



NORTH DAKOTA Farm Research

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Bulletin

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COAL...
black power,
or nemesis?

From the Director

A. G. HAZEN



Most of the material in this issue of North Dakota Farm Research concerns itself with problems associated with coal energy development in the state. Much of it has been reworked from a series of seminars held last January and February that was organized through the interest and efforts of the Department of Mechanical Engineering and their interest in some of the engineering aspects of such development.

This is the second issue of Farm Research devoted to one particular set of problems. The first, in March-April, 1971, was concerned with environmental quality, and was well received by our readers. Again, we are offering the best information and judgments available to our staff members to help farmers, ranchers and others interested to draw valid conclusions, make pertinent decisions and develop informal opinions.

Why do we wade through economic reports and mathematical formulas to extract these reports? In one word, the answer is "perspective." Some questions that must be faced and answered include, "Is the coal to be mined worth the agricultural land destroyed?", and "Is the number of acres of agricultural land to be stripped alarming in the perspective of the total tillable acres?"

For example, North Dakota is the most agricultural state in the nation from several viewpoints. More than 43 million of the 44,452,480 acres of our land area are in farms and ranches. We rank third after Texas and Kansas with more than 30 million acres planted to crops. We are 16th in total acres, excluding Alaska and Hawaii. These figures come into perspective when you consider the 472.1 million cropland acres in the U.S.

Additionally, statistics show that in 1973 North Dakota farmers had cash receipts from marketing crops of \$1,277,386,000, 10th in the total of \$38,172,493,000 for the 50 states. Cash receipts for livestock ranked 31st the same year with \$460,700,000 of a grand total of \$45,277,003,000. Agricultural cash sales in N.D. produced more than \$45,000 realized gross income per farm.

Hopefully, this special issue on energy as it relates to agriculture in North Dakota will provide valuable perspective in the formulation of opinions on the impact of coal energy development in this agricultural state.

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On The Cover: Our staff artist, Matt Lanz, graphically shows the challenges and the opportunities we all share to keep our use of Mother Nature's resources in balance. Maintaining this balance is everyone's job!

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**Arlon G. Hazen
Dean of Agriculture, and Director
of Agricultural Experiment Station**

**EDITORIAL ADVISOR
H. Roald Lund**

**EDITORS
Robert A. Jarnagin
J. J. Feight Gary Moran Dorothea McCullough**