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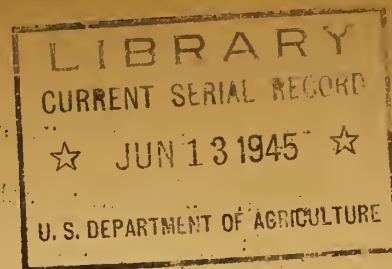
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TIMELY FARM TOPICS 23a

(Farm Science Serves the Nation No. 10)

A SCIENCE AND THE SOYBEAN



Recorded Tuesday, February 27, 1945, by Ernest Moore and M. L. DuMars, Office of Information, U.S.D.A. Script by Josephine Hemphill. Time, without announcer's parts, seven minutes and 35 seconds.

ANNOUNCER: (LIVE) And now by transcription...from the United States Department of Agriculture...we learn how farm science has improved the soybean. A food crop more important than ever these days...as a source of fats and oils.

Before Pearl Harbor, we were importing yearly around a billion pounds of vegetable oils from the Far East. Since Pearl Harbor, we've been getting a large part of this billion pounds of oil from soybeans grown by American farmers. Last year they harvested over ten and a half million acres of soybeans, mostly for oil production. This year they're out to repeat that record...so we won't be short of cooking fats and oils...and livestock feed.

But listen to Ernie Moore and Duke DuMars, of the United States Department of Agriculture, as they tell the story of this "most accommodating bean" from the lands of the Orient.

TRANSCRIPTION

MUSIC: ARABIAN DANCE FROM "NUTCRACKER SUITE"

ERNIE MOORE: Well Duke -- are you all set to give us a report on the "bean from the Orient"?

DUKE DUMARS: Ernie, if there ever was a compendium of soybean information -- I am it!

MORE: Then let's get going.

DUMARS: Not so in haste, my friend. Have you any idea...of the age of the soybean?

MOORE: Oh, 'round a thousand years.

DUMARS: A thousand years....Why man, in the history of the soybean...a thousand years...is as yesterday. In the course of my research, I have gone back to --

MOORE: Day before yesterday?

DUMARS: To the "dim corridors of time." To the first written record. Made in the reign of the Chinese Emperor Shen Nung...in the year 2838 B.C.

MOORE: Do you mean you've only reached the year 2838 B.C.?

DUMARS: Oh I don't intend to stop there! As soon as I master the Chinese language --

MOORE: I might have known. You're just like an uncle of mine.

DUMARS: A Chinese scholar?

MOORE: No. A fellow who collects all kinds of interesting but useless facts.

DUMARS: What's he working on now?

MOORE: (Never mind.) I'm going to get you and the soybean out of the Orient... out of the "dim corridors of time"...so fast it'll make your head swim. In 1712 the bean was taken from Asia to Europe. In 1790 it was taken to London as a curiosity from the Far East. And in 1804, soybeans were brought to America.

DUMARS: How?

MOORE: By Yankee Clipper.

DUMARS: One of the old sailing ships?

MOORE: Yes. The Captain was sailing down the coast of China...looking for return cargo. He wasn't sure how long it'd take him to get to America...and he didn't want to run out of food. So he had some beans put in the hold of his ship -- just in case. And that's how the first soybeans came to America...in the year eighteen hundred and four.

DUMARS: And then -- ?

MOORE: Nothing much to report, Duke, till 50 years later -- when Admiral Perry brought over some more of the beans from Japan. And still nothing to get excited about...till pioneers at a few experiment stations -- in New Jersey, Massachusetts and Kansas -- got interested in soybeans as a forage crop.

DUMARS: Didn't they know they could use 'em in pancake flour and muffins?

MOORE: Not in those days! More and more people got interested, and in 1898 the Department of Agriculture began to bring in many more varieties from the Orient. Then in 1907--- That's a year to remember, Duke! Just as important, in soybean history, as the year 2838 B.C.

DUMARS: What happened in 1907 A.D.?

MOORE: A young plant scientist...fresh out of Cornell University...took a job with the United States Department of Agriculture, and he's been on that same job ever since.

DUMARS: Do you mean my friend Bill Morse?

MOORE: I certainly do. And speaking of "compendiums of information" -- about the soybean, --

DUMARS: Oh I won't compete with an international authority!

