

AG Research: Cultivating Dollars for Oregon

by William E. Davis



Chances are, you've never heard of a fababeen. Even if you have, they probably aren't growing in your backyard garden.

But fababeans—when green, they resemble lima beans—offer promise as feed for Oregon swine, which often eat more expensive feeds brought in from out of state.

As a crop new to Oregon, fababeans are a focus of agricultural scientists' research at the Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station, based on the Oregon State University campus in Corvallis.

And they are but one example of how experiment station researchers are working year-round—and state-wide—to create new products, to find new markets, to lengthen shelf lives and to improve the quality of foods we eat.

In a state where agriculture is one of the top two industries, the experiment station's contributions can be as attractive to our farmers as an ungrazed alfalfa meadow is to a hungry heifer.

Consider these examples:

- Hermiston-area watermelon growers often cannot harvest their crops until late July, long after the Fourth of July peak of watermelon consumption. Agricultural Experiment Station researchers, however, are working with fabric and plastic row covers used in Europe that may help melons ripen earlier while also protecting them against inclement weather.

- Many Oregon growers of soft white wheat are losing money because a glutted world market has depressed prices. Crop scientists attached to OSU, however, are developing strains of hard red winter wheat, like that grown in the Plains states, which may enable Oregon wheat growers to increase overseas sales.

- Turkeys, a \$12.1 million cash crop for Oregon in 1985, eat expensive Midwest-grown corn and soybeans. Animal scientists are experimenting with yellow peas and with a wheat rye combination that can be grown in Oregon. If successful, they will have reduced turkey growers' costs while also expanding markets for Oregon field crops.

Even if you aren't a farmer, this research is important to you.

If farmers can't grow crops economically and then sell them, they won't make a profit. If farmers can't make a profit, they won't spend money with local

restaurants, grocery stores, service stations, travel agents, appliance dealers and theaters.

To those in agriculture, work at the experiment station is as exciting as that being conducted at IBM or Bell Labs.

For example, crop scientists at the experiment station developed the Stephens wheat variety, an unusually disease-resistant strain that now accounts for nearly 75 percent of wheat grown in Oregon.

Research also domesticated a crop called meadow-foam, which yields a high-priced oil used in cosmetics, lubricants and soaps.

And they introduced bush beans so that Oregon farmers, who previously grew pole beans, could use more economical mechanical harvesters.

Because Oregon grows more than 170 crops in 10 distinct regions, the Agricultural Experiment Station also works statewide.

Branch stations are located in Aurora, Medford, Hood River, Moro, Redmond, Burns, Klamath Falls, Hermiston, Pendleton, Union and Ontario.

Their work ranges from potatoes and onions to cattle and sheep.

In addition, related operations to help growers with Easter lilies and seafood operate at Brookings and Astoria.

Experiment station research also teach students, and the branch stations across Oregon are available to both graduate and undergraduate students for their studies.

Recognizing the clear economic value of this research, the 1985 Legislature voted Oregon Lottery revenues to build new facilities to conduct research into growing potatoes (a \$100 million-dollar industry in Oregon) and raising sheep (where Oregon is No. 8 nationally).

Across Oregon, these advances in agricultural science are boosting the state's farm economy, whether in fruits, fowl, forage—or fababeans.

State and federal dollars invested in the Agricultural Experiment Station have an economic payoff that extends beyond Oregon's borders and across generations of agricultural products. This payoff is truly global through the sharing of information that improves the lives of people around the world.

William E. Davis is chancellor of the Oregon State System of Higher Education.

Along the Color Line

by Dr. Manning Marable

Dr. Manning Marable is professor of sociology and political science at Purdue University. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 140 newspapers internationally.

