

"I still think you should have told the vicar about using the church as a temporary intervention store..."

it we have agreed to investment "remains in use for at least two years this mean with no

se producing less than 1000 lbs per cow per year, who in this day and age that "a skilled worker would be needed for at least 1800 lbs" with 10 cows?

country have always knocked them for their social policies in the time we can look to the future as it seems that Mrs Thatcher ditched us!

argue that if levies of the type are to be imposed, a realistic quota of, say, 1000 lbs per unit be exempted from the minimum, although I agree it is difficult to police.

Why, why couldn't we have a rise in milk, coupled with a proportionate rise in the price of concentrates through a levy? Concentrate usage becomes a problem we could at least control.

margins by producing more milk who choose to maintain a high level of concentrates would dispose of any surpluses at a small price increase in the market.

businesses, some with a high level of investment are encouraged at the expense of the family farm, then the family farm will eventually disappear. It cannot expand enough to absorb an income what is the carrying on when he has no work for?

G HOOKING
Home Farm, St Buryan,
Penzance, Cornwall.

Production approach is problem

Why, a decision cannot be made on the milk surplus. The price of milk is the price of price or quotas or a combination of both. Price alone is a solution that the control of milk production is a long-term affair for a comparison with putting a three-day week, and attempt by any market to exactly match and fairly exactly would

be almost impossible. Farm quotas, preferably saleable, can get somewhere near this desirable aim and, of course, allow both producer and salesmen to plan their work.

Having farmed during the extraordinary period when at one and the same time producers were paid to slaughter their cows while their neighbours were subsidised to increase production, I suggest we look critically at ideas that may be put forward.

For example, the NFU is promoting a scheme to "buy out" milk production from herds of less than 45 cows.

Apart from its questionable morality in this country, it will be a non-starter among our fellow Europeans who believe in the small farm where economic performance will often equal the larger undertakings. Anyway this is, like earlier efforts, merely tinkering with the problem. A price free-for-all or realistic quotas are the only answer.

H J NITCH-SMITH
Ashley Farm, Bentworth,
Alton, Hampshire.

Cruising closer to nuclear war

SIR — In your article "The Grim Reaper", (FW, Sept 30) George Crossley gave the facts. One's imagination fills in the picture of the fearful suffering to humans and animals from blast, burns, radiation sickness and eventual starvation.

The one aim of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is to prevent this happening.

We believe it is essential for Britain to have a real defence; a defence which should be effective, non-provocative, non-nuclear, legitimate and set in the context of a comprehensive strategy for disarmament and world security.

We believe, too, that bringing Cruise missiles here increases our danger. The Minister of Defence said: "More than 1000 megatons would be required to destroy Cruise missiles on the assumption that they had been dispersed."

In these times of international fear and suspicion we could be the number

one target. This is not national defence — it is national suicide.

The media like to concentrate on the bizarre aspects of our campaign and to discredit it. The truth is that the vast majority of our members are very ordinary people, who love life.

RUTH WHITE
The Mill House, Blean,
Canterbury, Kent.

Thoughts on slaughter policy

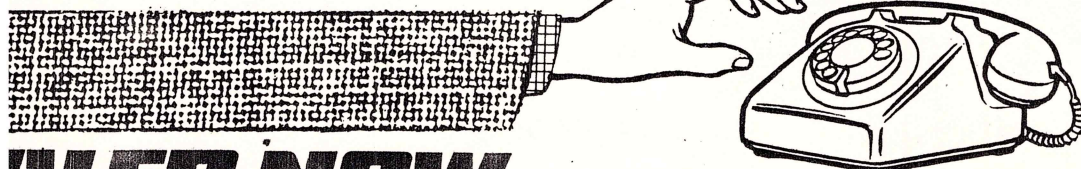
SIR — One problem unexplained in your article "The Grim Reaper" by George Crossley was how the sick and starving livestock would be slaughtered.

A doctor recently advised the people of Wiltshire that the best he would be able to do for a majority of his patients after a nuclear war, would be to bash their skulls in with a stone.

