Crawfish Harvester
Worthy of Attention

The genius of the free enterprise system lies in part with the fact that genius can be discovered anywhere, and technological breakthroughs do not consistently follow the man with the most degrees behind his name.

If advancements in technology may be defined as those things which enable something to be done simpler than before, then David Fontenot, who farms in a large area in the vicinity of Cazan's Lake in Evangeline Parish, has made his own contribution to the advancement of technology in the crawfish industry.

For several months he has been working on an improved "crawfish harvester" and he has come up with something that's simple and it works.

To start, take a three-wheel Honda ATC 200. To the handle bars attach two trays. One of the trays will be flat with sides sufficient to hold a supply of crawfish bait. The other tray will be funnel shaped. This is how it works.

The bike will offer mobility in the water during harvest. Simply drive the bike to a trap. Pick up the trap and empty it into the funnel-shaped tray to which is attached an onion bag or any other type bag to receive the crawfish from the trap. Hang the wire-mesh trap on a projection attached to the funnel-tray, and bait the now empty trap with bait from the second tray. Remove the baited trap from the hook and set it back into the water.

In a matter of a few seconds, the entire operation is complete and you can start over again. All of this can be done without stopping, Fontenot notes. And it is possible to run about 1,500 traps per day using the "harvester."

The entire cost of the "harvester" is about $1,600, including the cost of the bike, Fontenot says, which is one advantage of this type of harvester as opposed to others now on the market. Fontenot made his design with cardboard first and then spoke to local welder Ashland Manuel at Ville Platte Iron Works about the possibility of constructing the trays according to the cardboard model. After a little work and a few minor variations, the first "harvester" of (Continued on back page)