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A LOOK AT AGRICULTURAL ISSUES AND FORECASTS

OMAFRA's Howard Giles honoured at appreciation dinner in Winchester

by Rebecca van Noppen
Chieftain Staff Reporter

He has given 19 years of hard work and dedication to Dundas County farmers, and now has moved on.

Howard Giles ended his job with the Winchester, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) offices, at the end of March. He has since taken a position with the ministry as agricultural representative for Leeds County.

The Dundas County agricultural societies hosted an appreciation night for Giles on Thursday night, at the Winchester Community Centre. John Mellan presented him with a painting in thanks for all that he has done for agriculture in Dundas County.

During his time in Winchester, Giles worked as a farm management specialist. But as of April 1, those positions across Ontario

were eliminated. It is part of the ministry's reorganization. Basically the staff remains the same, but their positions and titles have changed.

"My position was eliminated and that has given me the opportunity to apply for a number of other positions (with the ministry)," he said.

He accepted the ag. rep. position for Leeds and presently works out of Brockville.

However, it is with mixed feelings he has left his Winchester job.

"The family grew up here and we lived here a long time," he said, acknowledging that it is hard for him to say goodbye.

His Mountain Township home is up for sale, and when it sells they will be moving closer to Brockville.

As a farm management specialist

Please turn to page 6



Giles appreciation

An appreciation night was held in honor of Howard Giles, who gave 19 years of hard work and dedication to Dundas County farmers. He worked as a farm management specialist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food's Winchester office. Appreciation night committee member John Mellan (left) congratulates him on his new position in Leeds County.

Chieftain photo by R. van Noppen



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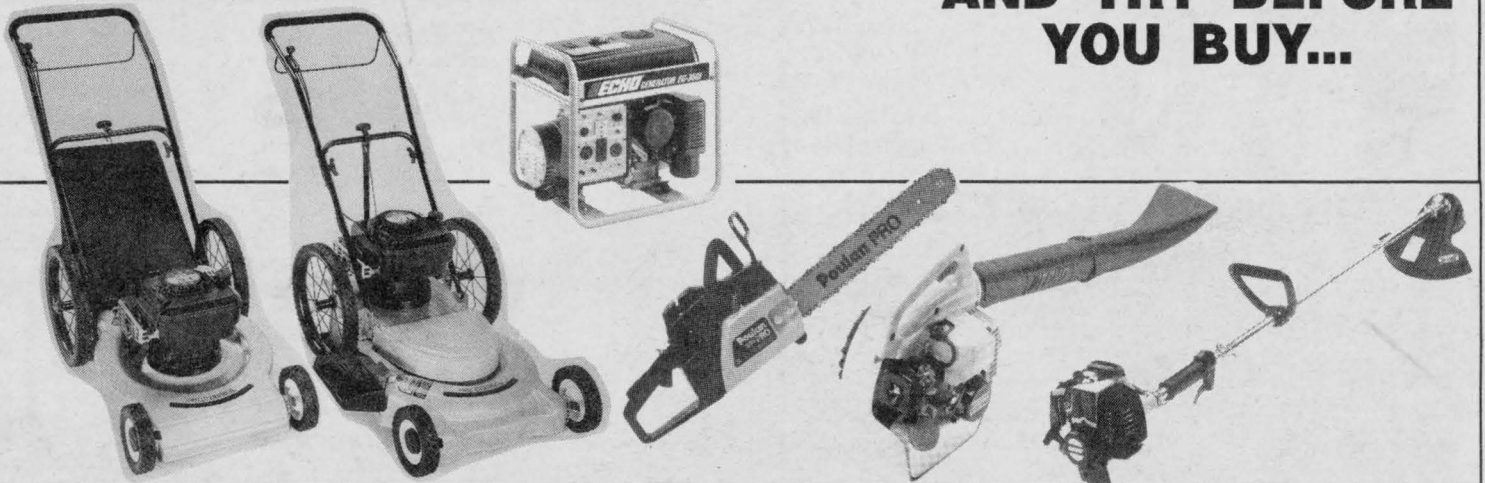
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SPECIAL SECTION



Facing facts

On Highway 2 towards Cardinal, there are a couple of signs along the roadside that carry direct and important messages; one brings awareness to farm safety while the other is displayed above.

