



Your Living Environment

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DON'T BOYCOTT QUALITY FOOD!

Famine stalks the earth and thousands die daily — yet in most nations, farmers are fleeing the land to avoid bankruptcy! What a crazy, illogical situation for this world to be in! What is wrong with agriculture? Why can't farmers *make ends meet* in a world crying out for more FOOD? Is it just a problem of mal-distribution of produce to *consumers* and income to *producers*?

In this issue of *Your Living Environment* we want to look at some of the problems these two population groups are bringing on themselves and upon each other. At the same time, as we are all either FOOD *producers* or *consumers*, it will help to point out ways in which both groups can live more abundantly.

Our Food System

Most *consumers* are part of the vast majority who exist on *low-quality, mass-produced* food, bought at the *lowest* price possible!

Those connected with *quality* food are in such a minority that for the moment in this article we need consider only the *mass* of consumers and those who produce the *cheap* food for them.

The relationship between the great mass of *consumers* and *producers* is usually explained via *economics*, but the root of this matter is mentally and educationally based, rather than economic.

No-one seems to know which came first — the farmers' *need* to cut corners and produce *cheap* food, or *consumers'* need to cut corners and buy only the cheapest mass-produced article. This must be one of the most *vicious circles* ever to arise out of the Industrial Revolution. Both *producer* and *consumer* are myopically locked in what could be a death-struggle! While each party struggles for economic advantage they appear to

be oblivious to their mutual *dependence* on one another, but worse than that, their influence on each other is mutually *destructive*!

Economic pressure from *consumers* drives individual *producers* to run faster on their treadmill, yet the more they collectively produce, the lower their unit market price falls: e.g. the European butter "*mountain*"! That means they must run even faster and the longer they survive the more they stress their environment! How long can it go on?

The *consumer*, on the other hand feels that he is caught in a *producer-backed* food price-spiral. If he is, it is not of the farmers' making. Any farmer will tell you that as much as he would like it to be otherwise — the price of food is set by *consumers*! If it were different, few farmers and their families would ever join the historic population drift to the cities.

Consumers are caught-up in a system. We help generate our own higher food prices by crowding together into ever larger cities! This results in longer lines of *transportation*, which in turn encourages more *processing, packaging* and *preservation* of food for increased shelf-life.

All these factors inflate the final cost that must be borne either by *producers* or *consumers*. It takes *people* to provide them and if that's what we want, we must be prepared to reward those from whom we demand service.

These cost factors will loom ever larger in food economics, just as long as our life-style continues on its present course of centralization and urban concentration!

Let's Get Our Priorities Straight

As stated earlier, the basic problem is in the mind, not the pocket book! We will come to

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producers a little later, but right now ask yourself the question — do *consumers* buy low-priced low-quality food because they can't AFFORD that which costs more? In all too many cases the answer is NO! Cutting down on *quantity* or *quality* does not necessarily mean they can't afford it! People do this even while receiving pay rises.

The recent international storm over beef prices is a good example. Pressure groups have been active in Britain and the U.S. to boycott beef. On the surface it would appear that any such cause deserves only sympathy, but there are a few questions we might ask first:

1. When was there ever a more rapid rise in British wages and salaries than in the months prior to the *beef boom*?
2. How much of these rises found their way into the pocket of the meat producer — except in the form of increased production costs?
3. When was the last organized boycott and massive press campaign against the rising cost of beer, wine, spirits and cigarettes?
4. Has the rise in food prices triggered off a fall in the public's consumption of the above items?
5. Has the rise in food prices dropped the sale of cars, TV, pop-records, or transistors?
6. Have there been any reports of a recent falling off in the national expenditure of gaming, betting, pools, lotteries, or bingo?

No doubt rising food prices cause very real hardships with people on fixed incomes. Many of the rest of us also feel trapped as part of a vicious system, but we must admit that some of our troubles are self-inflicted. There is a great need to get our priorities straight — before cutting our level of nutrition by boycotting beef or any other food.

Don't Sacrifice FOOD QUALITY!

The world is not about to follow Ambassador College but it is our job to make God's basic principles known. And even among members, some will be able to apply them more than others, but as either *producers*, or *consumers*, WE need to make more effort to obey God's physical laws and break away from the vast *majority*! We should be numbered among the *minority* who produce and/or consume QUALITY food!

Governments and *consumers* need to realise that forcing the farmers' hand results in a *raw deal* for the *consumer* in food quality. Let us now have a look at ways in which the *producer* is hurting himself as well as the *consumer*. At the

same time we will see that positive steps can be taken that will benefit both parties.

We All Depend Upon the Producer!

Yes — but on whom does *he* depend? Never before has agriculture been beset by such an army of *experts*, *advisors*, *liaison officers* and professional *extension services*! Never before has such a massive body of *salesmen* and *agents* existed! All of these groups flock to the "*aid*" of the FARMER to help solve his problems.

