Spring Farm and Garden

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Farm Family Advisor services

Many of us would agree that the agriculture community has seen more than its share of financial setbacks in the last decade.

For producers in financial stress, OMAFRA provides, upon request, the service of a farm family advisor. The advisor is a fellow farmer, sworn to respect confidentiality, and is capable of doing the necessary financial paper work related to production forecasts, monthly cash flows, assets-liability statements and debt service calculations. An advisor, if requested by the farmer, can attend meetings with creditors and suppliers and help work towards solutions. The advisor's job is to understand a farm business, outline possible options and recommend the best apparent course of action.

The strength of an advisor is their role as a peer counsellor who is from the same background and type of farm operation. Confidentiality is always maintained.

When it comes to options and solutions, there is no new magic. It all settles down to variations of refinancing, partial asset liquidation or down-sizing, pursuit of additional off-farm income or the complete liquidation of a farm business in as orderly a manner as possible.

It will probably be the first time that the farm family has had to face these choices and this is where the advisor can be especially helpful. Most advisors have worked at their roles for several years; many have also worked with the Farm Debt Review system, and all have seen numerous situations involving these options.

A further strength of the farm family advisor as a peer counsellor is their willingness to spend that extra time, often late at night around the kitchen table, when the talk turns from production numbers, debt servicing and refinancing options to the equally important issues of emotional feelings, impact on the family and status in the community. All fellow farmers share the same sense of time and place - a common bond that perhaps a consultant, creditor, banker or supplier does not understand as well.

To access the service of an advisor, contact your local office of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

"Ask a Master Gardener"

Q. How do I go about attracting more butterflies to my garden in town?

A. Whether you garden on a balcony or in a large backyard, you can attract butterflies provided you meet a few requirements. Plan to locate your butterfly garden in a sunny sheltered spot. Butterflies prefer direct sunlight and heat. If you have an exposed windy site, plant your garden next to a fence, building, hedge or larger plants that will form a windbreak as they grow (i.e. sunflowers).

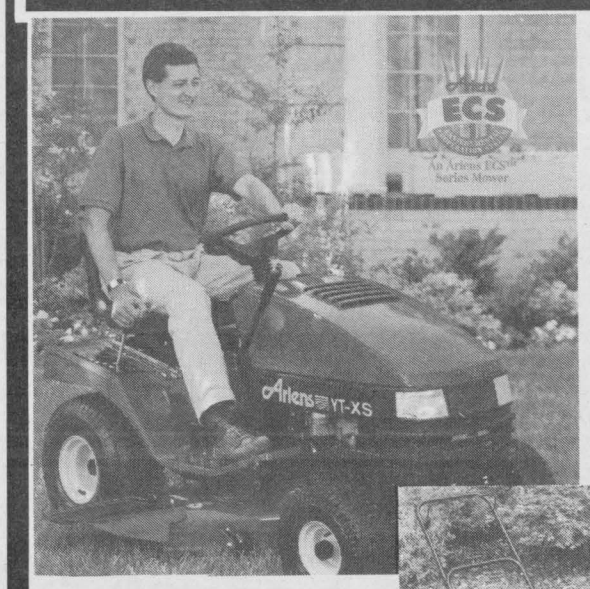
By doing a little research, you can find which butterflies are native to your area, decide which ones you aim to attract and find out what their food preferences are. While butterflies will feed on an assortment of flowers, the larvae are generally very choosy. The Monarch sips nectar from many flowers but will only lay its eggs on members of the milkweed family because the caterpillars that emerge will only feed on those plants.

Remember to include nectar plants for each season so there will be a sequence of flowering from spring to fall. Favourite butterfly annuals include: Zinnias, Cosmos, French Marigolds, Gloriosa Daisies, Strawflowers, Globe Flowers and Sunflowers.