Chieftain photo by S.L. Cumberland

Local lady participates in leadership program

Corry Martens, R. R. #1, Iroquois and Carol Williams, R.R.#2, Merrickville, all participants in the Advanced Agricultural (AALP), recently attended the fifth seminar of the two-year leadership program.

During this seminar, based in Owen Sound, April 11-13, participants examined the "Dynamics of Change" and learned tools to manage change.

Paul Levesque, instructor at the Achieve Service Academy in Mississauga, began a workshop on change with the warning "Adapt or perish!" According to Levesque, "Change is inevitable. The trick in helping people deal with change, is to make it less painful." This requires careful and constant communication.

The thirty leadership Program participants come from 21 counties across Ontario and represent a broad spectrum of agricultural backgrounds. They discussed local issues with community leaders from Grey and Bruce Counties at a dinner in Tara, April 11. In meetings with Ontario Hydro management at the Bruce Nuclear Power Development, and Canadian Agra executives in Kineardine, they learned how leaders in these two industries are helping to direct change.

The purpose of the Leadership Program is to develop leaders who will contribute to and strengthen the Ontario agri-food industry. The program is administered by leadership Trust - a partnership of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Univer-

sity of Guelph, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and the Foundation for Rural Living.

The next session is planned for July when the group will visit Saskatchewan and North Dakota to learn more about Canadian/North American relations.

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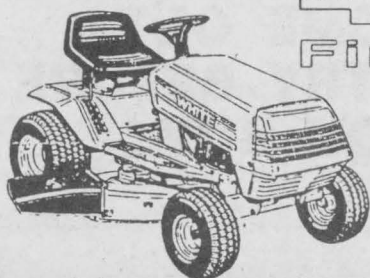
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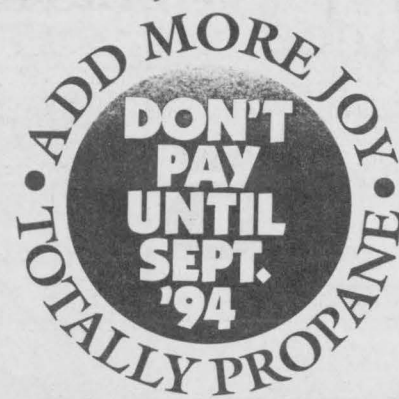
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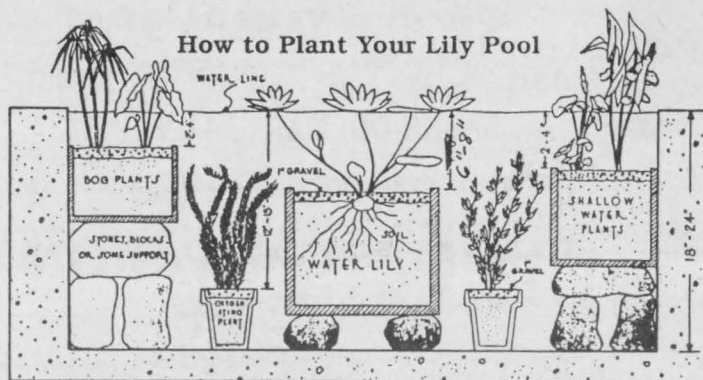


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A water garden can be formal, informal, linear, round, square or free form. It can even be sunk into a patio. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of water gardening is the playing of goldfish and the colors of water lilies.

The water garden can be a depth of one foot to eight feet depending on your plans. Water gardening is very simple. You can have a rubbermaid garbage pail inserted in the ground or have a half-barrel placed on the patio; both will serve its purpose.

Black plastic (6mm) is another cheap way of water gardening. It's free-forming and will last about four years or more if care is taken in the winter months. It is cheaper than pool liners which run from \$100 to \$600, depending on the depth or size of the pool. Also, a good way to protect the bottom of your pool is to use

an old rug or newspapers. This helps to stop anything from coming through the bottom.

Water lilies are easily grown. The three requirements for their successful culture are: plenty of sunlight, rich oil and quiet shallow water. Plant your water lilies in tubs or plastic dish pails,

Allow enough soil to fill at least half of the container.

Clay soil is preferred, although any heavy garden loam is satisfactory. DO NOT USE commercial potting soil, or peat moss, these will break down in the pond and spoil the water. Fertilize. Please turn to page 4

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Cute & cuddly

These youngsters were caught resting inside the Learmonth's barn, near Cardinal, a few weeks ago, as the spring thaw was going on around them.