MOORE: Since when?

DUMARS: Where is Bill anyway?

MOORE: The only reason he isn't here today -- he had to be at the Soybean Laboratory in Urbana, Illinois.

DUMARS: I see.

MOORE: Well, as I was saying -- Morse joined the Department in 1907, and ever since then he's been preaching the gospel of soybeans. About 18 years ago he made a trip to the Orient, and brought back around 5,000 samples -- including a hundred or so of the vegetable soys. They were something new in this country.

DUMARS: He told me once the Orientals thought he was -- Well, not quite bright!

MOORE: You can't blame them. Here was this young American -- wandering through their native villages -- pulling up soybean plants -- begging people in the market places to bring him a few more. They certainly thought he was a queer duck!

DUMARS: Getting all excited -- over a bean their ancestors had been growing for more than five thousand years!

MOORE: Yes -- You know I saw something interesting the other day.

DUMARS: What was that?

MOORE: I happened in on a meeting Bill was holding for a group of American missionaries. Men and women who'd spent years in the Belgian Congo, the Philippines, India, Korea, China. Well sir! Here were these folks from the Orient -- the home of the soybean -- getting advice on how to grow the crop from an American scientist. Now what would your old Chinese Emperor say to that!

DUMARS: Oh, he'd quote that ancient Chinese proverb: "If you build a better soybean -- the world will make a beaten path to your door."

MOORE: (Sounds Chinese, all right!) Well, to continue our story. In this country, as we've said before, soybeans were used first as forage, and also as a green manure or cover crop. Incidentally, did I ever tell you -- My father was the first farmer in our county, to plant soybeans as forage.

DUMARS: That was in North Carolina?

MOORE: That's right. I was pretty small then, but I can remember how the neighbors used to come around and look -- and talk about this new crop.

DUMARS: Bet they thought your folks were queer.

MOORE: Yes, I s'pose they did. Well, that was a long time ago. In the meantime; the plant breeders have developed so many improved varieties...and the chemists so many industrial uses...you just can't begin to count 'em. In 1936, they were going ahead at such a great rate -- with their soybean plastics and paints and varnishes and so on -- the Department set up a research laboratory at Urbana, Illinois. In this laboratory, in cooperation with 24 States, they work on soybeans and nothing but soybeans!

DUMARS: But you don't hear so much, nowadays -- about the paints and plastics.

MOORE: No, and you won't hear much till the war is over. Because right now the emphasis is on food...and livestock feed. But when the war's over--- Well, Bill Morse and I were talking about that just the other day. You know, he's the same enthusiastic fellow today he was in 1907 -- when he started out to show the possibilities of the soybean to the Western World.

DUMARS: What does he think they'll do next?

MOORE: With the new varieties they're developing...higher in yield...higher in protein...higher in oil...there just seems to be no limit. Look here, Duke. S'pose you're a farmer raising soybeans. You sell your crop, and then eventually you buy part of it back. In the form of oilcloth for your kitchen table...(where you mix your soybean pancakes)...linoleum for your kitchen floor...varnish for your chairs...paint for your house and barn...panels for your television set...and parts for your new autogyro!

DUMARS: My autogyro! Brother, you really are looking ahead!

MOORE: But of course those things will have to wait a while. Right now -- the soybean will have to continue to provide us with cooking fats and oils and high-protein livestock feed. Some way or other, we've got to make up for that billion pounds a year of fats and oils we used to import from the Orient. Soybeans help to make up part of the shortage. The need for soybean oil is greater this year than at any time since the war began.

DUMARS: Guess we'd really be up against it -- if we couldn't count on those ten and a half million acres or more...the farmers are planing as an oil crop.

MOORE: We certainly would. If anything upsets our plans for getting fats and oils from any source whatever this year -- someone is going to have to get along with less than he needs. But we're counting on the farmers to reach that goal...and to help make an ancient crop from the Orient come to our aid in wartime.

MUSIC: (CURTAIN)

ANNOUNCER: (LIVE) You've heard Ernest Moore and Duke DuMars, of the United States Department of Agriculture, in Number 10 of a series on farm research... and how it helps the farmer reach his wartime food goals.

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