FARM SHOW

Smörgåsbord

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Editor

Exciting new products in the "research hopper" include Dormoats, a promising new kind of oats being developed by a Canadian crop researcher. His goal: To build an oats plant with all desireable qualities of regular oats, plus the seed dormancy characteristic of wild oats. When harvested, the experimental "Dormoats" are dormant. However, the seeds lose their dormancy after being exposed to dry air, a characteristic which sets the stage for some interesting new cropping alternatives.

For example, you could possibly harvest Dormoats with an attachment that gathers all light seed and adds to it a portion of the harvested crop, then distributes this seed at the rear of the combine. "We have modified an older model, pull type Allis Chalmers combine to perform this task and it appears to be working well," Vernon Burrows, chief of the Cereal Section, Research Branch, Agriculture Canada, headquartered at Ottawa, told FARM SHOW. The idea: To harvest and sow grain in one operation. And, once the buildup of left-over Dormoats in the soil reaches a suitable level, to keep a crop of oats going each year from combine losses alone.

"I have 10 farmers and research stations testing 1 to 30 acre blocks of Dormoats," says Burrows, who emphasizes that no Dormoats seed is available at present: "When we have done our homework and have made all the assessments required, I will be delighted to release Dormoats to the farming public. To do so prematurely may jeopardize the project." We'll keep you posted on any new "Dormoats" developments in future issues of FARM SHOW.

International Harvester Co. gave its new president and chief operating officer a $1.5 million bonus to lure him from the presidency of Xerox Corp., according to a report in the Chicago Tribune. "Archie R. McCardell has received $1 million of the bonus with the rest to be paid Jan. 3, according to a proxy statement for Harvester's annual meeting Jan. 19. A five-year contract, beginning Sept. 1, provides McCardell with an annual base salary of $460,000. Harvester also sold 60,000 shares of its stock to McCardell at $29.94 a share — the average market price on Sept. 1. The purchase was financed by a $1.8 million loan to McCardell by I-H, at 6 per cent yearly interest. If certain financial goals are reached by Harvester the eight-year loan could be discharged without payment by McCardell. McCardell also gets deferred compensation of $100,000 a year for three years and $175,000 a year for eight years."

Where will it end? If you think that last new tractor or combine you bought was expensive, just wait until the year 2000. At an annual inflation rate of 7%, a $30,000 1977 tractor would cost $142,220. A combine that sold for $48,000 last year would cost right at $142,220. Some other projections to include in your long-range budget planning — a $5,000 car could cost $23,700; a $1.19 pound of ground beef, $5.64; a 39-cent loaf of bread, $1.85; a 59 cent gallon of gasoline, $2.80; and a 49 cent head of lettuce, $2.32. And that nickel candy bar, which now costs 20 cents, could carry a price tag of 95 cents by the year 2000.

Blow out the candle. An Arab returned to his tent late one night, very hungry. He lit a candle and searched until he found three dates. He took out his knife and cut one open; it was wormy so he tossed it aside. He took another one, cut it open, and it was wormy. Then he sighed, blew out the candle, and ate the last date.

In visiting with a former South Dakota neighbor over the Christmas holidays, I asked him: What was the best marketing decision you ever made? His answer: "I sold wheat for $5.60 a bushel." And, I asked, what was your worst decision? His reply: "I didn't sell all of it".

Looking for a successor to the "pet rock" gimmick, a California couple hit on the idea of a Solar Clothes Dryer. They're doing a booming business selling their neatly wrapped package. Labelled the "Solar Dryer," it contains 15 feet of cotton clothes line and 15 old-fashioned wooden clothes pins.

I read the other day in Country Guide magazine about a Canadian Implement dealer who has a clipping displayed in his store. It tells of the farmer whose combine broke down in mid-harvest. When all efforts to get it mobile failed, the farmer called in a repairman. He walked around the machine slowly before finally giving it a hefty whack with a hammer. To the farmer's surprise and pleasure, the combine immediately started to work. Some time later, the farmer received the repair bill — for $100. Annoyed, he demanded an itemized account. Back came the reply: "For hitting combine with hammer — $1.00. For knowing where to hit it — $99.00."