More "*scientific*" knowledge and "*technical*" know-how are employed today than ever before, but if you have a farmer-friend ask him:

DOES HE HAVE LESS PROBLEMS THAN HE HAD 30 YEARS AGO? ARE HIS PROBLEMS LESS THAN THOSE OF HIS FATHER AND HIS GRANDFATHER? The answer will be NO!! One might conclude from this that apart from God, man is — "*ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*" (2 Tim. 3:7).

Man has rejected the Bible — the only solution to his farming problems and is thereby jeopardizing the future of all mankind. We need to understand and obey the laws by which God's creation operates. Here are *five* basic points that will help protect both *producers* and *consumers*:

1. Tap God's Free Nitrogen Supply

The world's dependence on chemical fertilizers is cited as proof of their success, but in reality, its dependence on them is proof that they never have and never will add *fertility* to soil!

God's system depends heavily on the growing of legumes and also on continuous re-cycling of organic residues. That means the return of animal manure (from stock grazing land), residues from crops, "*weeds*" and even crops grown specially to turn back into the soil as *green-manure*.

Soil is the foundation of *all* food production. Yet today, most of our food comes from soil that receives NO planned return of organic matter! That is one major reason why soil fertility is *declining* in the Western world.

According to Oregon State College Professor W. B. Bollen, "Nitrogen . . . is most often the limiting food element in soil fertility" (*Micro-organisms and Soil Fertility*, 1959).

The *Designer* of our environment has provided the soil with four main sources of nitrogen:

- A. Leguminous plants in association with a certain type of bacteria that fixes nitrogen in the soil direct from the air.
- B. Animal manure from grazing stock.

C. Decomposition of all types of dead plant matter.

D. Decomposition of the bodies of all types of dead animals.

Did you realize God's Word commands a regular return of dead plant matter and animal manure to the soil? We are ordered to cease harvesting the land and let it rest every seventh year (Lev. 25:1-4). Our cattle and sheep are to spread out over it, grazing it lightly and returning animal manure to the soil (v.7). We can take enough produce for our immediate needs (v.6), but the real physical purpose of the *Land Rest* is to encourage an accumulation of plant life. This material dies or is cut down and allowed to decompose in the soil where it grew.

Our soil is a gift direct from God (Ezek. 47:13, 14) and He requires it of us that we regularly return organic matter to it. In this way God protects the *soil's fertility*, the *farmers' bank balance* and the *consumers' health!*

2. Correct Cultivation

Logically, the next step is to follow right methods of cultivation in order to make the most effective use of residues. This will *not* be done by burying them 8 to 12 inches below ground level. Deep burying of undecomposed organic matter can adversely affect decomposition by limiting oxygen availability. Soil inversion is also incompatible with maximum humus in the root zone.

The same may be said of stubble-burning — a practice so often followed in continuous arable farming. Farming systems and in particular, cultivation methods need changing to incorporate as much organic matter from the previous crop as possible back into the soil. Even straw is far too valuable to send up in smoke!

With few exceptions, any organic matter present on the surface should be retained, rather than raked off or burned. Furthermore, greater efforts should be made to capitalize on "*unwanted*" plant growth such as "*weeds*". We all tend to have a passionate hatred of "*weeds*" and true, they can be very troublesome especially if we let them seed. At the same time we should remember they can also be one of our best sources of organic manure.

Most of the initial decomposition of residues should take place just *prior* to seed planting. Otherwise soil microbes will compete with young plants for available nutrients and the plants always lose! If decomposition takes place *too* far ahead of sowing, valuable nutrients may be lost to the atmosphere, or leached into the subsoil. It is all a matter of *timing*.

3. Centre On Livestock

One of the most vital keys to all successful agriculture is the inclusion of *livestock* in every farm programme! To a city person this will sound a little strange, as he may never think of a farm *without* livestock. That's the way it should be — but agriculture has now become so specialized that there are today *many* farms without *livestock!* It is ironic that under the *battery* system — there are also many livestock *without* farms!!

These trends of modern agriculture have left large areas devoid of stock and therefore animal manure. Banishment of animals from the fields has encouraged the tearing out of protective hedges, shade trees and windbreaks, enabling farmers to "crib" a few more acres for monoculture and manoeuvring of ever-larger machinery.

Cyril G. Hopkins, a former chief in agronomy and chemistry at the University of Illinois wisely stated: "...practically all the advice given to grain farmers concerning the problem of maintaining the fertility of the soil can be summed up in the words, '*BECOME LIVESTOCK FARMERS*'" [emphasis ours throughout]. The perception of this man is better appreciated when we realize this statement appeared in Bulletin No. 29 in 1909!!

These views run contrary to modern beliefs and here again the Bible provides us with the all-important clue to the truth.

