

Farmers Suffer \$22 A Year Loss In Food For Each Rat

The State Department of Agriculture says Pennsylvania farmers are paying a big boarding bill annually for rats that come to dinner on farms.

Dr. Thomas L. Guyton, director of the Bureau of Plant Industry, said each rat eats and contaminates approximately \$22 in food per year. Since there are an estimated 170 million rats in the nation more than 3.7 billion dollars in food is destroyed by the pests, he pointed out.

There are no accurate figures available on rat destruction of grains in Pennsylvania, but Dr. Guyton estimates that it costs Pennsylvania farmers at least one-half million dollars in losses annually.

It is estimated in a booklet distributed by the Corn Industries Research Foundation in Washington, D. C., that rodents, chiefly rats, destroyed as much food annually as can be produced in one year by 200,000 average farms. These farms would produce sufficient food for 10 million people.

Beside being a farm pest, from a standpoint of destroying grains, rats are considered by experts as carriers of many contagious human and animal diseases. Dr. Guyton pointed out that rats pollute food and water, may spread infectious jaundice, transmit bubonic plague and may cause tapeworm infections in humans and animals. Not content with spreading germ warfare to the human population, rats also are said to be responsible for using the same destructive tactics against livestock, poultry and pests.

Contagious abortion, trichinosis, distemper, rabies and many others can be transmitted by the rat, according to Dr. Howard A. Milo, who is director of the State Bureau of Animal Industry in the Department of Agriculture.

Dr. Milo said a rat, if given the chance, will run amuck in a poultry house and kill chicks, attack broilers and even full grown hens. Rats are also known to attack young stock with their scissor-like teeth.

Rats as a rule are found where food is stored and unsanitary conditions exist. If a grain bin is not properly cared for and if there are separations between partitions and the soil, rats are invited, department observers point out. It is recommended that tight bins be lined with sheet metal and kept closed at all times, except when in use. Grain should be staked 18 inches from flooring to allow ample space for cleaning the area. Bait stations also should be used.

Breed Rapidly
Rats breed at the age of three months. The gestation period is 21 to 26 days and the litter averages six to ten. An average of four to six litters is produced annually. One calculator recently said 350 million rats could be produced by one pair of rats in three years, provided all of the offspring remained alive and bred regularly.

Farmers might not realize it, Dr. Guyton said, but a proper grain-sanitation program on a single farm, rigidly controlling the depredations of rodents and insects, can result in savings considerably above \$1,000 annually. He suggested farmers contact county agents for control programs.

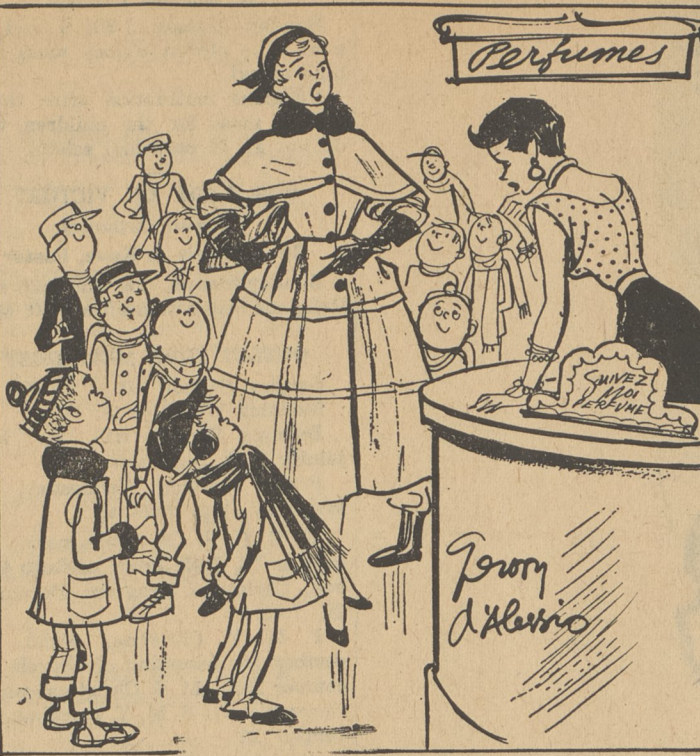
In addition to the rat's destructive ability with grain crops and in pollution and disease area, the rodent is also said to be responsible for 25 per cent of all fires of undetermined origin. An insurance survey report recently pointed out that in 39 cities fires were caused by rats or mice in 530 instances. Rodents gnaw on the insulation of electric wiring, cause short circuit by crossing open switches and contribute to the necessary conditions for spontaneous combustion fires by gathering oily rags and other flammable materials for a nest.

Dr. Guyton warned that if you see rats "now and then" at night on the farm there are 100 to 500 rats robbing the farm operator. He points out that anywhere from 1,000 to 5,000 rats are probably boarded on a farm if they are spotted in large numbers during the day.

Dr. Guyton suggested that farmers maintain good practices of keeping grain area clean, use recommended construction and a control program to eliminate rats.

He said five years ago the egg laying houses near the State Farm Show Building in Harrisburg "were overrun with thousands" of rats. He claimed that poor construction of the houses, only several inches off the ground and with no concrete footers, made the area a haven

THESE WOMEN! By d'Alessio



"I'm afraid that perfume you sold me must have a chocolate marshmallow base!"

