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REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Articles in the field of agricultural economics, suitable for publication in the journal, will be welcomed.

Articles should have a maximum length of 10 folio pages (including tables, graphs, etc.), typed in double spacing. Contributions, in the language preferred by the writer, should be submitted in triplicate to the Editor, c/o Department of Agricultural Economics and Marketing, Pretoria, and should reach him at least one month prior to date of publication.

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Editorial

Festival of the Soil

Our Prime Minister, The Hon. B.J. Vorster, announced in a press statement on the 28th September 1967, that the Government had decided to arrange that during the first week of April 1968 a Festival of the Soil be held in the Republic, culminating on the 6th April, which is a public holiday.

A study of the motives underlying this decision reveals that it is not only highly commendable but also most opportune. The primary object is to inculcate in all the people of this country a true appreciation of respect for the soil, so that they will cherish and make wise use of this most important of all our natural resources.

This is vitally necessary because in our modern Western World, people are in danger of losing their sense of values. In times of plenty, as at present, the importance of the soil is easily forgotten.

Progress today is popularly measured mainly in terms of expansion in the fields of mining, industry and concomitant urban and commercial development. Highly productive, level agricultural land is blithely withdrawn from food production to make way for factories and urban buildings.

Man's endeavour to conquer outer space has fired the public imagination to such an extent that we willingly countenance the expenditure of colossal sums of money, prodigious effort, brain-power and man-hours of labour, to lift the human body into space, while on earth, beneath our very feet, the soil is all too often being ravaged and eroded.

There are unfortunately too many people who are prone to measure the destiny of our country purely in terms of economics as affecting industry, mining and commerce. They forget that economic conditions are like the weather - changeable. They look upon the destruction of the soil with a complacency that grows out of a false assumption that there is an abundance of land and that in any case the scientist will see to it that there will always be sufficient food.

During and for a few years after World War II, the importance of agriculture and the soil was brought home to the cold and hungry millions of

people in the war ravaged countries. They saw their social and economic structures, their factories and industries, their trade and prosperity blasted to eternity. Then they realised that human life depends on a continuous flow of the products of the soil - that man is what he eats and what he eats comes from the soil; that there can be no social or health security without soil security; that permanence and continuity are anchored to the soil.

The result was that soon after the War there was considerable activity in many parts of the world, including South Africa, to bring about the conservation and proper utilisation of the soil and other agricultural resources.

Our Soil Conservation Act was promulgated with great enthusiasm in 1946 and during the past 21 years much has been achieved, especially by the farming community, in bringing about increased production on properly conserved soil.

It is an unfortunate fact, however, that enthusiasm for conservation has waned in recent years. Whether our sunny land, which holds so great a promise for further development, is to reach sound maturity, will depend on its peoples and the use they make of the soil and other natural resources.

The welfare of the soil is everybody's business; it is right and proper that this fact be brought home to every man, woman and child.

It is earnestly hoped that through the Festival of the Soil, the entire population of the Republic of South Africa will become imbued with a proper sense of responsibility towards, and an abiding love for the soil.

E.D. Adler

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