



Weaver's museum includes one Turkish drain tile that may be over 3,000 years old. OVER 350 TYPES OF DRAIN TILE ON DISPLAY

Drain Tile Expert

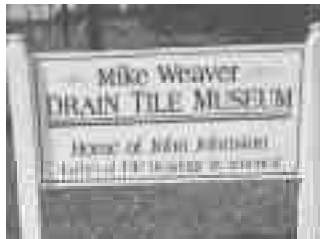
Ever wonder who first dreamed up the idea of field drainage tile? Even if your answer is "no" you might want to consider stopping by the Mike Weaver Drain Tile Museum near Geneva, N.Y., if you're ever out that way.

For many years Weaver was an engineer with the Soil Conservation Service. Working in an area where drainage tile had been widely used for over 150 years, he learned about John Johnston, the "father of tile drainage in America." Weaver started collecting drain tiles over 40 years ago and wrote a detailed history of drain tile in the 1960's. About two years ago he started a museum to show off his collection and showcase the origins of what he considers one of the most important developments in the history of agriculture.

John Johnston arrived in the U.S. in May 1821 from Scotland and purchased his first farm - 320 poorly drained acres - with \$1,200 in borrowed money. He had learned about field drainage in Scotland but drain tiles were rare in the U.S. So in 1835 he sent a message to friends in Scotland, requesting two drain tile "patterns". Then he had a friend start reproducing the clay tiles in volume and he laid the tiles in trenches across his farm and quickly became an object of local ridicule.

He had the last laugh. His fields, containing 72 miles of drain tile, were soon producing twice as many bushels of wheat per acre as the undrained fields of his neighbors. Word of what drain tiles could do for wet farmland soon began to spread.

Weaver's museum has one of the two original tiles sent from Scotland. The other one is in the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Mich., which is a sore point for



Johnston arrived in U.S. from Scotland, where tile drainage was common, in 1821.

Weaver because as far as he knows they've never put it, or any of the other 46 tiles he sent them, on display. When he recently asked about getting them back, they told him they weren't even aware that they had them. He still hopes to get them back.

There are over 350 different types of tile in his collection, including a number of other tiles dug up from Johnston's farmland. Most early tiles were round or horseshoe-shaped, and about 15 in. long. They were buried 2 or 3 ft. deep lying end to end in a trench. Water entered the tile lines through the spaces between the sections.

Weaver's collection includes tiles made of wood, cement, stone, and glass. There's a drain tile from ancient Turkey that may be more than 3,000 years old. There's another drain tile made by German prisoners of war at a factory in Ohio during World War II. The prisoners scratched a swastika on it when no one was looking.

Weaver's 350-page book about Johnston and the history of drain tiles sells for \$15.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mike Weaver, 1332 Rt. 96, Waterloo, N.Y. 13165 (ph 315 539-3963).

Time For A New Breed Of "State" Calves?

"I read with interest the story in your last issue about a calf with a patch on its forehead in the shape of the state of Ohio. I have a calf named Spud who sports an upside down patch on his forehead the shape of Idaho," says Karen Carlson, Lamona, Wash.

"He's not a good steer because his mother did not produce much milk. We're not sure what we will do with Spud but I think someone should collect pictures of calves with markings of all the states. Spud was born here on our farm and is great fun for visitors to see."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Karen Carlson, Box 6, Lamona, Wash. 99144 (ph 509 982-0016).



Spud sports upside down shape of Idaho on his forehead.

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Photo courtesy South Dakota Tourism

Prairie dogs are fast becoming popular pets, but there are some do's and don't's to keep in mind if you are considering them, say experts on exotic and unusual animals.

KEEP THEM IN A CAGE
OR SET UP YOUR OWN COLONY OUTSIDE

Prairie Dog Pets Catching On Fast

To Western farmers and ranchers who struggle yearly against damage caused by big colonies of prairie dogs, there's probably no animal on earth that seems more worthless.

So it may come as a shock to them to learn that prairie dog breeders are doing a booming business selling the pesky rodents as pets.

"They're becoming more and more popular all the time," says Linda Watkins, an Oklahoma breeder of exotic and unusual animals. "This year we expect to sell 10,000 pups worldwide."

Here are a few of the tips she has on raising prairie dogs as pets:

- First, prairie dogs are illegal to keep as pets in some states. You'll have to check with the fish and game department in your state.

- Prairie dogs breed only in burrows, so they won't breed in captivity if kept in a cage.

- You can set up your own colony out-

side only if you first build an underground barrier to keep them in one spot.

- They love and demand attention and can be litter box trained.

- Feeding is easy. Use hamster pellets, fresh fruits and vegetables, dog food, peanuts, sunflower seeds, hay cakes.

- Cages have to be made of wire since they'll chew through plastic. They should be caged when not attended, but should not be left alone for long.

- Matic and unusual prairie dog has been dipped at least once in flea pesticide.

- Make sure your prairie dog has been handled a lot from an early age (six weeks on). Wild adult prairie dogs do not make good pets.

Watkins sells prairie dog pups about the size of a small Guinea pig for \$65.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Glasgow Enterprises Ltd., P.O. Box 431, 1820 N. Washington, Elk City, Okla. 73648 (ph 405 225-2000, fax 2024, E-mail glasgow@itnet.net.