

An aerial, black and white photograph showing a vast number of military tractors, likely M35 or similar models, arranged in neat, parallel rows on the deck of a ship. The tractors are viewed from a high angle, showing their front hoods, steering wheels, and tracks. The ship's deck and the ocean are visible in the background.

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Tractors on the port side

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A NEW TEMPO FOR HAITI

The future has promise for this tiny land

where the

tractor

is challenging the drum

THE DRUMS OF HAITI, voices of a culture. Historically, a "work" drum has paced the labor of farmers hoeing their lands to its rhythms. Work done, they dance to the beat of various voodoo drums such as the one pictured here.

By NORB HILDEBRAND

Photos by VORIES FISHER

A NEW TEMPO FOR HAITI

PIERRE BOYLEAU and his wife, typical of the Haitian families benefiting from SCIPA's programs. Most peasant-farmers own their small land plots which new methods are making more productive.



PIERRE LOADS his invaluable burro for a trip to town. His wife will ride most of the warm day before she has traded their farm produce for necessary food.

IRRIGATION is making it possible for the first rice crops to be cultivated in Haiti's history. Trenches originally constructed by the French before 1800 are being dug up and repaired.



agricultural practices. Their hard-won country had once been the most productive in the new world, but primitive methods and erosion eventually debilitated the land until Haiti could barely provide even a meager national diet. Three and one-half million people faced defeat, despite the efforts of 90% of their population, the farmers. These willing peasants tediously plied backs and hearts to the tempo of the "work" drum but the tired land would not respond.

Then, in 1948, SCIPA came into being and Haiti's economic progress began. More formally known as the Service Cooperatif Inter-Américain de Production Agricole, this United States agency undertook to

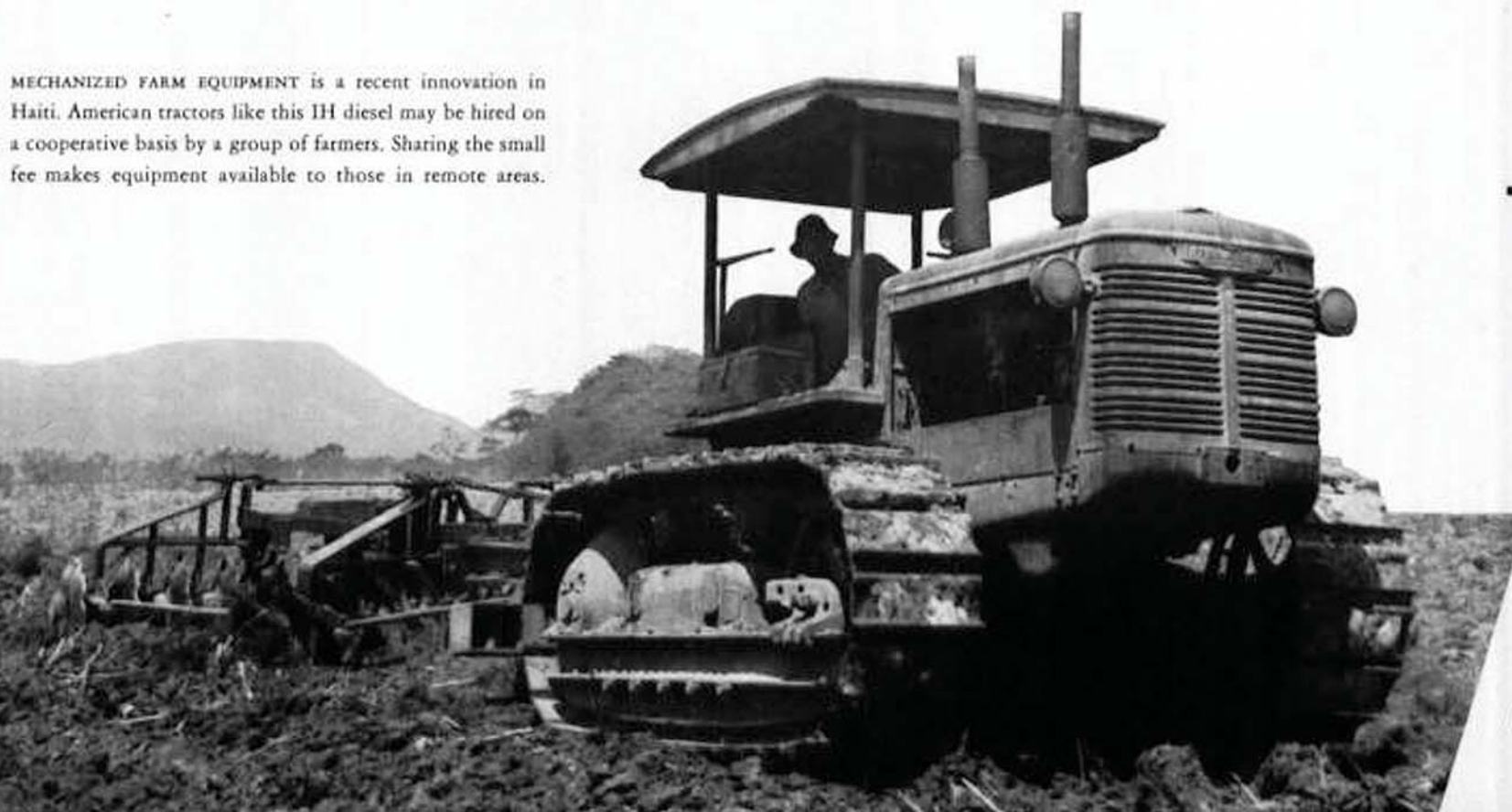
restore the great productivity Haiti once enjoyed.