Favourite perennials include: Butterfly Weed, Lavender, Purple Coneflower, Yarrow, Asters,

Please turn to page 7

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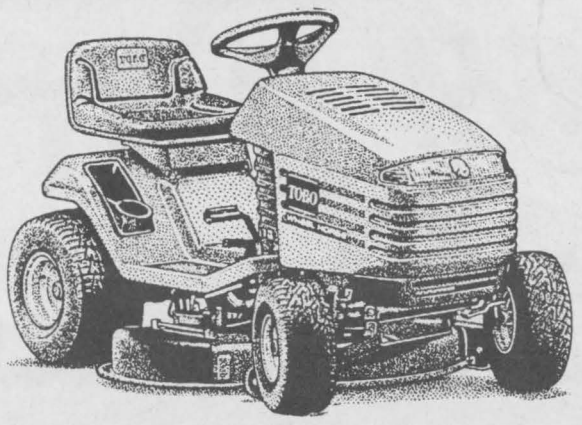
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Safety first

Living in a rural area, farm safety is an important issue for people of all ages. At the Dundas Agricultural Fair in Winchester, these public school students listened to a member of the Dundas County Farm Safety Association. *Chieftain photo by M.C. Bailey.*



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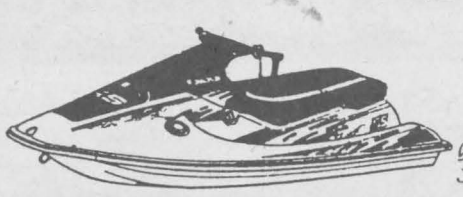
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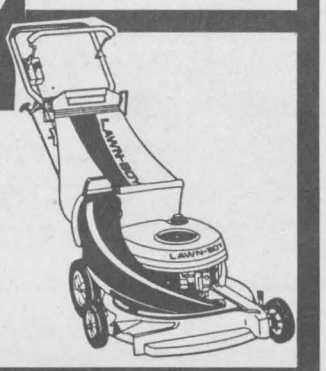
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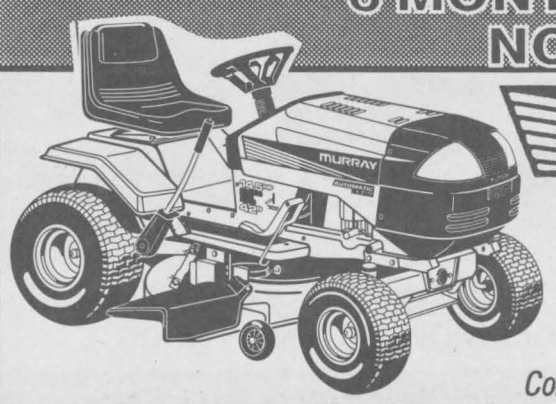
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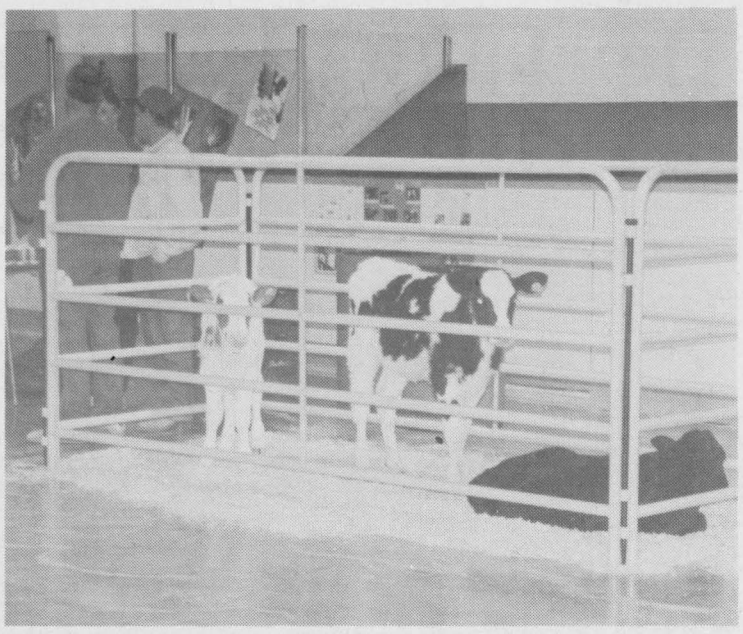
Travellers who want to experience a little bit of country living as they travel across Ontario can do so by vacationing with members of the Ontario Farm & Country Accommodations (OFCA).

Individuals who are looking for alternatives to the traditional summer vacation pass times might enjoy horseback riding, hay rides or relaxing under the shade of a maple tree enjoying the peace and quiet of the country.

Many guests enjoy visiting the barn during chore time to help feed a baby calf, or gather eggs. Families visiting farms should not expect to be entertained by farm families, the owners of the farm will be busy running their operations but will welcome visitors to observe their activities and may invite farm guests to join in when possible.