Chieftain photo by S.L. Cumberland

CONTINUED

Water gardening

Continued from page 3

ize according to directions with water lily fertilizer. DO NOT USE cow manure it breaks down in the water as well, and will kill fish life.

The plant should be placed so that the crown, from which the leaves grow, is even, or slightly above the surface of the soil. It is advisable to sprinkle gravel or fine stones on top of the soil to prevent the fish from digging up your plants and dirtying the water. Stones or pea gravel can be found along the river or gar-

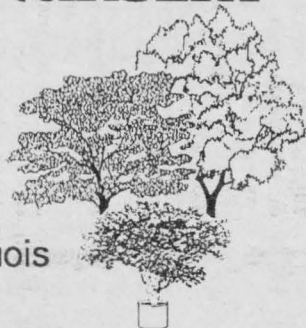
den centre.

The water lilies should have from 6 to 12 inches of water over the soil or crown of plant. The depth is at least 8 inches. In deep ponds, use supports to hold the containers up within approximately 8 inches of the surface of the water.

Water lilies can be planted in May, until the first of September. May and June are the best months for fast growth. Water lilies can be found in small lakes or in swampy areas, but remember to be gentle when removing the plant and take only what you need.

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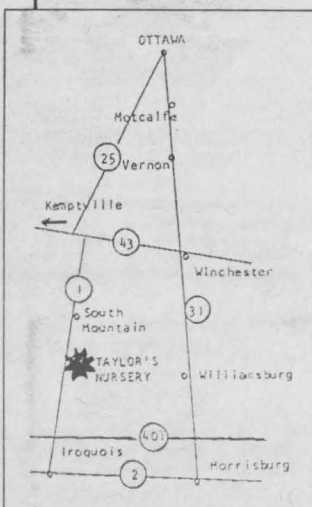


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Ground covers are less work

by Jeff Arsenault

Canadians love to have large lawn areas which require more work and more water than any other feature in the home landscape. Many people are converting parts of their lawns to low-maintenance and low-water using ground covers. These are plants that have low growing habits, and will spread like a living carpet across the ground.

Ground covers are good landscape problem solvers. Crown vetch and wild strawberry are ideal on slopes. Pachysandra, vinca and English Ivy do well in shady spots, such as under trees where grass will generally not grow. Try creeping thyme or baby tears between stepping stones in walkways.

The best months of the year for outdoor enjoyment are unfortunately the months when your garden seems to need the most attention. Lawn mowing, watering, weeding and other chores can take a sizeable bite

out of your free time. These are some ideas that can help you drastically reduce the time and energy needed to maintain your garden and yard so you can relax and enjoy them for a change. These tips are water savers too!

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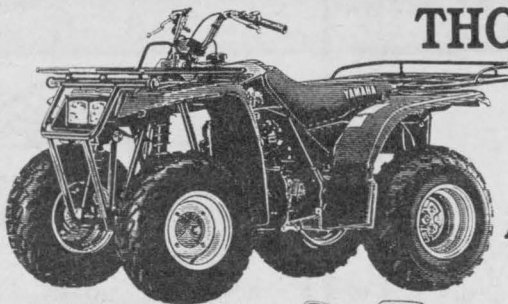
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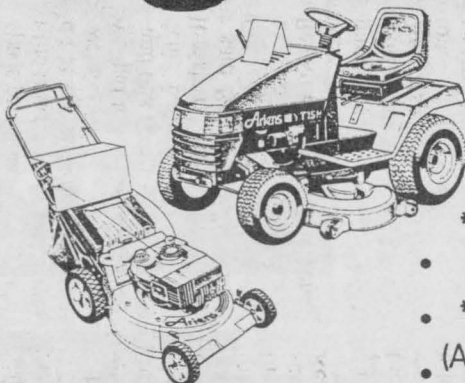
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Farm debt review board helps farmers in financial trouble

by Rebecca van Noppen
Chieftain Staff Reporter

These years are not easy times for the agricultural community. In the face of economic instability and uncertainty of government support, among other issues, farmers must make a living to support themselves and their families.

Many farmers find themselves struggling financially, but they are not without support. In 1986 the government set up the Farm Debt Review Board, to keep farmers on their land. It continues its work today.

The Board mediates between farmers and financial institutions, as well as offers support, agricultural advice, and assistance in management and husbandry practices.

