

HARVESTING FOR BEGINNERS

Characters: Announcer, Professor von Weizenfeld, 3 members of the audience, reader

Announcer: Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to be able to introduce to you that agronomist and scientific agricultural adviser to governments, Professor Hans von Weizenfeld. Professor von Weizenfeld has kindly consented to address us this evening on the subject of recent advances in the field-if you forgive the pun-in the field of harvesting techniques and I feel sure you will give him a warm welcome.

(Applause)

Prof: (Speaks with marked German accent) Thank you...thank you very much. My little talk to you tonight, as you know, is about the subject of new discoveries in harvesting technique. We at the Institute for Agricultural Advancement have been worried for some time at the singular lack of progress in the development of modern methods. For far too long we have been dependent on the seasons, the weather and the ancient outdated methods of growth and harvesting. But need this be so?

Our research has been twofold. First of all the research into self-cutting wheat. Why do we need to have the drudgery of going into the fields, planting, nurturing and harvesting with all its implications for intensive labour and machinery? Even with modern machinery the amount of work involved is still considerable. Hence we now have an entirely new concept in the self-cutting sheaf. This can be achieved by a cunning mixture of whole wheat and Wilkinson sword and we can now say that this new strain is almost at commercial production level.

Secondly, we have begun research into long-distance crop control. Our team asked itself the question: why cannot the crops be attended to without the necessity of, so to speak,

getting your hands dirty? In the age of the computer technology we surely need not go out into the harvest fields when we can do so much from a laboratory and a control centre. Our research in this area has enabled us to envisage a time when no manual work or personal involvement will be part of the laborious and time-consuming process of harvesting.

Thank you.

Announcer: Perhaps I might ask Professor von Weizenfeld if he would accept questions from the floor.

Prof: Ach, very novel, ze talking floorboards.

Ann: Very droll, professor. Are there questions?

1: Yes. Professor, you talk a great deal about harvesting but are you sure that the fields are ready for this process? Perhaps it is not ethical to continually invade our environment in this way.

Prof: A good point. The whole issue of the readiness of the wheat as opposed to the shreadedness of the wheat.

2: Well I think wheat is best left where it is. What right have we to go making it into flour and bread? Wheat germs have feelings, too.

Prof: Ja, a good point. We would not want to fight against the grain's feelings. It might lead to wheat germ warfare.

3: Well I'm concerned about all this talk of fields. I mean there's many a wild oat about and quite a few blades of wheat and rye grow in ditches.

Prof: Ah well, you must remember, it makes no difference in the end whether they are harvested or not. We mustn't intrude on other types of grain. They must be allowed to 'do their own thing' as it were.

Ann: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen for a very interesting question session. Professor von Weizenfeld, I feel I express the feelings of us all when I say that we look forward to the day of the self-cutting crop and remote control harvesting when labour will be a thing of the past.

Reader: The Lord said: The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few. Pray, therefore, the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into the harvest. Go your way.