The following references all point to one fact — through God, the Patriarchs understood the vital importance of *livestock* to agriculture! Read Gen. 4:2; 13:2,6; 24:33; 26:13,14; 30:29,30.

One day we may come to realise that the institution of ANIMAL sacrifices (*ruminants* in particular) was as significant to agriculture as to any other aspect of obedience to God.

There are also two important aspects of God's commanded *Sabbatical Year* that should be mentioned here — *commercial crop-production* is OUT and *livestock* are very much IN at that time!

4. Balance — Be Diversified

Men must reverse their mad rush into specialization. *Soil, plants, animals* and *people* must be supplied with wholesome food, produced under the normal conditions of "nature". In short — we need MIXED FARMS — where *all* life processes are going on together in the harmonious balance our Creator intended.

As one environmental authority wrote:

"If we study the prairie and the ocean we find that similar principles are followed . . . In lakes, rivers, and the sea, mixed farming is again the rule: a great variety of plants and animals are found living together: *NO-WHERE DOES ONE FIND MONOCULTURE*" (*An Agricultural Testament*, Sir Albert Howard, p. 271).

Every aspect of agriculture should be approached from this natural and balanced standpoint. Every farmer should be reasonably diversified for maximum economic security and minimum "overhead". His quantity of production may not equal today's high-pressure levels, but neither will his *veterinary, pharmaceutical and fertilizer bills!*

Mixed farming is NOT retrograde agriculture. It will bring security to the *producer* and health to the *consumer!*

5. Breeding — Purity in Plants and Animals

In Lev. 19:19, God's word tells us plainly NOT to mix our plants and animals by cross-breeding. Verse 29 of the same chapter tells us *not* to make prostitutes out of our daughters, otherwise the land will become filled with wickedness. Most people have had no difficulty understanding that principle, yet today men of agriculture (in spite of being closer to God's creation than most people) act as if they are ignorant of the law in verse 19!!

As recently as 10 or 20 years ago, the farmer who let animals breed indiscriminately was the object of scorn and ridicule. Many a "feud" developed if males got through the boundary fence and bred with the neighbours' animals.

But today in the beef, dairy, mutton and poultry industries a chaotic REVERSAL has taken place! Of course this utter perversion of God's laws is dignified with labels like — "*scientific progress*"; "*economic breakthrough*"; "*genetic engineering*" and "*production miracle*"!!

The pursuit of "*hybrid vigour*" has elevated the breeder of mongrel animals and plants to the "with-it" status, while those producing "*pure-breds*" for the commercial market have become a minority of "*squares*".

Some would challenge that the "pure-breds" of today are nothing more than a selection of yesterday's crosses. This is probably true, but the modern cross-breeder must at least give thanks that the founders and sustainers of today's "pure-breds" provide him with something to pervert! Plant hybridization is another shoddy perversion of natural breeding laws. Why perversion?

Because it is an attempt by man to make the *sterile*, the "oddball", the reject of nature *acceptable!!* In other words men are taking the *ABNORMAL* and calling it *NORMAL!!* This is done by playing on the "*economic emotions*" of the farmer. There is just one key feature that sells the hybrid — its ability to produce *QUANTITY!!*

NO!! Hybrids are *NOT* the answer to the economic difficulties of the modern farmer, or the health of consumers which is already declining through eating *low quality food*.

God's Word gives us the true answer to this question. We could have top quality grain today — with higher yields than *ANY* hybrids have *EVER* produced — if we would turn back and obey God!

By breaking His laws, man is substituting *QUANTITY* for *QUALITY* in his food.

God tells us that His servant Isaac received *ONE HUNDREDFOLD!* Do you know any farmers getting 150 bushels of wheat per acre (Gen.26:12)?

It used to take two fit men to carry a cluster of grapes *from* a vineyard (Num. 13:23). Today it would take two fit men to carry the drums of pesticide *to* the vineyard!

Training For The Future

Obedience to the laws of God is the way to abundant agricultural production and a healthy diet. Mingled seeds, continuous grain-monoculture and cross-bred battery-housed animals is *NOT!*

Do we realise we are now in a training situation — that it is our responsibility to future generations and to all who have ever lived, to become proficient in God's *LAW*? Now is the time for each one of us called into God's Work, to prepare for the future!

It is our job to acquire knowledge and the practical ability to use that knowledge. Soon we will be confronted with the gigantic task of global rehabilitation. And included in this great thousand-year project will be *human nutrition, food production and environmental management!* But irrespective of whether we are a *producer* or a *consumer*, *ONE* important question faces us all — *ARE WE QUALIFYING TO FILL OUR ROLE IN WORLDWIDE ENVIRONMENTAL RE-EDUCATION?* Let us all hope so, because whether we are qualifying or not — others *will!*

This is one of the most important reasons for Ambassador College having a *Department of Agriculture* and we hope to be able to continue to serve you in this direction.