Printed in Japan

NES-L6-USA

M.U.L.E.

MINDSCAPE INC

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Welcome to M.U.L.E.

M.U.L.E. is a game of exploration and resource development on another planet. As many as four humans can play. If you have fewer than four humans, your Nintendo will play the others. There are three versions of M.U.L.E. — Beginner, Standard, and Tournament. Each version has slightly different rules. The player who has the greatest net worth at the end of the game is the winner.

If You Want to Start Playing Right Away

The fastest way to learn is to play the Beginner game. The next pages of this manual have screen shots and quick-reading captions to teach you the Beginner game fast. If you have any questions, read the *Questions and Answers* section. The rest of the manual has rules and strategies for the Standard and Tournament versions.

Pausing the Game

To pause the game, press the SELECT button. To start again, press the SELECT button a second time. This is especially useful for playing and trying to read this Guide at the same time.

1. Choosing Your Character



MECHTRON **GOLLUMER** **PACKER**
BONZOID **SPHEROID**
FLAPPER **LEGGITE** **HUMANOID**

The Nintendo will cycle through 4 different colors. Whoever pushes his A button on the controller first uses that color throughout the game.

After choosing a color, you select a character. Use the control pad to point towards a character, and it will appear in the center.

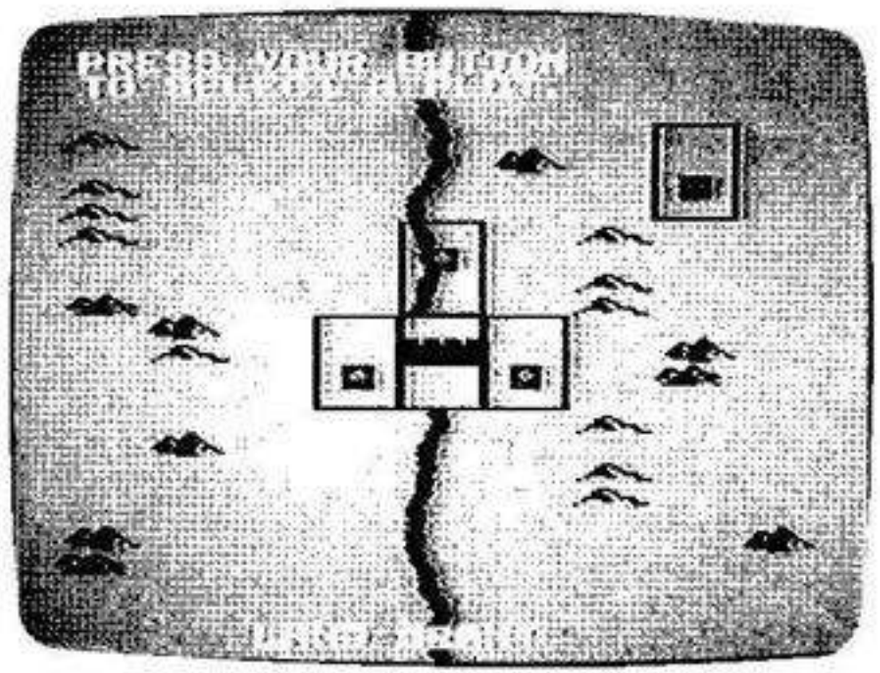
If you don't want this one, move another character into the center of the screen, and push the A button. When you are done, the Nintendo will cycle through the remaining colors for the other players.

2. Summary Report



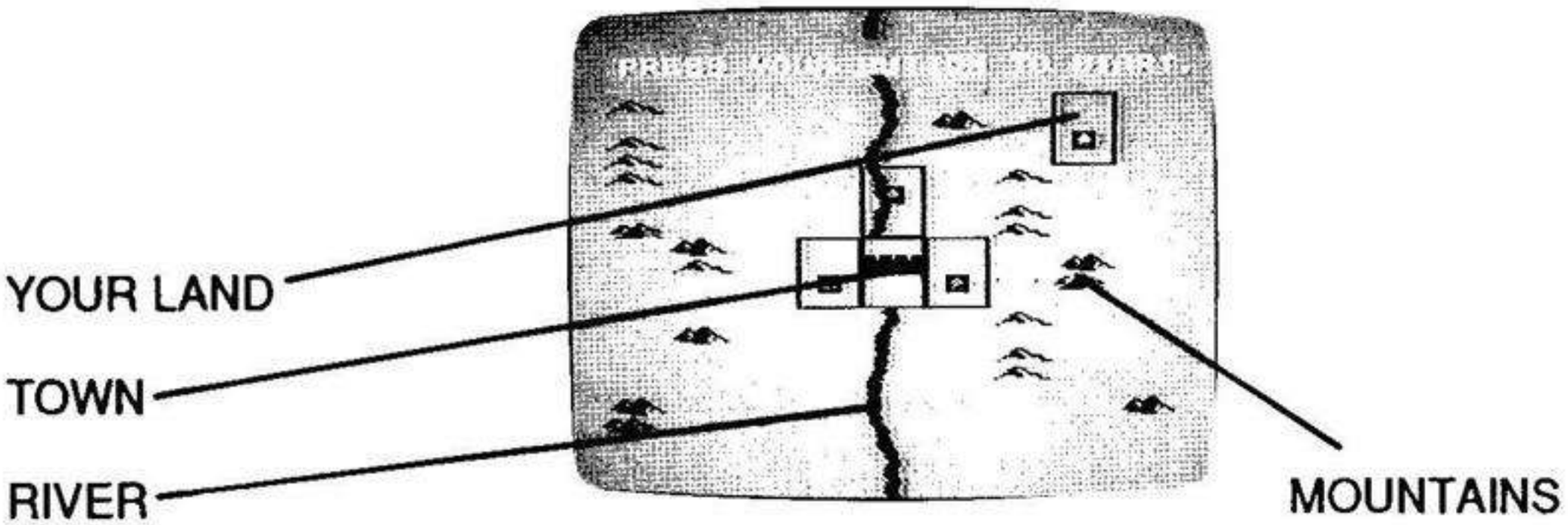
Most players start with $1,000 in money and $300 worth of Food and Energy – "goods." However the Flapper starts with $1600 in money and $300 worth of Food and Energy, and the Humanoid starts with $600 in money and $300 worth of Food and Energy.