Farm vacations are not a new concept. European vacationers have grown accustomed to holidaying in the country in many parts of Europe and England while Canadians are just now discovering the joys of a family country holiday in beautiful rural Ontario.

The OFCA annually published a directory that lists and describes each OFCA farm. Guests interested in receiving a copy of the OFCA directory should send a self-addressed $1 ($1.25 for USA) stamped legal size envelope to: The Ontario Farm & Country Association, RR 2E, Alma, Ontario, N0B 1A0, Canada.



Agricultural Fair

The Dundas Argicultural Fair held annually in Winchester at the Community Centre is a popular event with local public school students. For those students who don't live on a farm, seeing the live animals is always a special treat. *Chieftain photo by M.C. Bailey.*

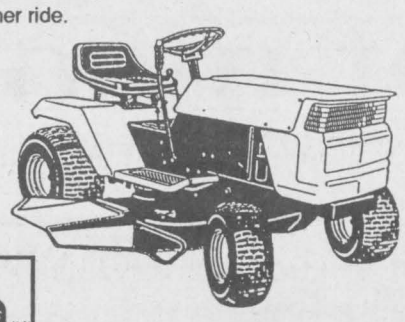
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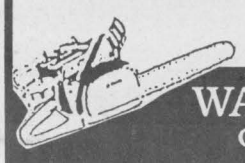
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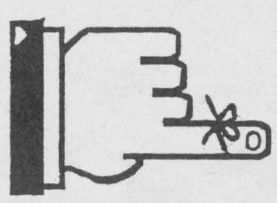
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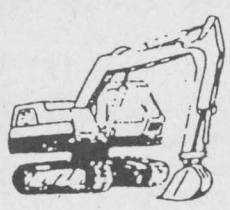
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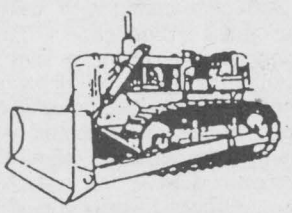
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Heirloom gardening at Upper Canada Village

The 7th annual Heirloom Plants and Gardens Weekend at Upper Canada Village has been planned for May 27 and 28. Visitors to the Village will not only have the opportunity to see many unusual 19th century varieties of flowers, but also to bring inquiries about their own gardening opportunities.

Village interpreters will be very busy in the Village gardens. At Loucks' Farm, visitors will help prepare potatoes for planting, and special attention will be given to the heirloom varieties - Garnet Chili and Early Rose. In the Loucks' and Robertson House Gardens, children will be able to help prepare and plant seeds. They can even take some of the special Village seeds home with them. Visitors are encouraged to discuss 1860s gardening methods, pest control and hot bed construction with the Village gardeners.

People with particular gardening questions will be pleased to meet members of the Dundas County Master Gardeners at the Village entrance. They will provide demonstrations and information on such gardening topics as: composting, propagation and division, and butterflies and birds in the garden.

Visitors will once again be able to purchase a variety of popular 19th century annuals and perennials at the Village Store. The plants on sale are heirloom varieties that are found in the Village gardens such as Black Hollyhock, Fringed Pinks, Yellow Loosetrife, Love-lies-bleeding and Angels Trumpet. Vegetable plants are priced at $1.95 per box, perennials (4" pot) $195 each, perennials by the box $4.95 each, annuals $1.95 and lemon geraniums at $2.25 each.

Upper Canada Village is located 11km east of Morrisburg off Highway No.2. Starting on Saturday May 20, the Village will be open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. And don't forget... the 2nd day is on us!

Nitrogen fertilizer

The growth of grass stands in hay fields and pastures tends to be limited more by the lack of nitrogen than that of other essential nutrients such as phosphorus and potash. Hay fields and pastures with legume content greater than 50 percent, require no additional nitrogen for optimum growth. However, as the grass content in a forage stand increases, the requirement for added nitrogen also increases.

High yields from grass stands are obtained more efficiently by splitting the nitrogen applications through the growing season rather than making one large annual application. Since fast-growing grasses make the best use of nitrogen, the demand for nitrogen is highest early in spring and immediately after a cut or following grazing.

Under a pasture situation, frequent nitrogen applications will help distribute the growth of grasses to better meet the grazing needs throughout the season. On the other hand, hay fields will benefit from proportionately higher nitrogen rates in early spring to maximize grass production.

