

Ol' Hoosier Farmer — July 6, 1977

By Jim Jones

Took note of a single colyum article in th' June-July Farm Journal which sez, EPA official looks ahead at Farmin'. Now, sounds strange fer th' Environmental Protection Agency to be lookin' at farmin' since farmers is usually pretty interested in environments and in takin' care o' them. Or at least, wuz at one time.

Th' farmer's caught in th' middle agin between high costs of fuel, fertilizer, labor, insurance an' land, an' th' low prices paid fer grains and livestock. In order to make a fair profit, th' farmer has to increase production. Since be can't afford to buy more land an' pay th' labor needed to farm it, his only choice is to increase production on what he has, so he pours fertilizen' chemicals and weedkillin' chemicals on th' soil an' hopes his crops will realize enough to pay fer all of it. He feeds chemicals an' hormoans to his livestock in order to turn out marketable meat in th' least possible time. Then th' government steps in and sez, we find traces of yer chemicals in th' stuff yer sellin' so we will have to dock you fer inferior products. So what to do.

The feller from the EPA sez that he sees some future changes in farmin' which are interestin: Practices such as crop rotation, irrigation, cover crops, tillin' methods and plantin' techniques. Agents such as compostin, nitrogen-fixin' bacteria, non-synthetic sprays, an' Pest Controls such as bacteria, predaton, viruses, beneficial bugs.

Th' amazin' thing about all this is none of this stuff is new. Rodale over at Organic Gardening and Farming in Pennsylvania has been preachin' this same stuff fer years an' years. Even 20 years ago, Purdue University taught crop rotatin', cover crops, nitrogen-fixatin', bacteria, an' so on. These wuz standard famin' practices fer years on midwest farms. So th' cycle repeats itself, as somebody sez history will do on occasion.

Well, fer once mebbe th' government man at EPA has somethin' on th' ball. Even in our own little patch we has seen in jest 3 years what a change in th' soil occurs when leaves, manure an' organic matter is worked in an' left to decay an' restore th' organic matter back to th' soil. We have seen that we can get good crop yields with little or no chemical fertilizer. Mebbe th' farmers better think over some of these ideas to see if they can cut costs an' turn out high quality yields. It would probably make all of us healthier.

We got to remember th' Good Lord don't use chemicals in His farmin'. Somehow His crops usually turn out OK an' mebbe we ought to take a note from th' felds and woodlands, places where man hasn't fiddled around with th' natcheral way of doin' things. Th' Tillers of Th' Soil are Th' Chosen of Th' Lord. Shouldn't we foller th' Divine Example an' try th' Natcheral way of doin' things?