

the family is the earthworm, but one can go on numbering and naming those soil animals until you reach astronomical figures. I learnt with the submersible Hardy green turnip that the bi-annual is possibly the best way of rebuilding fertility on land that has been depressed, because you get an enormous leaf fall in the autumn and early winter. Turnips, in fact, were one of the Norfolk rotational systems that was written into a lot of tenancies, and were fed off to sheep in January and February. But by the time you move the sheep in to graze in small paddocks, the leaf is completely gone, and you've got the bulb there for the sheep to feed on. The leaf has gone back into the soil, but only in the top three inches, and it's the soil animals that take it there. But they can't stay there if the soil is bare in the autumn, because they can't stand the light: the Sun literally destroys soil animals and micro-organisms. The Sun and the micro-world can only meet in plant form, which offers a protective clothing.

If a field is ploughed or bare, you're left with a depreciating soil throughout the winter, so you finish up in the spring with a soil that has become strained and drained away, whereas in my, or nature's, system the soil is being built up, and when we reach the spring I've got a soil packed with organic matter, loaded with micro-life through the dying vegetation, and at the moment when a plant wants to grow, able to produce chemicals for that plant through decay. I get rapid growth, and those multiplying micro-organisms also ring alarm bells to awaken their chosen associated seeds.

Plants like the dandelion, yarrow and burnet played important parts in creating the right plant balance, giving our herd the vital trace elements which satisfied their hunger more readily. This saved grass, and also gave our products a distinctive tang which was well-received by our early customers and which still pervades our whole range of yoghurts and

### *The production of cream cheese*

cheeses, numbering in all 75 different items. We're now employing 40 girls, and they're in my old cowshed, which has been converted into a modern dairy. We've now added another modern dairy to it and our varieties include cream salads, made with a base of clotted cream and yoghurt, yoghurts with wines and spirits in, cheeses with fish and vegetables, and sour cream. We never research in a laboratory and say: 'This is something which would sell.' We go to the public and adjust the product until the public say how lovely it is. Our present marketing ideas have developed from direct contact with our customers, and if we maintain that close link, we feel we will always hold onto our small portion of the market, which grows slowly on trust and understanding, and a feeling that what we offer contributes to the health and fitness of the whole family. This creates a long customer life, a link that must not be broken. The same link exists between our plants and their soilfriends.

If you forgot the term 'health food business', I think you could fairly say that every housewife in the country might wish to buy this kind of food, if it was available at an economic price. I think they're all becoming more and more aware of it. The press is calling attention to various dangerous elements in food manufacture, and that tends to make the housewife think rather more than she's ever done before. The fact that farmers do not practise organic farming has to do with a fear of stepping out of line. A lot of farmers are now doing yoghurt, but only on a limited scale.

Farmers have no desire to go flat out at break-neck speed along the technological road on which we're being led. It's leading them to economic disaster, and they feel this. You can see this, too, when you talk to the housewife or the farmer's wife: they are sensitive to these things, but their intuition is rarely listened to. I think my-

able on their land, which they can tap and increase, improving their fertility at the same time. If they forget all this and allow themselves to buy the advertised materials, they will put their own inheritance to sleep—the life within the soil.

A vast increase in yield in Western agriculture could be achieved if we recovered the surpluses from these two main soil sources—human waste, plant and animal residues. But we are not doing so, and a high tide of rising yields has already been reached. If we continue, there can be only one direction—backwards.

When starting to plan organic farming you need to start thinking now about what you are going to do in 1973. You would take probably half an acre, and plan that half-acre in such a way that it was left with a dense cover of whatever crop you choose, next autumn, and not graze it until February or March. It may be sheep that are coming to lamb, it may be young stock, it may be milch cattle that are just coming down to calve, or it may be new milch cattle already calved: whatever animal you choose, there must be a link between animal and crop. But you could also do it without any animals at all. Then you would have to rotovate, or disc, or in some way work the crop you've had there all winter into the top four inches, and not plough it down six to nine inches—that would be fatal. And if you did this, and sowed a crop that didn't demand your sowing it too early, you'd see a vast difference in the yield from that particular patch of ground. From there your knowledge would build up very rapidly, whatever system you were farming on.

Nature has done it this way for millions of years and she's prepared to do it this way for me. It cuts the economics of the cost side of farming down to an absolute minimum, and yet your yields are the same. The risks are too great to return to chemical farming. The rising prices of imported or sold or advertised materials are governed by the profitability of the man making them. But a farmer's prices are liable to be adjusted only once a year, and this can happen at the point where he may well be unable to pay his bills: I