

LETTERS

Feasts, Fuels, and Factories

DEAR SIR:

In the Aug. 5th issue, Mr. Groggins, in his article on "Farming for Feasts, Fuels, or Factories," commented on my suggestion of processing surplus grain into alcohol and high potency feed. The information given by Mr. Groggins is not complete and, therefore, misleading.

Mr. Groggins stated that high potency feed is worth from \$75 to \$85 per ton. Several distilleries in this country already are refermenting stillage and selling high potency feed at \$600 to \$1500 per ton in car-load shipments depending upon the vitamin B₁₂ and antibiotic content in dry solubles. The price of grain is a function of the amount of cash grain and not total crop. The amount of surplus grain which could be processed into alcohol by the existing idle production facilities of the distilling industry is estimated at 100 million bushels per year which represents 1/8 or 16.6% of the cash crop and not 3% as mentioned by Mr. Groggins. Market price of wheat gluten (80% protein) is 25 cents a pound or \$500 per ton, which makes production of alcohol from wheat also at an attractive price. The new large market for wheat protein, besides monosodium glutamate, is in the making.

These new productions require additional investments in distilleries and time for sale-promoting of large quantities of new products. Therefore, I suggested a two-year transition period.

The present huge surplus of grain requires emergency measures and I, therefore, suggested to process, at once, up to 100 million bushels of grain per year during two years, by using idle distilling industry capacity. This suggestion has very little or no bearing with the first one. Mr. Groggins estimated that this would cost the Government about \$200 million in subsidies, but he did not mention that it would save another \$200 million for the Treasury when 200 million bushels of grain are shipped free of charge abroad, shipping costs included. Two price policies for grain were suggested: one at parity level for human domestic consumption, and one substantially lower priced, for surplus grain, for industrial uses. This matter, as you know, is under consideration by the proper authorities in the Government.

I would like to add that the main reason that ethyl alcohol is not used to improve antiknock property of gasoline is because of its high price. The synthetic alcohol produced by petroleum companies is sold under contract to the organic chemical industry and, therefore, is not available as an antiknock compound. However, the excess of iso-

propyl alcohol during the last few years found a substantial outlet in this field.

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DEAR SIR:

Although no specific mention of source material was made in the two articles we wrote on "Farming for Feasts, Fuels, and Factories" (Observation Post, July 22 and Aug. 5), we had in mind the report by Mr. Rosten entitled: "A Solution to the U. S. Agricultural Dilemma," and the book entitled "Chemivision," by W. J. Hale. Both of these authors have seen fit to communicate with us and we welcome the opportunity of widening the discussion.

Readers of our previous articles will recall that Mr. Rosten's statement contained four major proposals:

1. Farmers would deliver 4 tons of grain to a distillery and obtain in exchange, 1 ton of a high potency feed (which should not be confused with relatively high-priced vitamin B₁₂ and antibiotic concentrates which are used in small quantities as additives by manufacturers of mixed feeds).

2. Government would deliver 100 million bushels of grain annually for two years to distillers at 50 cents per bushel (effective parity Aug. 15, 1953, \$1.78) thereby incurring a loss of about \$100 million each year.

3. Derived alcohol would be used as a motor fuel and for the production of butadiene for synthetic rubber.

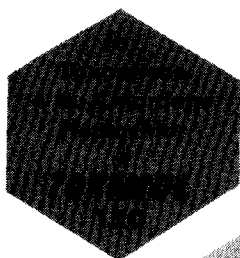
4. Delivery of subsidized grain to distilleries would be preferable to making gratis relief shipments to impoverished foreign countries.

Our view on these ideas:

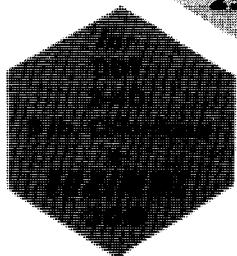
1. Our study of proposal no. 1 led us to the conclusion that American farmers would not want to exchange 4 tons of corn (valued at \$200) for a ton of feed which not only had lower dollar value but was also of doubtful utility to many grain producers. This conclusion was supported by distillers having extensive feed operations. It was their contention that distillers were fully aware of the advantages and possibilities of high potency feeds. The distilling industry has been investing millions of dollars in feed research and market development. Based on their advices it would appear that the availability of lower-priced competitive feeds would make Rosten's proposal unattractive to farmers.

2. Government now provides economic protection for grain producers through the medium of price supports. A further financial outlay which might

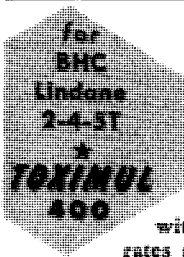
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BLENDED EMULSIFIERS

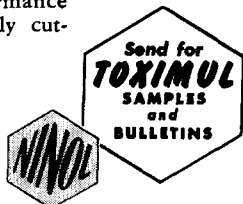


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