricultural districts, which protect their land from excessive property taxation and grants other important protections against urban and encroachment.

Recently, Long Island's Suffolk County tried a new program called Purchase of Development Rights (PDR). Under this program, a farmer may voluntarily sell the development rights of his farmland to the county. In return, the county pays the farmer the difference between the development or market value and the lower farm value of the land. The farmer may then continue to farm, and his property taxes will be permanently based on the lower agricultural value.

This program has shown a great deal of promise. A major drawback, however, has been the inability of a single county to meet the high cost. In New Jersey, a large majority of the voters felt this issue was important enough to pass a \$50 million bond issue to fund their PDR program.

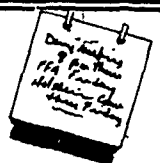
In addition to programs of this type, the federal government can play a supporting role in preserving farmland by offering educational, technical, and financial assistance to interested local governments. Conflicting federal policies have often contributed to the loss of valuable farmland. President Reagan is currently working to implement a provision of the 1981 Farm Bill requiring all federal agencies to review and change (if possible) any programs that contribute to farmland conversion.

Perhaps more important than any single policy in keeping agricultural land in the hands of our nation's farmers, though, is the necessity to restore this country's economic health so that farmers can stay in business. Federal tax credits and other incentives may be necessary to help farmers withstand the financial pressures of encroaching urban development.

American has been blessed with an abundance of fertile land, but it is not without limit. If we take action now, a crisis can be avoided and we can ensure that future generations will be able to share in the abundance that flows from our American agricultural system.

Sen. Alfonse M. D'Amato  
R, New York

**Farm Calendar**



- (Continued from Page A10)
- Crawford County, continues through Saturday.
- Elk County Fair, Kersey, continues through Saturday.
- Harford Fair, Susquehanna County, continues through Saturday.
- Lawrence County Fair, New Castle, continues through Saturday.
- Ferry County Fair, Newport, continues through Saturday.
- Venago County Fair, Franklin, continues through Saturday.
- Fa. Shorthorn Show, Lawrence County Fairgrounds.
- New Jersey Holstein Show, 9 a.m., Warren County Fairgrounds, Harmony.
- District FFA Dairy Show, Kutztown Fairgrounds.
- Franklin County 4-H Beef Show, 5:45 p.m., Chambersburg Rod & Gun Club.
- Wednesday, Aug. 18
- University of Md. Crops & Soil Field Day, 9 a.m., Wye Research Center, Eastern Shore.
- Migrant & Seasonal Farm Workers Meeting for Growers, 7:30 p.m., Sheraton Inn, Rt. 15, south of Gettysburg.
- Montgomery County 4-H Dairy Show, 4-H Center, Lansdale.
- Flowing Contest, 11:30 a.m., Meisenhelder Farm, Dover, York County. State Contest begins at 1 p.m.

- Allen Township County Fair, Northampton, continues through Saturday.
  - Dawson Grange Fair, Fayette
- (Turn to Page A39)

**Now is  
the Time**

(Continued from Page A10)

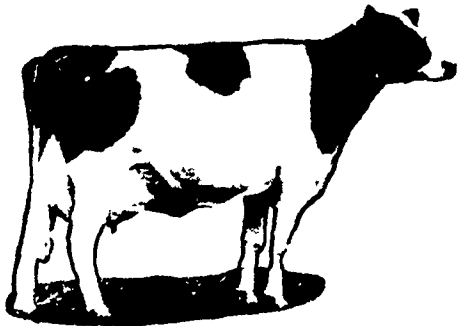
worth the effort and time to visit with your creditors, claims Chester D. Hughes, Extension Livestock Agent.

**To Fertilize Strawberries**

Your new strawberry patch should be pushing runner plants by the dozen at this time of the summer. It is a good idea to apply another shot of fertilizer to these new plants during August. A fertilizer of nitrogen only, or one high in nitrogen is best.

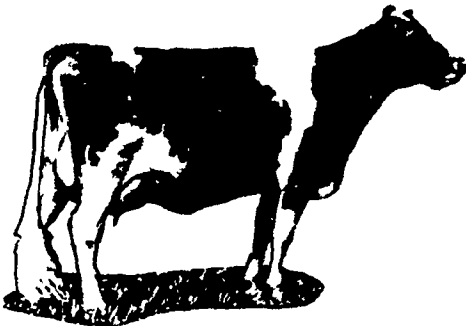
The objective is to encourage more runner plants and to develop strong runner plants; these will help increase the yield next summer. Also, weeds must be controlled at all times in order to have healthy strawberry plants. The earlier in the summer we can get the runner plants to take root, the better they will become established and yield next year.

**WHATEVER  
HERD YOU HAVE**



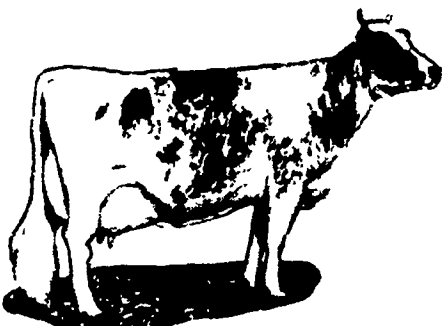
- HOLSTEIN  AYRSHIRE
- GUERNSEY  JERSEY

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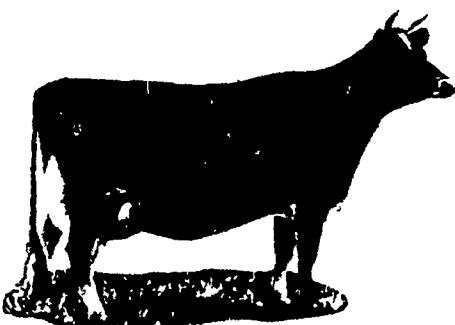


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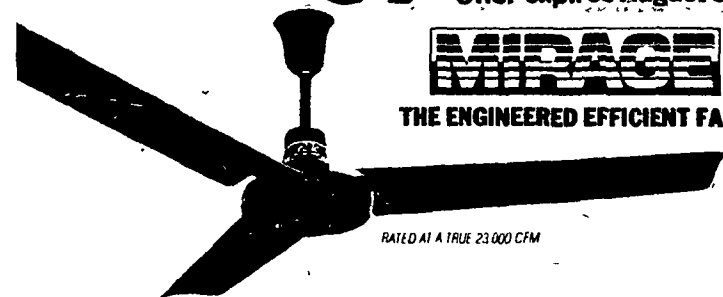
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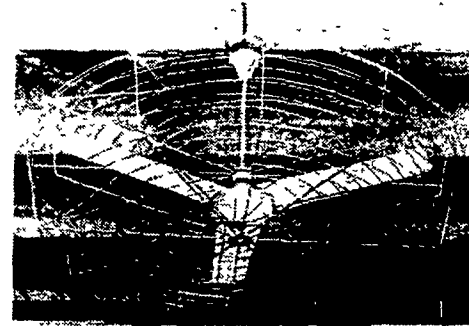
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