"FATHER, what's the value of a grassland sod?"

"The books put it this way, son. A sod is a complex conglomeration of the roots of pasture plants; decaying vegetable matter; fibrous residues of animal dung; mineral rich worm casts and is teeming with bacteria and other lower forms of animal life. It may vary in depth from very little to several inches and lies within and above the true soil surface.

The boys like dung but anything the humans call humus will do. The more work we do, the more we breed and then there are more of us to do even more work."

"What happens in poor conditions—when you get waterlogged or when the soil surface runs together and is sealed so that you can't get any air?"

"Strict union rule; no working in water. We're out, mate, the lot. There's a lot of idle renegade bacteria that come with the water but they're no good to anybody. Puts us back two months or so to get rid of them and clear up after the water has gone. Air? well—cut off the air and that's our lot. But the worms usually help us out by going up and letting in a bit of air."

"How are you affected by artificial fertilisers?"

"We like them. They make the old grass grow and this means more dung and urine from up top and bigger and better roots down here."

"Thank you very much Mr. Bacteria."

"That's all right, Guv; me successors will look forward to meeting you later on, if you know what I mean."

My eyes are now accustomed to the light and I can see animal life in many different forms; coming towards me is a very small white worm hardly bigger than a pin head. "Hello my little man. What's your name and what do you do around these parts?"

"My name's Enchy something. There are millions of we Enchys to the acre in a good sodded sward. We do a lot of the soil moving that is usually credited to the worms. We bring dung and decaying leaves and vegetation from the soil surface and dump it near the roots plants. When there has been too much help, we blot up the surplus moisture, then give it out to the soil particles at some later date. They pass it on to the plant roots. This humus material we have been working on helps prevent loss..."
of moisture from the soil in times of
drought by preventing evaporation.”

“What do you like best?”

“A good friable sweet smelling soil
with plenty of air and lots of lovely grub.
We’re a bit dependent on these lazy bac-
teria devils, you know, because they
make our food a bit more digestible for
us. Mind you, they do have a lot to put
up with at times, especially when these
stupid humans pack the top of the soil
and exclude the oxygen.

“There is one tribe of the bacteria
race we have a very high regard for.

They are the ones that produce the
nitrogen from their large round bumps
which break off the white clover roots.
Boy, don’t those little blighters work!
And we all benefit from it down here.
The nitrogen leads to increased growth
which means more food for us either as
dung or decayed leaves. But if the
leaves are taken away and no dung
returned to feed on, many of us die from
starvation and the majority who live
migrate to better feeding grounds.”

“Enchy, it is most kind of you to have
spared the time to talk to me, many
thanks.”

“No at all, I would just like to have
it put on record that our greatest fear
is not of nature, but of the illogicality
of man.”

As I moved about down here I can
see moisture coming into the air spaces
so I guess it has been raining pretty hard
up there. The mass of fibrous, sponge-
like material which surrounds me is
greedily sucking it up. It is also quickly
seized upon by the millions of new grains
of soil which have been brought up to
kept in circulation. There is plenty of
cooperation on all sides to keep it
flowing. The soil grains when they have
supplied the roots, draw on fresh supplies
from other grains at a lower level and
these in turn are freely fed by the spongy
humus. The more humus material there
is to hold the soil particles apart from
each other, then the thicker is the cover-
ing of water on each particle.

Before I return to base there is one
other group of people I must talk to.

“Mr. Earthworm, would you tell us
about your job?”

“We do the work of chemist and
engineer but we can also tackle air con-
ditioning, debris collection, and general
soil amelioration. We are best known as
earth movers. We load up with raw soil
from the lower layers and then move
up to the surface where the load is
dumped. The return journey is usually
made with a leaf or some other part-
rotted material.

“We use humus as food to keep us
active, and where there is a good supply

(Continued on page 13)
**SPECIAL OCCASIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JUNE</th>
<th>19th</th>
<th>Welsh Section A.G.M. and Competition, Royal Porthcawl Golf Club.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JULY</td>
<td>18th</td>
<td>South West Section, Annual Tournament, Weston-Super-Mare Golf Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST</td>
<td>30th</td>
<td>Southern Section, Autumn Tournament, Sunningdale Golf Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPTEMBER</td>
<td>25th</td>
<td>East Midland Section, Autumn Tournament, Willesley Park Golf Club, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPTEMBER</td>
<td>26th</td>
<td>Welsh Section, Cardiff Cup, Glamorganshire Golf Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER</td>
<td>28th</td>
<td>Midland Section visit to Messrs. Massey Ferguson.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Worm’s Eye View—continued.

of this we work a seven-day week, 24 hours a day, and in a year, we and the Enchys combined can move up to 26 tons of soil to the acre.”

“What a wonderful feat; how on earth (if you will excuse the expression) do you move all this soil?”

“We eat it, nip up to the surface, get the old discharge auger on the go and then nip back again for another helping. By moving around pretty freely we can make sure there is plenty of work for the labouring classes to do as well as maintain good working conditions for them.”

“And how about your job as a chemist?”

“We have a secret process for modifying all the soil we eat so that many of the essential plant foods such as nitrogen, calcium, phosphorous, potassium and magnesium are made more readily available when dissolved in water.”

“How many of you are there to the acre?”

“The last time we had a census in this particular sod there were 10 cwt. of us, but mind you this is a pretty useful built-up area; plenty of food and plenty of employment.”

“Do earthworms or other active soil workers move towards the newly made regions which are frequently ploughed by man?”

“Who would voluntarily go to a place where semi-starvation is a certainty and premature death a high probability? Any migration is in the reverse direction, much of the humus food on which we are so dependent has been destroyed and such lands are able to support only about 2 3/4 to 4 cwt. of our population.”

“Suppose there were men who regretted the folly of their ways, what steps could they take to encourage your active co-operation?”

“Just make sure that we have a regular supply of humus food and air. That’s all we ask and we’ll repay them handsomely.”

“May I thank you and all your colleagues for taking part in this programme? Listeners will now be returning to the studio, I hope I follow.”

“There you have it, son. Just think about it next time you walk across the 10-acre.”

*With grateful acknowledgments to “The Farmers’ Weekly”.*