As for grass species, unimproved grass stands containing species such as Canada Blue Grass and quackgrass, have a lower yield potential than improved stands. Improved grass stands consisting of productive grass species such as brome, orchard, rygrass, timothy, or reed canarygrass respond well to nitrogen applications. Response to mid-summer nitrogen application is higher with orchard and reed canarygrass, because they tolerate summer heat and drought best.

The rates of nitrogen recommended for grass stands are based on the type of stand. Unimproved grass stands usually do not benefit from more that 50 kg per hectare of actual nitrogen. The recommended rates of nitrogen for improved grass stands are based on the price of nitrogen and the relative value of hay.

Although nitrogen is essential for grass production, growth response to nitrogen will be disappointing if soil phosphorus and potassium requirements are not met. Phosphorus and potassium requirements should be determined by a soil test. Nitrogen fertilizer favours the growth of grass at the expense of legumes in legume/grass mixtures. Therefore, over time nitrogen applications to legume/grass mixtures will tend to decrease the legume content of a stand.

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Forage quality terms important

Defining forage quality has undergone many changes over the years. Today dairy producers are looking at Acid Detergent Fibre (ADF) and Neutral Detergent Fibre (NDF) instead of crude fibre when balancing a ration. More sophisticated protein analysis is being sought for future ration determinations. Nutritionists are using three protein factions as they relate to animal performance - soluble, degradable and undegradable protein levels.

Dairy farmers should know some of the basic definitions in feed analysis. This can assist producers with growing and harvesting quality forage for optimum animal performance.

In Alfalfa forage analysis producers can remember the ADF is directly related to digestibility and NDF is related to intake.

With corn silage, Total Digestible Nutrients (TDN) or Net Energy of Lactation (NEL) are important as we measure energy content.

Maturity is the number one key in harvesting a quality forage. ADF increases rapidly in a maturing forage and the higher ADF value results in less digestible forage.

Each day delay in harvesting Alfalfa can result in a reduced crude protein (CP) by .5%, increase in ADF by .7% and increase in NDF by .9%. It only takes five to six days to go from an ideal 20-30-40- CP-ADF-NDF to 17-34-45 level.

Research at the University of Wisconsin indicates elevated fibre levels can reduce milk production by 400 pounds per cow per year (4 BCA points).

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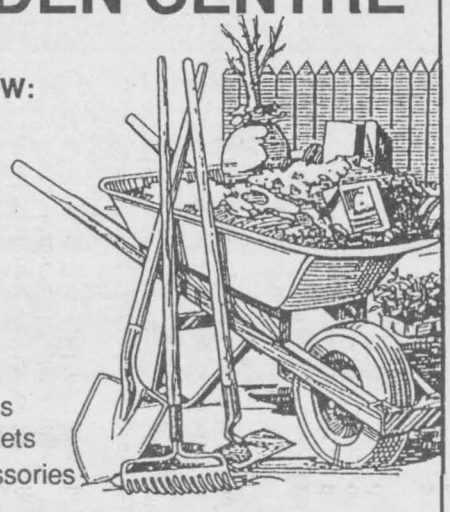
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Chieftain photo by M.C. Bailey.

Why inhibitor penalties happen

The OMMB is conducting a campaign to make milk producers more aware of the importance of producing a quality product for consumers. The 1994 dairy year saw an increase in the loss of milk from positive inhibitor tests. In 1994, 762,654 litres were destroyed for a total cost to producers of $359,278. The OMMB is considering changing the penalty levels for producers who have shipments that test positive for inhibitors. The proposed penalty levels will be much higher and could go as far as costing the producer the full value of his/her milk cheque.

Why do inhibitor residues happen?

1. Using the drug at levels above what is recommended on the label or changing the treatment procedures outlined on the label.
2. Improper withholding times.
3. Cows treated for extended periods with a combination of drugs.
4. Dry treated cows are not identified or removed from the milking line.
5. Treated lactating cows are not identified or segregated in the herd.
6. Milking treated cows into a bucket which overflows into the pipeline.
7. Not withholding all the milk when only one quarter is treated.

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CONTINUED

Gardener

Continued from the front

Helianthus and Sedum. Buddleia (Butterfly Bush) is one of the most successful plants for attracting butterflies. In small gardens, try to add more dual purpose plants. Lilacs will provide nectar and play host to Swallowtail larvae. Choke Cherry will offer nectar and play host to the White Admiral. Plant some extra cabbage, dill and parsley to feed hungry caterpillars. Wildflowers are some of the best attractants. Goldenrod, Queen Anne's Lace, and yes, the lovely dandelion, provide nectar for at least eight types of butterflies in the area.