Elitism and Inequality

One of the most striking contradictions about American society is the tremendous distance between its rhetoric of democracy, social equality and "equal opportunity" for all, and the harsh reality of class inequality, social bigotry, and economic discrimination. We usually think of this contradiction in either racial terms, or gender terms. That is, most of us are now sensitized to racial prejudice—we know it when we see it. Jim Crow as a legal system no longer exists. We are less sensitized to gender discrimination, or sexism. But we all know that job discrimination, or educational discrimination against women is not acceptable and that it is illegal. Yet so many of us who are acutely conscious of these forms of discrimination overlook the systemic disadvantages of the poor; we are frequently blind to the crippling stereotypes imposed by class biases.

Elitism is a general term which embraces this pervasive form of multiclass discrimination. Perhaps the best definition for elitism is the set of social attitudes, values, public policies and institutions which perpetuate any form of systemic inequality. The key word in this definition is systemic. Elitism is not an accidental or casual collection of values, principles and policies which perpetuate the affluence of one class or group of people over and above the existence of another class.

Elitism is the logical, consistent outcome of a deliberate, planned, and systemic series of public policy decisions which preserve social inequality. The stereotypes rationalize, legitimize and justify elitist policies. And there are numerous examples or manifestations of inequality.

There is the inequality experienced by those millions of Americans who live below the poverty line, or who depend on public assistance for their survival. There is the inequality of those 20 million Americans who go to sleep hungry each night. There is the inequality of the small farmer and farm worker, who is forced into economic penury by destructive federal government policies, and by the competitive power of monopoly owned agribusiness. Inequality cannot be separated from considerations of race or gender, because in a racist and sexist social order, poverty is experienced in a discriminatory way. Because of racism, there is a higher percentage of poverty among Hispanics and Blacks, for instance, than there is among whites. Because of the sexism, two thirds of all families which live below the federal government's poverty level are headed by women. However, to comprehend the role of multiclass oppression as a significant social variable, we must isolate the causes and cures to the dilemma of elitism.

The material conditions which foster elitist attitudes are the unequal distribution of wealth, goods and services throughout the American social order. The old motto, "the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer,"

was never more accurate a description of socioeconomic realities than it is today. The dream of a middle class lifestyle, home-ownership, two automobiles, material affluence and excellent educational and cultural facilities for one's children, has become increasingly remote for millions of Americans—Black, Hispanic, and white. The richest one fifth of all households in this country receive about 45 percent of all income, while the bottom one fifth gets under 5 percent. The average income of all two-parent families has dropped over 3 percent between 1973 and 1984.

The burden of economic inequality falls more severely and unfairly upon young families. Back in 1973, the average salary of a 30-year-old male was \$25,253, in current dollars. A decade later, the same worker took home an average salary of \$18,763. As wages fell, most young consumers were forced to rely on credit to cover basic needs. Consumer installment debt rose to over 16 percent of all personal income by 1986. Other families began cutting back, trying to lower their expectations. According to Business Week, "the typical family headed by someone aged 25 to 34 spent 14 percent less on furniture in 1981 than a similar family did in 1973. They spent 15 percent less on personal care, and 38 percent less on charity." Meanwhile, prices continue to spiral. In 1984, the average price for a single family, 3 bedroom—2 bath home in Detroit was \$95,000. Two years later, the average price had increased to \$110,000—well beyond the means of an average, working family. And the home prices in most American cities were generally more expensive elsewhere. The average house in 1986 went for \$112,000 in Baltimore; \$115,000 in Chicago's suburbs; \$124,375 in Washington, D.C.; \$180,000 in Boston; and an unreal \$375,000 in San Francisco.

One of the greatest political questions of 1988 is whether the white middle class, especially those income earners below 40 years of age, will comprehend the underlying reasons for the expansion of social elitism and economic inequality in this decade, and whether they'll vote according to their objective interests. Two political outcomes seem most probable. The white middle class, frustrated and mired in consumer debt, may look for "scapegoats" to explain their plight. The problems of Afro-Americans, Latinos, and poor people may be seen as secondary and even irrelevant to their own conditions. The cry against elitism and declining living standards may feed a reactionary populism headed by Reagan-clones Kemp, Dole, etc. The other option is that white middle America will discover that it, too, is victimized by the politics of elitism, corporate graft, and social welfare cutbacks. The ability of Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition to articulate a cogent political message of multiracial, multiclass equality and economic justice may spell the difference between victory and defeat in 1988.



CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

A NEWS SERVICE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST COMMISSION FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

Civil Rights Head Charges "Environmental Racism"

Leveling the charge of "environmental racism", Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., Executive Director of the Commission for Racial Justice of the 1.7 million-member United Church of Christ, declared that their just-released national report showed that racism may be a factor in the location of hazardous waste sites throughout the United States. The report, "Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States: A National Report on the Racial and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Communities With Hazardous Waste Sites", was released at a press conference held Wednesday, April 15, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

The report revealed that 3 out of every 5 African Americans and Hispanic Americans live in communities with uncontrolled (abandoned) toxic waste sites and that the average number of racial and ethnic persons who live in communities with commercial hazardous waste facilities was five times greater than in communities without such facilities. In addition, in 10 major metropolitan areas more than 90% of the African American population lived in areas with uncontrolled toxic waste sites. In fact, the largest toxic waste fac-

ility in the nation, which receives wastes from over 45 states and several foreign countries, is located in Emelle, Alabama, whose population is 85% African American.

At the press conference Dr. Chavis called the situation "an insidious form of institutional racism. It is, in effect, environmental racism." He added, "Given the disproportionate effect of these wastes on racial and ethnic communities, this has become not only an environmental issue, but a racial justice issue as well." Dr. Chavis also charged the Reagan Administration and its Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with "malignant neglect" and said this was "totally consistent with the Reagan Administration's general non-enforcement policy, particularly in the area of civil rights."

The Commission has called on President Reagan to take immediate corrective action in line with the report's recommendations.

Copies of "Toxic Waste and Race" are available from the Commission for Racial Justice, United Church of Christ, 105 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.

Letters to the Editor

Are You Guilty?

Are you guilty of child abuse? As the father of three children, I'm increasingly concerned with this question.

In October of 1986, the State of Oregon issued new "administrative rules" concerning the definition of child abuse. These new rules contain many vague and open-ended phrases. As a result, it's now very difficult to know if one is complying with the law. It's also a lot easier to be accused of child abuse for trivial reasons.

The phrase "includes, but is not limited to" appears repeatedly in the rules. This terminology can be construed to mean almost anything. For example, what would you as a parent think the term "neglect" means?

For one thing, "neglect can be "inadequate food." Does that mean three meals a day? A diet of Twinkies and chocolate milk? Is that neglect? How about "inadequate clothing?" What if there were holes in the knees of your boy's jeans, or a tear in his tennis shoes?

Would this be "neglect?" These rules discriminate sharply against poor families, especially single mothers who are struggling to provide for their children.

The American Humane Association in Atlanta reports that over a million families annually are falsely accused of child abuse. As a parent you can be accused by anyone, at any time, for any reason. You will be reported anonymously. Once accused, it is entirely up to you to prove your innocence. Recent cases of "false abuse" in Oregon have shown this to be a costly and traumatic experience for the whole family.

Senate Bill No. 782, now logjammed in the Senate judiciary, would put some clarity into present vague terminology of the law. This bill would restore to parents the freedom to raise good children in the framework of their own unique setting—the home.

Respectfully,
Roy Garrett

BLACKS HAVE BEEN AWAKENED...?

IT IS UP TO US, BLACKS WHO CARE ABOUT THE BLACK FUTURE, TO IMPOSE ORDER WHERE NONE EXISTS TODAY —

WE HAVE TO DO IT BECAUSE WE CANNOT ASK OUR OLD PEOPLE TO SPEND THE REST OF THEIR LIVES PASSING THROUGH A GAUNTLET OF MUGGERS.

ORDE GIBBS
NY MAGAZINE

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