FOR STAMP COLLECTORS

by Earl P. L. Apfelbaum
Since 1513, when Balboa first crossed the Isthmus of Panama to sight the Pacific Ocean, the narrow strip of land that joins the great continents of North and South America has been one of the world's most valuable areas. Over its jungle roads was carried the wealth of the Inca civilization of Peru by the Spaniards transporting their prizes to Europe. Pirates and brigands for three centuries raided and pillaged its coasts. The Forty-Miners on their way to the gold mines of California fought its jungles and died of fever while waiting transportation on the Pacific side.

The twenty-fifth anniversary issue of 1939 is a series of seventeen stamps commemorating the Canal and those responsible for building it. In 1928 Charles Lindbergh was honored with two stamps, one showing "The Spirit of St. Louis" and the other an airplane over the map of Panama.

Since 1903 Panama has been an independent republic. Its stamps were at first the provisionally overprinted Panama stamps that remained from the years that it was a part of the Colombian Republic. Since 1906 there have been many handsome issues celebrating Panama's heroes, scenes and industry.

The Fire Department of Panama City was fifty years old in 1937 and a handsome set of nine stamps commemorated that event. Again, in 1948, the Colon Fire Department received recognition on its fiftieth anniversary. One of the stamps, the ten cent, pictures an American la France fire engine.

Through the use of strong poison, used only by specialists and not available on the commercial market, and by reconstructing the houses, Dr. Guyton now reports no evidence of rats found at the laying houses. He pointed out that the rat campaign at the laying houses killed 2,000 rats that were counted by plant industry and poultry specialists who worked on the eradication.

Sports were recognized in the 1938 set commemorating the Fourth Central American Caribbean Games. Included are stamps for basketball, soccer, baseball, swimming and boxing.

Much of Panama's mail is carried by air mail, and that category of stamps is almost as numerous as regular postage issues. Since the currency is tied to the United States dollar all Panama stamps have a solid basic face value, and they hold their worth well in the philatelic world.

In 1956 a long set of stamps celebrating the Pan-American Conference pictured the President of every Western Hemisphere country and an inscription of each of the country names. There is some feeling that issues of this kind are too long and that there are many unnecessary stamps. The semi-official recognition of such labels as a set honoring the popes has not been to the advantage of Panama's reputation. However, if stamps are a nation's ambassador to the world carrying its learning, history and aspirations, certainly Panama has done a good job.


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SUCCESSFUL INVESTING...

by ROGER E. SPEAR
Investment Advisor and Analyst



MISSILE STOCKS VERY SPECULATIVE UNTIL GOVERNMENT POLICIES FIRM UP

Q. I have some funds that I can afford to risk. Would you advise me to put part of these into missile stock and what issues would you suggest?

A. A missile program as of now is in what the military call a very fluid stage. There is little doubt in my mind that the recent success of the Russians in testing an intercontinental ballistic missile, followed closely by "sputnik" may force an upward revision of the defense program in this whole area of rocketry. What specific items such a change would affect is at present a matter of pure speculation. My own inclination is to sit tight for a while and see what develops out of the present welter of confused thinking in governmental circles. There are many ways of speculating in missiles, the most obvious being through the aircraft makers who for the most part hold the prime contracts. In this latter category are General Dynamics, prime contractor for the Atlas 5000-mile ballistic missile now being tested; Lockheed, responsible for Polaris, a 1500-mile missile now under development; Douglas, builder of 1500-mile Thor which is undergoing tests; and Martin, prime contractor for the long-range Titan still in the research stage. North American is making the power plants for several of the foregoing, and General Tire is also important in this field. With the most of these companies the danger is that an upward revision of missile spending may mean sharp cuts in aircraft procurement which is their major source of income.

Rocket Fuel Stocks Have Speculative Appeal

A safer speculation in my opinion would be one of the chemicals which have taken a leading position in rocket fuels. These companies, unlike the airframe makers, have an established earnings base in other products which is unlikely to be affected by changing procurement policies. Included in this category are Olin Mathieson, which has a contract to deliver a new fuel to the Air Force, and American Potash, a major producer of boron chemicals which have great promise as propellants for jet and rocket engines. Aside from rocket fuels in which it is spending a great deal for research, I like the long-term growth prospects of American Potash in commercial chemicals. The stock has declined 40% from its recent high and appears to me to be in a reasonable buying range.

DEFENSIVE ISSUES HAVE PLACE IN MOST PORTFOLIOS

Q. A Michigan investor writes: "My list of glamour stocks and growth stocks has left me badly burned on paper on the recent declines. I would appreciate a suggestion of more stable issues to balance my list with funds now available."

A. Many investors besides yourself have been getting a taste of what a serious reaction can do, on a short-term basis, to a list of stocks which get the biggest play during a bull market. I have always believed that there is a place for a proportion of defensive-type issues in most portfolios except those in which substantial long-term growth is of over-riding importance. Defensive issues, particularly necessi-

ties-of-living stocks, have built-in stability because of the nature of their business. They rarely rise to extremes during periods of bullish enthusiasm and customarily decline much less during times of considerable pessimism like the present. Foremost in this category are the utilities. Among these I would suggest Duquesne Light Company, serving Pittsburgh; Baltimore Gas & Electric, operating in the Chesapeake Bay area; Consolidated Edison, supplying New York City. Food stocks, such as National Dairy, foremost in milk products, and Campbell Soups are suitable for your purpose. Pharmaceuticals have defensive characteristics as well as good growth potentials and here I like Merck and Parke, Davis, both of which have behaved relatively well during the recent decline. American Can, an industry leader, is a long-time favorite of mine for steady market performance and moderate growth. Somewhat less stable but with a history of resisting recessions are the food chains. In this category I like Safeway Stores, First National, Kroger and Winn-Dixie.

(Send your investment questions to Roger E. Spear, care this paper.)

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