Provide some flat stones or a board in your garden for the butterflies to warm themselves on. A shallow birdbath or a puddle (shallow pan or dish filled with sand or pebbles and kept damp) will be especially appreciated.

Most importantly, avoid using pesticides or herbicides on your garden and lawn. Even slug pellets and some organic pest control methods have been found to be harmful to butterflies. Butterflies prefer weediness and will be encouraged by a few dandelions and clover in your lawn. Far too many neat, tidy "perfect" gardens are also biological barrens.

A compromise would be to plant the weedier plants and grasses in beds adjacent to but separate from other flower beds. The beautiful fluttering butterflies of summer are not only a delight to behold, but when highly visible signal that your backyard ecosystem is relatively sound.

NOTE - If you have a question for "Ask a Master Gardener," it may be addressed to: Ask a Master Gardener, c/o Hazel Taylor, RR 1, Iroquois, ON K0E 1K0.

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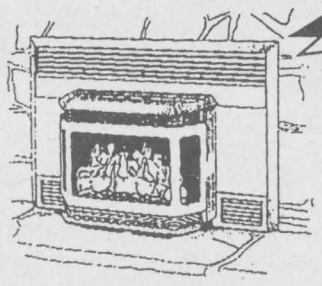
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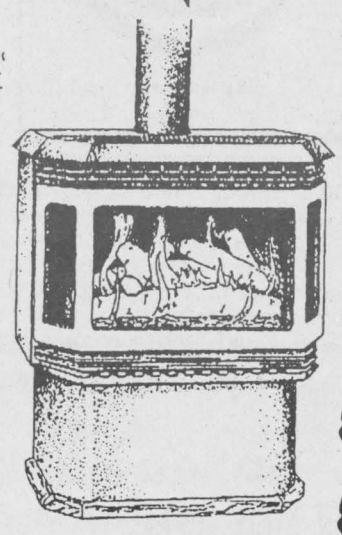
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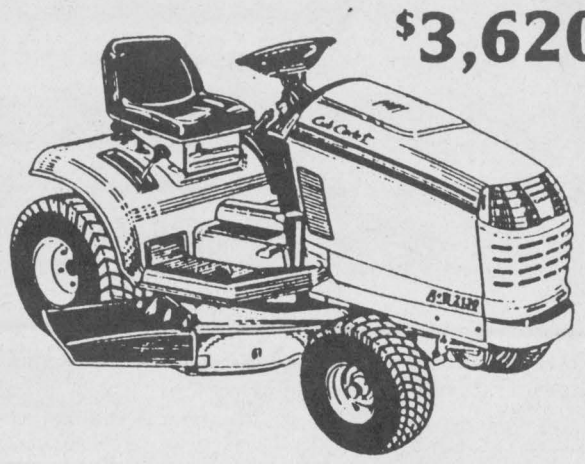
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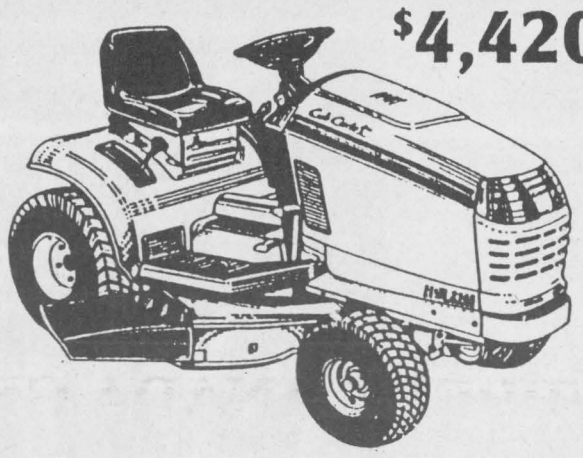
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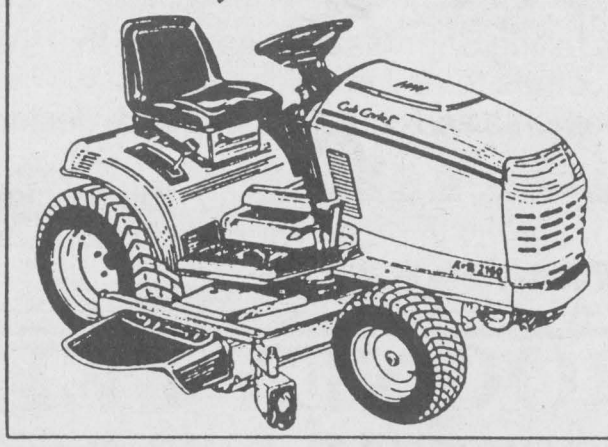
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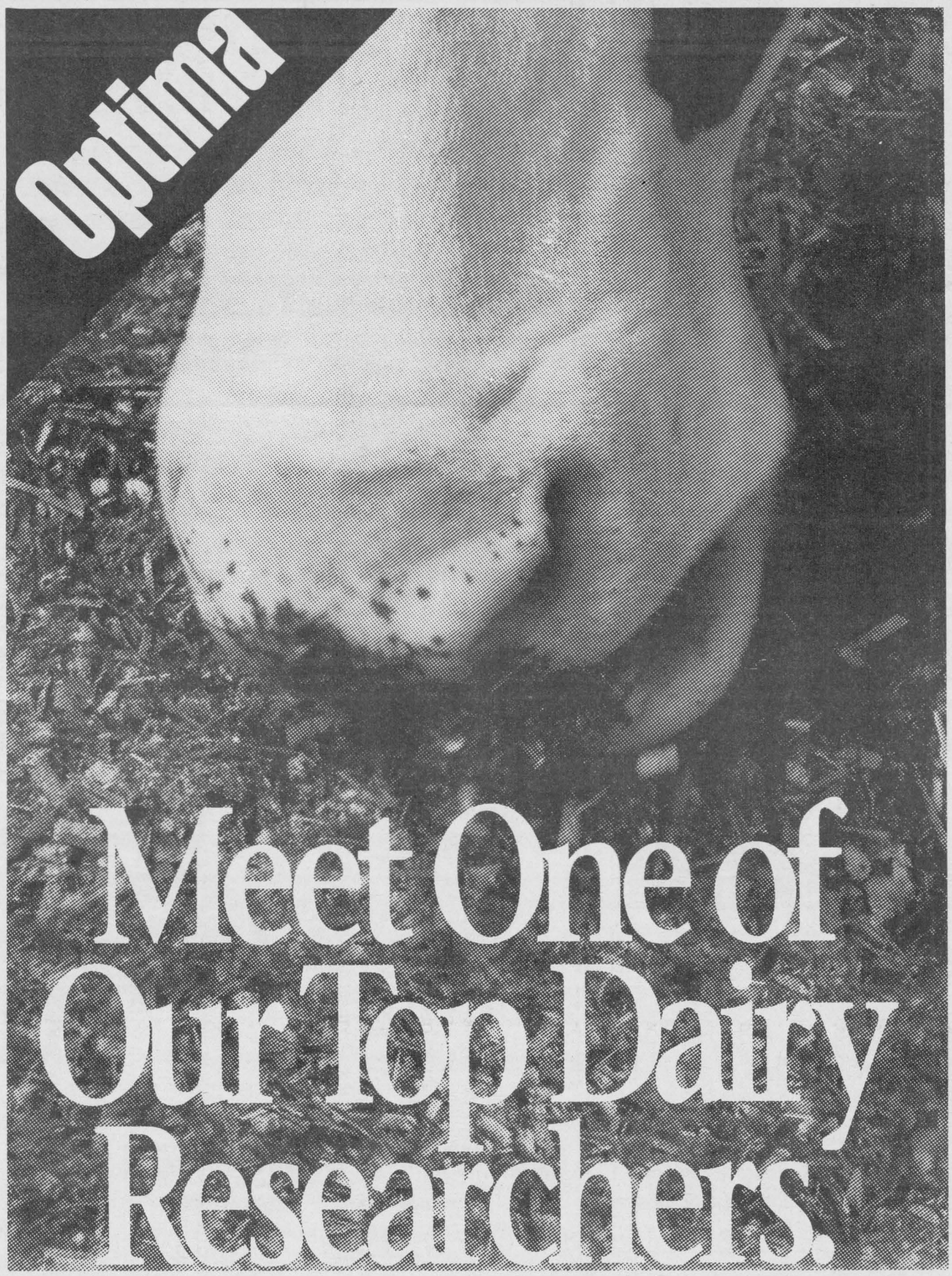
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