

Now live decoys such as these have been outlawed.

The wisest gander of the flock normally leads the great "V" formation. Wild geese can fly more than 60 miles an hour, some of them. But their size often makes them appear deceptively slow.

Ahead of the young ganders in the spring are the rites and fights of wooing a mate for the summer's mating. The battles between ganders sometimes last nearly an hour. Their powerful wings and blunt bills can give a lot of punishment.

Having driven off competitors, the successful swain woos his mate with loud hisses and rustling of feathers. He reaches his long neck caressingly around her, and her neck moves in response.

By mid-summer, with goslings in the nest, the parents begin to moult. Their feathers loosen and drop out. Unable to fly, they remain hidden in reeds and marshes, relying on swimming to escape danger.

By the end of August, in the farthest north, the geese have new plumage. They're ready for their great flight back south, telling farmers and hunters that winter is almost upon them.

But now the wild geese are headed north. In warming forests, Indians will call, "The waveys are back." And the ice will be breaking up in the bays and rivers. Another summer will be just around the corner.

Science News Letter, April 8, 1950

#### ENGINEERING-AGRICULTURE

### Alcohol-Powered Cars May Solve Crop Surpluses

➤ ONE of chemistry's great dreams—the day all automobiles will be powered partly by alcohol—has been described as a solution for the country's periodic headache, crop surpluses.

Dr. Philip J. Schaible, director of a Cincinnati, Ohio research council which seeks new uses for wastes from the nation's distilleries, told the National Farm Chemurgic Council the dream will some day become a reality.

Scientists have long known: 1. alcohol can be made not only from crops such as grain and potatoes but from crop wastes and wood wastes; and 2. alcohol-water-injection in gasoline engines can boost their power and save gasoline.

Edward W. Russell, former managing editor of the London Morning Post, told the convention that countries such as England that must import oil "sooner or later will find alcohol-water-injection essential."

Dr. Schaible predicted that grain alcohol for use as motor fuel would end grain surpluses in the U. S.

"But practical application to our economy is still something for the future," he said.

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#### CONSERVATION

## End to Dust Bowl Days

➤ "DUST storm conditions in the Midwest are not nearly so bad as those which existed in the 1930's," Dr. Mark L. Nichols, chief of research for the Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Division, stated.

"A prolonged dry spell might make conditions much worse, but even so, we have the machinery and the techniques with which to fight back against dust storms," he pointed out.

Dr. Nichols said that soil conservation officials had expected a much greater loss of top soil in dust storms but timely rains last fall had held the loss down.

Soil conservation experts lost ground in their battle against erosion during the war. The farmers' patriotic duty to feed the world, plus the excellent price for wheat then, combined to lead many farmers to abandon the stabilized rotation which is the main weapon against erosion and dust storms.

"Now," according to Dr. Nichols, "we have gained back the ground lost during the war and are even a little ahead of where we were before the war."

He pointed to 2,300 soil conservation districts in the country, set up under state law by the farmers themselves. Each district has a board of supervisors which advises farmers how to rotate crops, how and where to plant grass which holds topsoil on the surface and how and where to plant windbreaks.

"Much remains to be done, however," he

went on. "But, if we continue our present rate of progress, then I think that the country has dust storms whipped."

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### On This Week's Cover

➤ THAT a young man has no priority on the gentle thoughts of love in the spring-time is proved by two mongoose lemurs, shown on the cover, inhabitants of the National Zoo. The lemur which belongs to a primitive group of the primates is closely related to the monkeys. It has a pointed snout, usually long and sharp, but sometimes short and blunt. Each one has nostrils like those of a cat or dog and big, round eyes. There is always a gap between the upper middle incisor teeth and the lower front teeth are small and lean forward, so that they look like a comb, the conventional explanation of the arrangement being that the lemur uses these teeth to comb his hair. The mongoose lemur eats fruits and vegetables, but is also fond of birds' brains which are sucked into the mouth after the skull of the bird has been cracked with the teeth. These mammals are to be found largely in Madagascar although some of their smaller relatives are to be found in Africa.

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**PRE-ROMAN FIGURINE**—A product of the recent excavations in South Austria, the pre-Roman clay figurine is tentatively associated with the worship of the local Celtic god, Mars Latobius. Discovery has been made that a site on the Magdalenburg, a mountain near Klagenfurt, the capital of Carinthia, was not only a Roman settlement but also the center of the pre-Roman population, the lost capital of the Kingdom of Noricum.