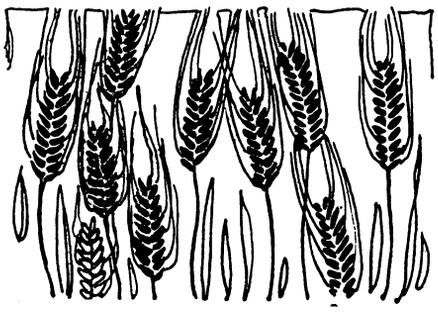
AGRICULTURE

NATURE RAMBLINGS

by Frank Thone



Record of Achievement

➤ HOPES FOR BETTER eating are held out to a famine-menaced world in the new Yearbook of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Higher-yielding plants and faster-growing, fatter animals, more efficient cultivation that saves the soil while it uses it, deadlier weapons against crop-destroying insect pests, grains with disease resistance bred into them—all these, and much besides, crowd the 944 pages.

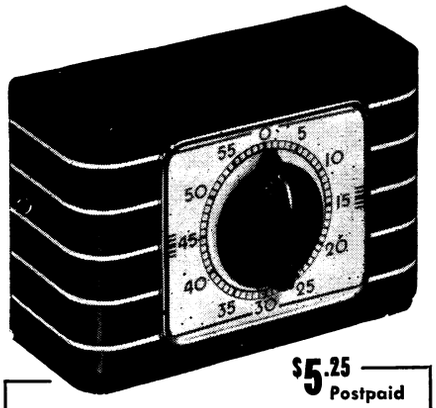
This is the first Yearbook the Department of Agriculture has issued since the beginning of World War II. Even the "skimmiest" kind of examination produces a most astonishing catalog of new things under the farmer's sun. Just at random: DDT, benzene hexachloride, 2,4-D, hybrid vigor in cattle, poultry and other animals, application of the hybrid idea to a range of plants from alfalfa to onions, feeding hormones and vitamins to animals, insect repellents, penicillin and other antibiotics in veterinary medicine—the list might be continued almost indefinitely.

Sometimes two scientific techniques are combined in one job. For example, a promising wheat hybrid proved sterile because its chromosome number was wrong. So the geneticists used colchicine to get offspring with double the chromosome number, and these proved perfectly fertile.

Department of Agriculture researchers know well that man does not live by bread alone. Along with their new strains of corn and wheat they have been breeding bigger and better berries and fruits and even doubling the size of Easter lilies.

Science News Letter, June 28, 1947

"MINUTE MINDER" IS BACK!



$5.25 Postpaid

CATALOG NO. 2339-A

Use this Minute Minder for hundreds of things—eliminate guess work in tests, experiments, photography, cooking, etc.

Set it to the time interval you wish and the Minute Minder's pleasant bell will call you on time. Can be set for any interval up to 60 minutes.

Sturdy clock movement will last for years—it winds as you set the interval. Housed in attractive bakelite case with metal trim.

Write for circular.

A. DAIGGER & CO.

159 West Kinzie St. Chicago 10, Ill.

NUTRITION

Disease Can Starve Babies As Well as Lack of Food

➤ PICTURES of starving babies, pathetic little bundles of skin and bones with big, tragic eyes, stopped many a doctor strolling through the exhibits at the recent American Medical Association meeting. Some of the babies pictured were European war and famine victims. Others were American babies brought to hospitals in the Boston and Cleveland areas for treatment for malnutrition. Without the labels under the pictures, you could not have told which was from Europe and which from the United States.

The American babies were not starving from lack of food. Their parents could and did provide plenty of the right kind of infant fare, with vitamins, proteins, carbohydrates and minerals, that ordinarily causes youngsters to thrive and grow.

These babies were sick babies. They were starving because disease, usually a chronic infection, kept them from being nourished by their food. Their pictures were shown by Dr. Charles F. McKhann and Dr. Samuel Spector, Western Reserve University School of Medicine, to call the attention of other doctors to the fact that malnutrition is not always the result of poor or scanty diet.

Only one out of 10 of the more than 1,000 malnourished infants they studied were starving because of lack of the right kind of food. About one in 10 failed to gain weight because of some psychological or emotional disturbance or refusal to eat.

The other eight out of each 10 were malnourished because of disease, often a disease not easily detected.

Dr. McKhann said the principal diseases causing loss of weight and other results of malnutrition are infections of the nose, throat, lungs and other parts of the respiratory tract, with infected adenoids, and sinuses probably causing the greatest amount of trouble. Other causes are congenital heart disease, disturbances of the metabolism, infections of the kidneys and genito-urinary infections, and coeliac syndrome.

Science News Letter, June 28, 1947

ORNITHOLOGY

Starlings Prefer Waltzes To Sousa's Martial Music

➤ LATEST WEAPON against those pesky birds, the starlings, is march music, but it probably will not help rid your town of starlings.

At the Philadelphia zoo, starlings built their nest in a loud speaker. They were not disturbed at all by the soft strains of waltzes. But when the stirring marches of John Philip Sousa were played, the starlings stirred. They flew off when the martial music began and returned only when it finished.

It seems the zoo's taste in music agreed with the starlings, though. They have raised four babies and are incubating a second brood.

Science News Letter, June 28, 1947

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

OBSERVOSCOPE STAR FINDER

This instrument points directly to the star. Requires no calculations. Measures angles in any plane and has many other uses. A valuable aid to Beginners, Amateur Astronomers, Engineers, Teachers and Scouts. Made of Plastics 7" high. Full instructions furnished.

Price $12.50 F.O.B.

W. H. REDDING

Dept. E • 5105 Newhall St. • Phila. 44, Pa.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Science Service, Inc. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve, and extend access to *The Science News-Letter.* www.jstor.org