Jacob Froese is a member of the Review Board. He is a tender-fruit farmer from southern Ontario who was asked to join the Board when it began in 1986. He has mediated hundreds of cases across the province, including in the Brockville area.

The Board has 10 members across the province. Panel-members do a lot of the leg-work and hold the initial meetings with farmers.

The Board member is a chairperson of the panel. There is a three-member panel that handles the case of the farmer of which a board member is chairperson. The other panel-members they try to include are a farmer of the same commodity of the farmer who is applying, and also a financial person.

The whole process is geared to establish a plausible financial solution for both the farmers and creditors.

"The purpose of the farm debt review board is not to keep the farmer on the farm at any cost but to keep him on the farm with a cash flow that he can meet his debt and survive with his family at a healthy living," Froese said on a recent visit to the area.

"It is important to note that

members of the Farm Debt Review Board do not take sides, either for the farmer or the creditor. We try to work out an arrangement that's satisfactory to all parties. We have no powers except to mediate a situation, and that is the most successful system that you can provide between a creditor and a debtor."

The agricultural industry was just coming off its peak years during the 1970s and early 1980s. At that time, financial institutions and government lending institutions were very willing to promote loans to farmers on the basis of equity and not cash flow. No one ever thought there would be a turn around. But there was.

By the mid-1980s, the industry's success came crashing down. The hardest hit were the tobacco and beef industries. However, difficulties occurred in other areas of the agricultural industry as well.

It was at that time, the Review Board was established to help farmers in their difficulties.

"I went into this work understanding the importance of the agriculture industry, and knowing it should be saved by any means possible," Froese said. "The majority of cases that we

had the first three or four years were related to the decline of the agriculture industry in general."

Other cases the Board dealt with, included people who did not have the right handle on the financial aspect of the industry.

"Even though the agricultural industry by no means is in a very lucrative position today, the areas that we face now are based on problems of farm management or husbandry practises."

Today, unless you are a good financial administrator and have top knowledge on agriculture practices, it is just about impossible to carry any kind of a debt load on a farm. According to Froese, any kind of a disaster whether it be fire, draught, hail, or disease also can make it difficult for a farmer to meet his financial obligations if there is any amount of debt that he has to carry.

Although it is important at any time for a farmer who is in financial trouble to apply to the Board for assistance, Board members recommend that it is best for the farmer to apply under section 16a where he can sit down with a panel and discuss his financial situation without any creditors present. Everything involved in the review process is


kept confidential.

If a farmer does not apply under section 16a, that person may apply for assistance within section 16b or 20, under which the farmer will then meet with

his creditors.

If anyone wants more information or an application, you can call the Farm Debt Review Board offices in Guelph at 1-800-265-7288.

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Healthy measures for plants

by Jeff Arsenault

Ensuring the health of your ornamental garden requires the same approach as ensuring the health of your family.

Create the environment most conducive to growth and take preventive action at the first sign of trouble.

Plants communicate distress through many signals. Your talent for recognizing symptoms and



correctly diagnosing the problem may make the differences bet-

ween life and death.

Early detection and treatment are the keys to preventing epidemics in your garden.

Good gardening practices contribute to the health of your plants. Poor drainage can suffocate roots. Plants debris left to decay in the garden attracts troublemakers.

Droughts and very high temperatures can kill eggs or early forms of many pests. Plant diseases thrive in high humidity.

Check your garden regularly for the first signs of insects. A contact insecticide may kill these homesteaders before they settle in. Soap and water work wonders. One teaspoon to one litre of water.

Common Troublemakers:

Aphids - attack all plants, leaving a trail of honeydew in their wake. They deform plants by sucking their juices and stunting growth.

Attention to weather conditions can alert you to certain potentials for infestation. Winter temperatures affect the survival rate of eggs and insects from autumn to spring. Temperature determines when insects will emerge from hibernation.

Scale insects - live under a protective armour. Scales have long sucking mouths that sap plant juices, causing foliage to drop. Heavy infestation can kill plants.

Beetles - come in many varieties and cause a variety of damage. Most feed on plant leaves and some also may spread disease. Beneficial beetles such as "ladybugs" and black ground beetles feed on aphids, scale crawlers, ants and mealybugs; care should be taken not to harm these garden helpers.

Leafhoppers - may spread viral diseases and suck sap from the underside of trees and plant leaves, causing the plant to lose colour and vitality.