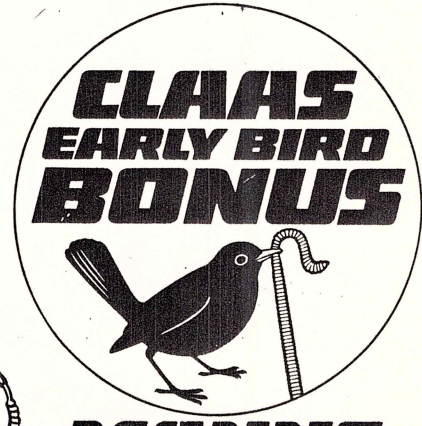
This is fair enough for us humans. At the best we protest weakly, mostly we ignore the reality like ostriches with our heads in the sand and, at

continued over

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LETTERS

worst, we lie to ourselves.

But our animals deserve better. They are in no way responsible for building enough bombs to destroy our species several times over. They have done nothing to feed the hate and fear that is the grist of international politics. I would urge all those who have animals to make sure that they have humane ways of slaughtering them all if a nuclear war should happen.

R F STEARN
Rookyard Farm, Old Newton,
Stowmarket, Suffolk.

Silage pollution worse, even so

SIR — Your article "Winter muck spreading under threat" (FW, Sept 9), requires some comment. To the non-legal mind the 1974 Act can present what appears to be a confusing picture and it clearly is open to interpretation; one is obviously needed for "good agricultural practice".

I can only guess at this stage just what interpretation will be used, but surely any interpretation will be in accordance with guidelines already issued by the Ministry?

I have every sympathy for Liz Rigbey having to write her own interpretation to a pending situation from the interpretation of others but just to put the record straight, or at least straighter, I cannot see water authorities consenting to discharges of slurry from land to watercourses. Furthermore, the article claimed that... farmers who pollute watercourses receive verbal, then written warnings before prosecution...

I suppose that such a procedure may have been followed with some farmers on some occasions, but this must not be regarded as the norm.

Indeed, over the past two years, the North West Water Authority has presented articles on farm drainage pollution in periodicals, yet this last silage season has proved disastrous in terms of water pollution.

So, where do we go from here? Obviously towards something much, much stricter than the present system.

COLIN MOSS
Senior technical officer,
North West Water Division,
Warrington, Lancs.

Treated straw has proved itself

SIR — So Mr Geoff Alderman, head of nutrition chemistry, ADAS, has

doubts about the value of ammonia-treated straw (FW, Sept 23). Is he unaware of the trial work undertaken by several Ministry EHF's which have demonstrated, almost without exception, that ammonia-treated straw can be used successfully as a sole feed for suckler cows and beef stores?

Liveweight gains averaging 1.3kg a day using 50 per cent treated straw have also been recorded in beef trials and in the dairy herd it has provided a valuable buffer to conventional forage stocks.

While I agree that the straight-forward addition of urea is, maybe, more questionable, there can be little doubt that, in areas where there is an indigenous supply of straw, treatment with ammonia will convert this straw into a valuable feed for far less than the current cost of making hay.

The added benefit, of course, is that stocking rates can be intensified or the need for conserved grass be reduced. This combination of reduced feed cost and more effective land utilisation has been seized upon by thousands of ammonia-treated straw users throughout Britain and Europe as a means of increasing profitability.

The proof of the pudding has been in the eating.

KEN C JORDAN
General manager,
Straw Feed Services Ltd,
Hempton Green, Fakenham, Norfolk.

Positive view of a negative approach

SIR — I am surprised that Mr Geoff Alderman takes such a negative approach to treated straw. In view of the current interest in straw utilisation one would have expected encouragement to feed more of it.

You quote him as saying "... the cost (of treatment) could not be recovered in extra production".

Surely one of the main reasons for feeding treated straw is that it can replace more expensive fodders, not necessarily that it will give extra production?

Comparisons between treated and untreated spring barley straw tell a very small part of the story. The substitution of part of a silage ration, the replacement of hay, the use of treated wheat straw rather than spring barley straw — these are the major economies.

