

What's RIGHT with Agriculture?



Astronaut Alan Shepard, when a long, long way from the earth, found it "a beautiful sight." Possibly if we had that same sort of vantage point, if we could view this whole business of farming from a distance, it, too, would appear very attractive indeed. The point: If you "can't see the agricultural forest for the trees," stand back — and get the whole picture.

Put agriculture, America's biggest industry, in its true perspective and all our concern about "fewer farms," "fewer farmers," "no chance for beginners," "the price squeeze" — and a lot more, fades away. Then you get a clearer conception of the really wonderful possibilities in farming, in the things to come — beginning right now.

Before squinting down the road ahead at the exciting, and rewarding developments in the early farming future, note these testimonials to the extraordinary progress already made:

In 1961, compared to 10 years ago, 20 per cent fewer American farmers, tilling 5 per cent fewer acres, are feed-

ing 20 per cent more people — and supplying them more and better food than any other country ever had in the whole history of the earth. Thirty years ago one farm worker fed himself and 9 others. Now, so effective are our production facilities, one farm worker feeds himself and 27 others! That's pretty remarkable. Since 1947-49 others of our industries than agriculture have increased production per man-hour 32 per cent. American farmers have done nearly three times as well — stepping up results per man hour 90 per cent!

It's lucky for Uncle Sam that his food producers are the most efficient in the world, because he is expecting to be feeding about 230 million nieces and nephews within the next 15 years. Within a decade he'll be needing about 37 per cent more meat animals than the present total, 25 per cent more poultry products, 28 per cent more milk, 36 per cent more fruit and 42 percent more grain. The finest compliment ever paid our farming industry is that no informed person doubts these tremendous food and feed increases are to be forthcoming. That's real confidence!

Coming up are many, many wonderful changes. These will include new varieties of crops with bred-in resistance to insects and diseases, improved strains of livestock and poultry, progress with fertilizers and a host of "cides," including insecticides, pesticides and fungicides. We are to have new helps in food production beyond anything we now dream to be possible. We are certain to learn to desalt ocean water cheap enough for irrigation; we'll improve our soils and do our field work mechanically and largely with equipment operated automatically. Also in the offing is the application of atomic power in farming.

The next big labor-saving program on our farms is to equal our cropping efficiencies in our barn lots. We've been slow there — reluctant to give up the pitch fork, shovel and bushel basket. We'll move about a billion tons of feed and waste products mechanically, not by hand as we have in the past. We'll build with plywood panels, lower cost and of greater strength than the type of lumber now used. Our structures will be planned for production-line operation. Not only will we have air-conditioned housing for our animals and birds but we may even put domes over fields for control of weather and pests.

To stay in the beef business in the early future, you'll cut cost corners with razor sharpness. Herds must pasture lowest-priced land which will be managed to yield a maximum of feed. Feed lots will be compact automatic feeding and handling units. Silage will be unloaded by an automatic timer and delivered at a uniform rate. Feeding grain and protein supplements will be a push-button matter.

So, if you have a friend contemplating entering farming to live at a slow pace, leading a restful, tranquil life, tell him he should have chosen an earlier time to be born. But if he is looking for a fast-moving, tremendously interesting, challenging life where he has to be on the ball every minute in order to keep up, tell him to come on in — that farming's the industry for him. Happily, the returns, the rewards, for efforts put in will be most satisfactory. Wonderful — the future American Agriculture.

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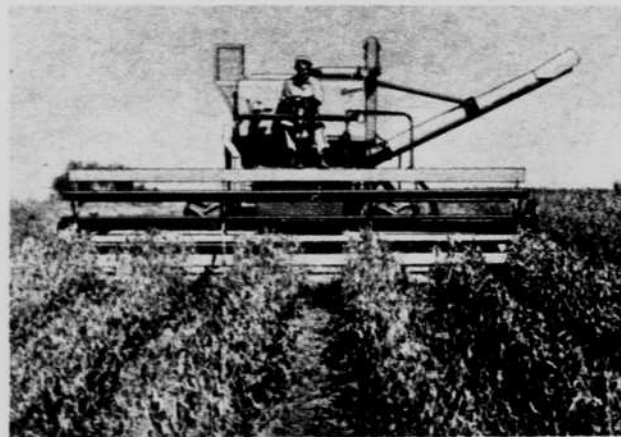
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