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BRITAIN HARVESTS HER SUGAR

It's D-day in Britain's eighteen sugar factories. The first loads of the season's crop of four million tons of sugar beet come rolling in. Around the factories the yards pile high with the hard parsnip-like roots which, nowadays, provide the equivalent of the whole domestic sugar ration.

With four hundred thousand acres of beet to be lifted the new mechanical harvesters prove their worth. This year there are five hundred and fifty of them in operation. Manpower and time is being saved.

Minus the tops, which feed the farmers livestock, the roots are literally washed into the factory. They pass through a succession of cleaning processes ending in great warmwater tanks where the roots are stirred mechanically.

Samples are taken of each load to assess the sugar content. Despite a poor summer the yield is up to average, two and a half ounces to the average beet. Sliced into thin strips the pulp goes through a diffusing process (much like making tea) and the thin syrup flows away in a stream which will run without a stop until mid January.

Thickened by evaporation the syrup is whirled around to separate the molasses from the sugar. White and pure but still damp, it is sprayed out through the driers.

By the end of the season there'll be five hundred thousand tons of it. For Britain, it's an achievement to be proud of.