The resulting profit improvements are most noticeable when farm stocking rates can be increased, the arable

enterprise enlarged or hay and good straw sold off the farm.

When comparing forage costs it is not sufficient merely to do feeding trials. The effect on the economy of the whole farm must be taken into account along with other non-quantifiable management advantages.

It is essential, though, that treated straw is seen for what it is — a medium-energy-protein fodder. It will not be of major use to dairy cows in early lactation or to very intensive beef, but is of ideal energy density to form the basis of the diet for dairy followers, sucklers and stores.

There is now a wealth of trial experience with these classes of stock — from both inside and outside the Ministry of Agriculture — which demonstrates that ammonia-treated straw, particularly wheat straw, can be an economic alternative to traditional forages.

Many farmers are now into their third season of feeding ammonia-treated straw. Surely it is time that Mr Alderman acknowledges that the product has a place, even though he has insufficient figures to include it in Bulletin 33?

C J DAWSON
Hargreaves Fertiliser Industries Ltd
Skeldergate Bridge, York

Not all institutions are losing interest

SIR — I read with some concern your headline and column quoting Savills' view that institutions are losing interest in farming (FW, September 30). I believe this is misleading. My own firm's experience is that, for the time being, the pension funds and insurance companies are not in the market for agricultural land, but, with their departure, there is renewed interest from those traditional institutions who, over the centuries, have held land as an investment.

This is a typical situation in that these traditional institutions are canny investors, inclined to withhold from the market unless and until they believe that their timing is right. It is clearly their present belief that now is the time.

Again, I believe Savills' comment on the reasons for non-availability of sale and lease-back properties is not wholly accurate. I agree that the wide vacant possession margin has some bearing on this, but, of course, that margin is due to an increase in vacant possession values which has been cre-

ated through demand from virtue of their confidence industry.

Perhaps, however, the for the lack of good sal back propositions is lo rates, combined with in fitability and positive cash not through the feather-be industry by tax-payers' m the skill, ingenuity, har good management of a hi farming industry.

Strutt
Coval Hall, Chelms

Developers the threat to farming

SIR — While I am sure Backhouse's suggestion (September 9) that all field receive a post-harvest dress (human or otherwise) wa alternative, I am sure tha mers are a greater 'threa Russians' brigade would that baned as well due t acceptable smell" or the he due to the attraction of flie

I would also suggest aforementioned "brigade" better to concentrate thei on the real destroyers of th side, ie the development o of this country, one of whi miles from where I live, past 10 years or so turned 2 of prime agricultural land they will tell you it was n assortment of hair-brained and eye-ores.

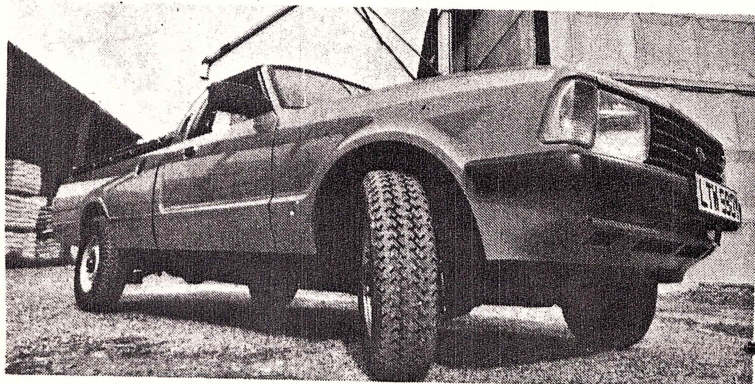
Still, that is the age we li If you are building homes y away with virtually anythi are producing food there around who wish to make will get a way with nothing.

BA
6 Sp
Oln

Manager should at least £25,000

SIR — Having read "Farm wife's" letter "How much s manager make?" (Letters, S feel I should comment beca am a far a manager's wife.

My husband is in his 40s after nearly 1200 acres — and followers, 700 acres ce works about 70 hours a wee a weekly take-home pay of £12



ENTRY FORM PAGE 115

WHATEVER THE ANGLE... THE P100 IS WORTH COMPETING FOR

