THE FARM FRONT
by John Russell

Just about a year ago I passed along to readers of this column news of a Montana experiment in the matter of feeding skim or powdered milk to young tomato plants. In so doing I unintentionally laid myself open to some of the finest 'needling' I have ever experienced—and I might say that, in my time, I have been needled by experts.

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The whole trouble was—well, you know the old Scots saying about the children of the busy shoemaker always running barefoot. And I had been so busy preaching the possibilities of milk-fed tomatoes to others that I clean neglected to do anything about my own.

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But why go into gruesome details. Last Summer, in my part of our fair province, it wasn't very favorable to stuff such as tomatoes. And it seemed that the neighbors formed a habit of leaning over the fence and peering much too intently toward my straggly and starved-looking vines. As they turned away I could almost hear them saying to themselves **"Milk-fed tomatoes—PHOOOOEY."**

* * *

But things have a way of evening themselves up. As a pal of mine used to say, "You'll go along for a spell thinking life is just as bad as it can possibly be; then, all of a sudden, it will take a change **—and get worse."** Anyway, within the last couple of weeks I've run across three people who tried out the milk feeding—and are most enthusiastic about it.

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So here it comes again, just as it was published last March or April. I haven't had word of anybody trying the treatment on onions as yet.

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Most of us have heard of such things as celery-fed ducks and, in a bygone day, corn-fed blondes; but I must confess that milk-fed tomatoes are something new—at least to me. However, that's what they're saying — feeding milk to young tomato plants is not only possible, but highly profitable as well.

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According to Prof. Frank M. Harrington, who is head of horticultural research at Montana State College, the milk feeding will not only make the tomato plants grow, They'll mature earlier; the vines will be sturdier; the root systems 50% bigger at transplanting time; and at harvest-time the tomatoes will be big, solidly-fleshed, with few seeds.

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As for the yield—that from the milk-fed plants will be about double. In fact the milk appears to act very much the same as some of the new growth-stimulating hormones we hear so much about.

* * *

In charge of the Montana experiments was Dr. Leon Johnson. He dissolved powdered milk in water till it formed a soupy mixture and poured about one-third of an ounce around each new plant the first week it was up. Then he increased the amount one third of an ounce each week for five weeks. He also used buttermilk and skim milk in the same manner.

* * *

As for the actual results—plants that hadn't been given extra plant food of any sort produced at the rate of 6,829 pounds of tomatoes per acre; those receiving skim milk alone yielded at the rate of 9,814 pounds; while plants receiving both skim milk and ammoniated phosphate averaged 12,374 pounds.

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One pound of powdered milk fertilizes 100 young plants in pots, and will take care of even more if grown in flats. Johnson believes that milk-feeding tomatoes will prove practical for both home gardeners and commercial growers.

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And after the milk had made such a startling showing on tomatoes, Johnson tried it on young onions—and with similar results!

Swede Auto—To be placed on the market in June is this low-slung, low-priced Swedish motor car. The vehicle's designer, Claes Allander, left, tries out the runabout with a friend in Stockholm. The car will sell for about $386.

SPORTS-&
by A SIXBIT CRITIC

That very eminent guardian of the hockey twine, Mr. William Durnan, of the Montreal Canadiens, has announced his intention to retire at the end of the present season—that is, if hockey seasons ever come to an end, which we sometimes gravely doubt. He will be greatly missed; but for his own sake, we sincerely hope that Large William will stick firmly to his resolution.

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Durnan makes no bones about his reason for quitting, frankly stating that he would prefer to end his career with all his mental marbles intact. And with the sort of hockey they play nowadays, and the kind of protection goalminders entirely fail to receive, this is a rather harder task than many onlookers even begin to suspect.

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Goal-tending, under present conditions, is an "'uryin', scurryin'" business, as the old lady in "The History of Mr. Polly" remarked after her rescue from a burning building. Your own players tend to back in on you and block your view so that you never have a glimpse of half the pucks that are hurled your way until they either hit you or land in behind you. Opposing forwards play "inside home" on you in a manner that wouldn't have been tolerated in the palmiest days of field lacrosse. You are bumped, battered and bruised, as well as be-devilled by the type of loud-mouth that loves to congregate in back of the nets. In fact, it's a wonder that, after a few seasons of modern big-time hockey, most of the goalies aren't walking around like punch-goofy fighters, talking to themselves.

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So, although his absence will leave an aching void—especially in the region of the Montreal nets—we entirely applaud Bill Durnan's resolve to get out when the getting is good. And because—as the poet said—it's better to decorate the lives of the living than the graves of the dead, we would like to pay him our meed of tribute. Just how best to go about so doing is rather difficult to figure out, but we'll try.

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Well, then, it is hard for anybody who has followed hockey fairly closely almost since the days when Lester Patrick and his brother, Frank, invented it, to admit that there are players today that even begin to compare with some of our heroes of old.

* * *

When Junior comes home, raving over the speed and cleverness of such as Maurice Richard, Syl Apps, Teeder Kennedy, Elmer Lach and the like, it is our custom—and that of scores belonging to our generation—to give the brash youngster a pitying smile and start talking about Howie Morenz, Cyclone Taylor, Sprague Cleghorn, Dutch Nighbor, Nels Stuart. "Your stars of today couldn't even carry the spare sticks of guys like those," we tell him, and sometimes it seems as though he almost believes us.

* * *

But the truth is mighty and bound to prevail, sooner or later. And if the aforesaid Junior were to come up right now and ask us, "Did you honestly ever see a better goaltender than Durnan?" we might hem and haw for a while; but in the end we'd be bound to break down and say that we never had.

* * *

In our time, we have looked at and admired a lot of high-class netminding. Names like Georges Vezina, Chuck Gardiner, Roy Worters, George Hainsworth, Lorne Chabot, Harry Holmes and half a dozen others come to mind whenever there is a hockey fanning bee.

* * *

But while we may have seen more brilliant single-game exhibitions than anything we ever saw Durnan put on, when we picture Bill over the whole span of his National Hockey League career, we are afraid we'll have to admit that if he wasn't the best that ever stood between a pair of hockey uprights, he'll do to tie to until the top man comes along. Maybe that admission is a sure sign that age is softening us up, but here it is:

* * *

Bill Durnan was the outstanding performer in a highly difficult and nerve-wracking profession, and we wish him all the best now that he's decided he has had enough.

Praise Be

An old Scottish couple were listening to a broadcast service, the husband sitting back smoking his pipe, his wife in deep contemplation. Half an hour passed in silence. Then, suddenly, the old man laughed.

"Sandy," exclaimed his wife, "why this merriment on the Sabbath?"

"Ah," said Sandy, "the parson's just announced the collection and here I am safe at home."

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Modern dredges are now working this ground again, recovering gold that escaped the hurried miners of 50 years ago. And the dredges frequently uncover pre-historic skeletal remains. Tusks dredged recently from the gravel bed of Last Chance Creek were said to be 12 feet long and 14 inches across at the base.

From these, Messrs. Murdoch and Diment can make hundreds of souvenirs for sale to the tourist trade.

Mean Trick

A farmer's barn was burned and the agent for the insurance company duly turned up and told him that his firm would build another barn exactly like the destroyed one instead of paying the claim in cash.

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