CONTINUED

Howard Giles

ist, Giles worked with financial management, farm transfers, and computer programs and courses. He taught computer courses to farmers and others in the community, including students at the alternative school.

"I will continue to do that in my new position as well," he said. "Eighty per cent of the work will be the same. The remainder will be more time spent with farm organizations, executives, attending meetings and activities."

A part of his role with the ministry is to act as a liaison with the farming community. He will take scientific or other research and translate it into a plain language that everyone can understand, to make it applicable to day-to-day agriculture.

"The goal is to make the farmers better at what they do and try to improve those skills they have," he said.

John Mellan is a member of the committee that organized the appreciation night. He said the farming community will really miss Giles' expertise.

"Howard did a good job at what he did," Mellan said. "He was very important in getting the computer club started in the county. He brought us into the 20th century as far as computers go."

"He's always been available and he's always been very helpful."

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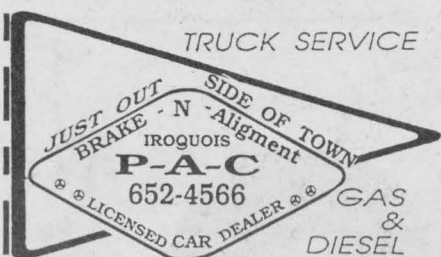
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Efficient nitrogen use in corn

By: Gilles Quesnel
Soil & Crop Advisor

Nitrogen is one of the most cost effective plant nutrient used in corn production, and is one of the nutrients which has the most impact on yield. However, it is necessary to determine, as accurately as possible, the quantity of nitrogen needed for maximum economical corn production while avoiding over fertilization. Also, as more crop residues are left on field surfaces, the method used to apply nitrogen has to be adapted to avoid excessive losses.

In the absence of other information or sources of nitrogen, Table 18 in the 93/94 OMAF Field Crop Recommendations Publication can be used to determine an average commercial nitrogen requirement for corn. However, when other sources of nitrogen, such as manure, sludge or perennial legume plowdown are available, application rates of nitrogen fertilizer should be adjusted downward accordingly.

When a good perennial legume sod is plowed down it will supply 100 lbs/acre or more of nitrogen, which along with 10 to 20 lbs/acre of starter fertilizer nitrogen, will be sufficient to meet the nitrogen requirement of the corn crop. Perennial sods containing 30 to 50% legume will supply approximately 50 lbs/acre of nitrogen the first year, following plowdown or burndown. For perennial legume plowdown, full nitrogen fertilizer allowances should only be made when the percentage of legume across the field is uniform. In the case of manure, solid and liquid dairy manure supplies 2 to 6 lbs of nitrogen per tonne and 5 to 12 lbs of nitrogen per 1000 gallons of manure applied respectively, in the first year, depending on the time and method of application.

The amount of nitrogen supplied by the soil varies greatly from field to field. Over the last few years, a


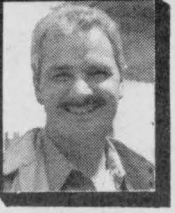
soil test has been developed to measure for nitrate-nitrogen. In Eastern Ontario calibration work has indicated that many well drained fields of medium to heavy textured soils, which were manured or rotated with perennial legumes over the years, needed relatively small amounts of nitrogen to produce the most economic crop of corn. On the other hand, the same tests indicated that sandy fields which had been in continuous corn, contained very little soil nitrogen and needed on average 100 to 135 lbs/acre of commercial nitrogen to produce the most economic crop of corn.

When growing corn in high residue fields it is a good practice to use anhydrous ammonia, or 28% injected in the ground as the source of commercial nitrogen as opposed to broadcasting urea or 28% on the residue. Broadcasting urea or 28% which contains urea, can lead to nitrogen volatilization when the product comes in contact with crop residue on the soil surface. When urea is used and not incorporated in the soil, 0.33 of an inch of rain or more will be needed to move the urea into the soil to avoid nitrogen losses.

In the fall, to estimate if the proper rate of nitrogen was used, examine the lower leaves of the corn stalks. Under normal growing conditions, if three to five of the lower leaves are dead (or nearly) by early dent stage, and the upper leaves on the stalk are still medium to dark green, the right rate of nitrogen was used. If fewer than 3 of the lower leaves die by the early dent stage and the top leaves remain dark green, too much nitrogen was used. If the leaves on the corn stalk die up to or

above the ear leaf, or if the whole plant is light green in colour and the leaves near the ear are yellow, not enough nitrogen fertilizer was used. Nitrogen deficiency starts as a V-shaped yellowing of the leaf tip which proceeds toward the stalk. It should be noted that drought symptoms are very similar to those of nitrogen deficiency.