The task was and is a formidable one. SCIPA began by sharing with the Haitian government, on a three-to-one basis, the costs of organizing and supervising agricultural extension and development projects. Rural agencies were set up to attack Haiti's problems along two lines. First, the farmer needed technical help in making the most of his land already under cultivation. Land reforms, credit facilities and cooperatives were scheduled to evolve from the solving of basic problems. The second primary need was for the fundamentals of husbandry: tools, breeding animals, poul-

try, insecticides, fertilizers. Specialists were then found to teach the values of agronomy, soil conservation, engineering and veterinary science.

As has the language of the drums for so many generations, word of these modern methods has gone from village to village, from man to man. Progress is slow but steady. Farms and villages are isolated, and the roads between them are far from good. A limited number of Haitian county agents and SCIPA technicians must teach and cajole a generally illiterate farm population. They must work with less money and with less machinery and fewer techniques than they would like to employ.

MECHANIZED FARM EQUIPMENT is a recent innovation in Haiti. American tractors like this IH diesel may be hired on a cooperative basis by a group of farmers. Sharing the small fee makes equipment available to those in remote areas.



NEIGHBORS OF PIERRE BOYLEAU inspect their first crop of rice which will better the meager diet of the St. Raphael area, long deficient in cereals and vegetables.



But their efforts are being rewarded. Pierre Boyleau rented his tractor through SCIPA. His neighbors witnessed its feats and saw that Pierre's beans, corn and sorghum were quickly and easily planted. They could not deny that the machine made it simple for their friend to have a revolutionary plot of vegetables behind his one-room, sun-baked mud hut. Even had they followed their custom of working in groups to the tune of the drums, they could not have done so well for Pierre as did the big machine.

Each time a SCIPA county agent succeeds in overcoming native suspicions of strangers and advice he takes a step toward



CORN, CALLED MAIZE in Haiti, used to be hung for storage in nearby trees, unprotected from insects, sun and heavy rain. SCIPA has taught Pierre to construct a sheet metal tank, roofed with thatch and off the ground to avoid rats. This is temporary storage before the corn is sold. Haitian farm boys mill the corn with ancient wooden mortar and pestles.

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AN INTERNATIONAL "CAMION." Brightly colored trucks carrying passengers in the body and produce on the roof are the only public transportation between towns. Some roads are merely easily flooded stream beds, aggravating the transport problem. (Below) Most marketing is done by the farm women, walking long rocky miles.



better living and a full stomach for his people. In just five years, Haiti has increased production sufficiently to reverse the original SCIPA financial ratio. Three Haitian dollars are now behind the program for every American one.

Pierre Boyleau's home village is one of the centers of this encouraging growth. For many years, sugar cane has been St. Raphael's principal crop. Small-plot farmers raised it to be sold at the local mill for "rapadou," a kind of sugar sweetening much in demand on the island. Agronomists found, however, that the area was not providing its own food, much less a surplus which the country so badly needs.

SCIPA persuaded Pierre to break with agricultural tradition and diversify his crops. For the first time, he planted vegetables and a few cereals, in addition to his marketable crop of sugar cane. One of these grains was rice, sustenance for more peoples than any other food grown, but previously unknown in Haiti. SCIPA is making it available with the introduction of small dams and irrigation methods.

The increasing adaptability of adult farmers is paving the way for Haiti's youngsters, the real hope of Haiti's future. They have no bad agricultural habits to unlearn, they are eager for new information. Illiteracy is not the handicap to them that it has been to their fathers, and the young people make apt pupils. Fifteen hundred of them are enrolled in a SCIPA project which could conceivably correct, in one generation, the agricultural errors of the last hundred years . . . the 4-C program.

DIFFERING FROM THE 4-H movement only in translation and resources, the 60 Haitian clubs progress under the French motto, "Corps, Coeur, Cerveau, et Cooperation." In a few years these sons and daughters will be taking over their fathers' farms and garden plots. Their new knowledge will be basic, a matter of first things first. They will have learned how to grow the health-giving vegetables, to shelter livestock, make compost heaps and to use simple tools. The life-saving fundamentals

of hygiene and sanitation will make sense to them. They will have learned to apply hands and imagination to manual arts, sewing and food preparation. Even at this early stage, the success of 4-C clubs has given them such local prestige that their members are the stars of community celebrations, from school flag-raising to the annual Mardi Gras parades.

The "work" drums of Haiti will continue to beat for a time. But determination and the fresh enthusiasm of the young generations have already established a new era on the island of Hispaniola. Until now, hunger and disease have sapped the hope of the people.

Pierre Boyleau can now begin to feed his family by his own efforts. He and his neighbors are outwitting the ravages of malaria, yaws and waterborne diseases. The future has promise. In time, another story will be added to the voodoo folklore . . . a tale of a friendly steel dragon that growled at the land and made it productive, a memory of a machine that gave freedom a meaning.

BEANS HAVE ALSO DIVERSIFIED the land and augmented the Haitian farmer's food supply. Pierre and his helpers sort beans by his sun-baked-mud, thatched house.



HARVESTER'S INTEREST IN SCIPA's work is centered in Cie Haitienne de Moteurs, S.A., IH distributor in Port-au-Prince, capital of Haiti.



A 4-C GROUP LISTENS INTENTLY as a SCIPA agent discusses vegetable gardening and (center) gives them practice in the cultivation of tomatoes. Each boy has a small plot of land which will net him \$25 when his produce is sold.