

Patents for Inventions Connected with Farming Activities

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WHEN in 1831 Cyrus Hall McCormick, village blacksmith and farmer, built his first mechanical reaper he started the farming industry on the road to mechanisation. McCormick was fortunate in that the United States Patent Office granted him a patent for his invention and thereby virtually gave him the sole right "to make, use, exercise and vend" his reaper for a set number of years without fear of competition. Thus when in 1847 the McCormick factory was started in Chicago his harvesting machines had a good start, especially as the protection afforded by the patent office had enabled the inventor to try his machine openly under varying conditions and in distant parts of the country, correct weaknesses, and, most important, create a reputation among the farming community. Under New Zealand patent law the King will grant an inventor monopoly rights for a term of 16 years, on expiry of which the invention becomes public property, that is, anybody is then entitled to make, use, exercise, or vend it without having to ask the inventor's permission.

TO enable the public, after the monopoly has expired, to build the machine, apply the method, or employ the process according to the invention, the inventor is required to deposit with the Patent Office a full description and, if necessary, drawings of his invention. This Complete Specification will be kept at the Patent Office library, where it may be inspected. Abridgments of all such accepted specifications are also published, together with drawings (if any) every month in the Patent Office Journal, which is exchanged with similar publications of the principal patent offices throughout the world. For this reason any patent office library is a veritable storehouse of human knowledge.

Patent Fees

In New Zealand (unlike some countries) it costs little to apply for a patent, nor are the fees charged to keep the patent alive for its full term prohibitive. An inventor may file either a Provisional Specification or a Complete Specification in the first instance. Either must be accompanied by an application form, incorporating a statement of address for service. The inventor can draw up the specifications himself, or, as is done in most cases, he may avail himself of the help of a registered patent agent. A fee of £1 must accompany a Provisional Specification and a fee of £2 a Complete Specification. The former will afford provisional protection to the applicant for 12 months from the date of lodgment with the Patent Office; this means that the applicant is free now, without invalidating his priority right, openly to make, use, exhibit, improve, or otherwise deal with his invention. Even assignment or sale of the prospective patent rights, if and when granted, are possible. Unless, however, the Provisional Specification is followed within 12 months by a Complete Specification (which, as pointed out before, could alternatively have been filed in the

first instance), the application is deemed to have been abandoned. If, on the other hand, a Complete Specification has been filed, it will be examined thoroughly by the Patent Office in the light of the requirements of the Patent Act and, if accepted, details of it will be published in abridged form in the Patent Office Journal. If no opposition is raised within 2 months, the Letters Patent will be issued on payment of a fee of £1. Small renewal fees will also fall due at intervals during the term of the patent. Forms, information leaflet, list of patent agents, and sample

specification are supplied free by the Patent Office to anyone interested.

Today every step in life is governed by patents. Human progress is based on inventions and the very standard of living of whole nations is dependent—to quote an American authority—"on the inventive genius of its population and the type of patent legislation which makes good use of it."

Reliance on Individuals

Unlike the engineering industry and the fields of electronics or chemistry, where improvements or developmental work are carried out in well-equipped laboratories by paid researchers, primary industry in general and farming in particular have to rely on the individual inventor—the man on the land, in the butter factory, or in the meat works, in other words on those who are in closest touch with the day-to-day problems confronting them in their work and who, through ceaseless struggle and effort or a sudden flash of genius, find solutions for them. Such inventions, if guided into and through the proper channels, may mean not only an easier life for the many who will be able to use the improvement but a financial reward for the inventor. It is in this way that new devices originated for tailing lambs, improving milking machines or shed routine (non-stoop sheds), or novel arrangements for drainage or ditch clearing, livestock dipping, seed sowing and fertilising, and eradicating noxious plants and animals were developed.

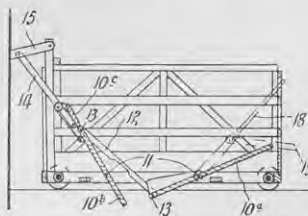
Room for Improvements

There is, and always will be, room for improvements: At present inventors are concerned with apparatus and methods for aerial seed sowing and fertilising, with crop dusting and

RECENT PATENTS

The following particulars of recent patent applications of interest to farmers have been selected from the Patent Office Journal, September, 1949, issue and are published by permission of the Commissioner of Patents, Wellington. Photostat copies of any specifications will be supplied for a small fee on application to the Patent Office.

No.	Description	Applicant
96182	Sheep Dipping (dropping sheep into tank), March 26, 1947, (Drawing)	H. H. Ronalds.



This comprises a 4-wheeled conveyer truck the bottom of which is formed of 2 sectional parts 10a and 10b arranged endwise in the truck's length and pivoted on axles 11 so that each part may assume a normal horizontal position continuously with the other for use as a floor or platform, supported on cross shafts 13, or may be turned on its pivots 11 by means of levers 12 and 14 to form with the other a discharge chute through which sheep can be dropped into a dipping vat below.

88277	Spinner Bait for Fishing,	I. S. Macdonald.
89939	Truck Digging Attachment for Tractor,	T. K. Anderson.
90765	Wool Scouring (removal of brand marks),	R. D. Coghill.
92286	Cutting Edge Insert for Ploughshare,	J. A. Stormlund.
95657	Hay Loading Machine (baled hay),	E. F. Rudd and W. D. Rudd.
97176	Fruitcleaner and Polisher,	A. B. Masters.
97243	Winnowing Tea and the like,	H. Sutherland.
97482	Construction of Top Edge of Cheese Vat,	F. D. Pedersen.