Information on the use of the nitrate-nitrogen soil test is available in the 93/94 Field Crop Recommendations OMAF publication or from the county OMAFRA office.

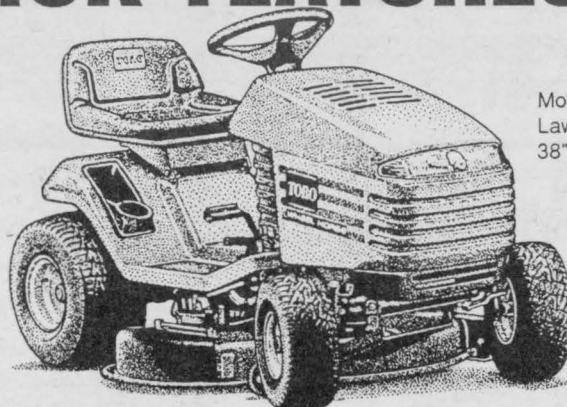



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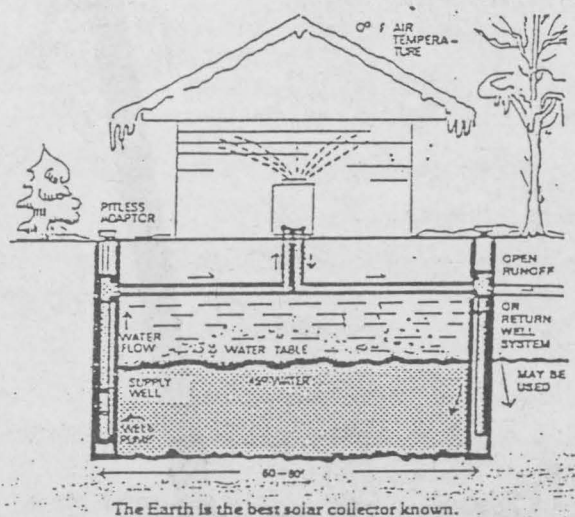
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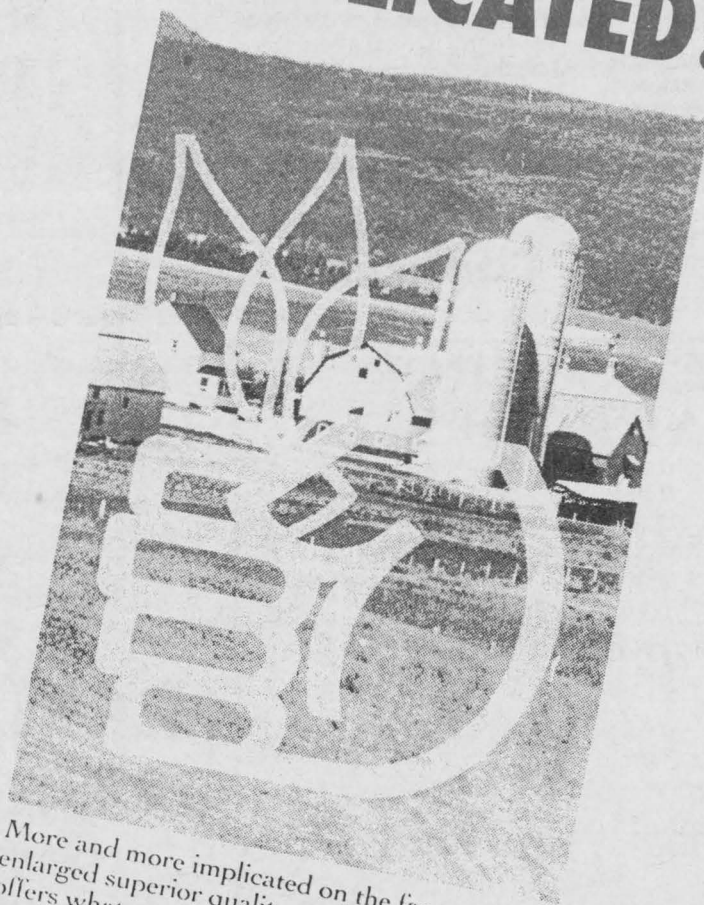
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