Latest new development in the "I've seen everything" department is pierced earrings for dogs. People all over the country are setting up shops that specialize in this new fad. Costs generally run $8 to pierce one ear, or $15 for both. It might work for pampered poodles in town, but you can imagine your own "Rover" chasing gophers, cattle and cars with pierced ears and earrings. He'd have them ripped out, along with half his ear, in less than a week.

"Most people won't believe blue cows even exist until they see one," says Leo Joubert, secretary of the new Blue and White Cattle Association headquartered at Wisconsin Rapids, Wis. His father Renzel made the first selective crossings of Milking Shorthorns and Holsteins. Leo, together with his brother Duane, and brother-in-law Vernon Amondonson, is now spearheading the project.

We've seen the cattle and can vouch for the fact that they really are blue. Some are white with blue spots throughout the body; others are white with blue tips on the ears. Most are polled. "Fourth-generation bulls usually sire blue and white calves when bred to other breeds of cattle," says Leo. "It's a dual purpose breed like dairy farmers used to have. You don't have to put a lot of high protein feed into them to get milk. Some of the first Blue and White cows on DHIA testing have produced more then 20,000 lbs. of milk and upwards of 800 lbs. butterfat," says Joubert. The Association claims about 400 registered animals in about 20 dairy herds throughout Wisconsin.

Worth repeating — Joseph Reynes, of Sonoma, Calif., is the developer of a product called "Frost Guard," a cold weather, outdoor cream designed to keep skiers and snowmobilers more comfortable in cold weather. Today, he sells it by the bucketsful, not to skiers but to dairymen, thanks to Nebraskan Leonard Roh, of Abie.

It all began about four years ago when Roh began ordering the product after reading a news item about it. Reynes became so curious about this customer from the plains of Nebraska who kept ordering eight-ounce jars by the dozen, he picked up the phone.

"What are you running, a boy's football team?" he asked. (The product is also used by football teams playing in cold climates.) "Heck, no. I use it on my dairy cows," Roh responded.

What Reynes didn't know, but soon found out, was that Roh was using the product to prevent severe chapping on his cows' udders. Roh had passed the word on to other dairymen who began using it too. Roh asked Reynes to have a companion product made for him — Udder Frost Guard — "just keep the same formula, but cut the frills and put it in four and eight pound buckets." Reynes did, and that was three years ago.

Today Roh, besides being a dairyman, is also the national distributor for the product. And with the recent frigid weather, Roh reports he can't keep up with the spurt in demand and is flying it out to Maine, Vermont, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Kansas, Iowa and the Dakotas. (From Don Ringler's RFD column in the Omaha World Herald.)

Food for thought: "Livestock producers would benefit from a ban on additives and antibiotics in feed." So says Ken Monfort, Colorado cattle feeder and meat packer. Speaking at the recent National Beef Congress in Kansas City, he noted that "livestock producers would be economically ahead to produce less meat. Today, we could sell 110 lbs. of meat per capita for more total dollars than we could 128 lbs. So anything that will cut production will be beneficial to the producer. In short, what we'd have without these additives is more grain being used to produce less beef which would sell at higher prices . . . if the farmers of American quit using 80% of the commercial fertilizer they now use, they'd have all sorts of higher prices and lower costs. And, they'd be a lot better off economically. Food would, however, cost the consumer a bunch more."

I got to thinking the other day that it's high time those of us who grew up with rubber guns get together to meet a challenge. Our kids scarcely know what an innertube is, much less rubber guns. As custodians of this vanishing art, it behooves us to make certain that blueprints for building rubber guns are properly recorded for posterity.

As any veteran rubber-gun builder well remembers, you were in trouble with both Mom and Dad right from the start — with Dad for cutting up an inner tube he was saving for a spare; and with Mom for dulling her best pair of scissors, for dumping out a peach crate to salvage one of the end pieces, and for raiding her clothes pin bag to get one of those special pins with a spring in the middle to hold the rubber band "bullet". From there, you let your imagination take over to build a rubber gun that would shoot straighter and farther, and load faster, than anyone else's.

So, let's hear it from you veteran rubber gun builders. Suppose you're telling a son or grandson how to build one. What are the key steps to follow? How about any other home-built toys or fun things your father made for you — such as whistles made from short sections of tree branches cut in the spring when the bark was green and juicy, or rope climbing gingerbread men. What home-made toy do you best remember? How was it built? Send your ideas to: Rubber Guns, c/o FARM SHOW, 8500 210th St., Lakeville, Minn. 55044.