3. Land Grant



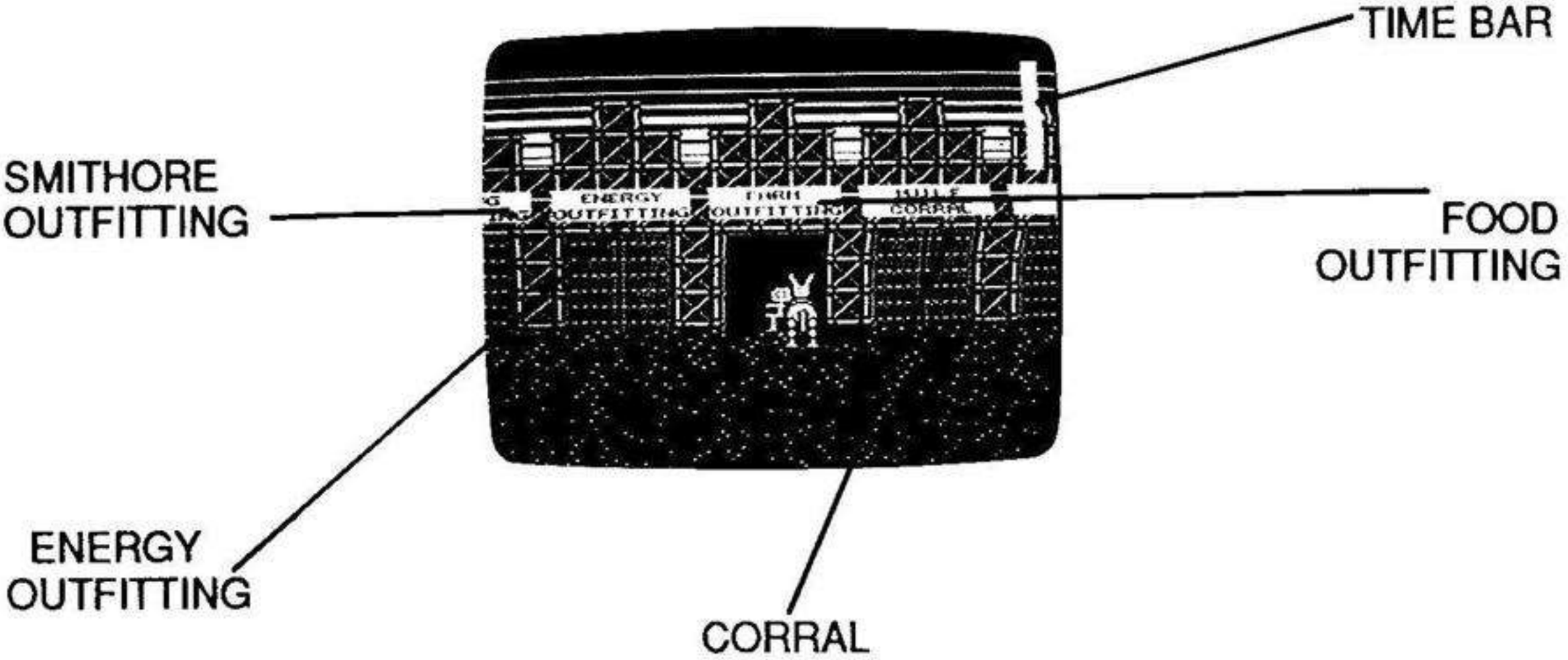
You select a plot.
The Land Grant is your chance to get one free plot each turn.
When the moving square is over the plot you want, push the A button.

4. Deciding What to Produce



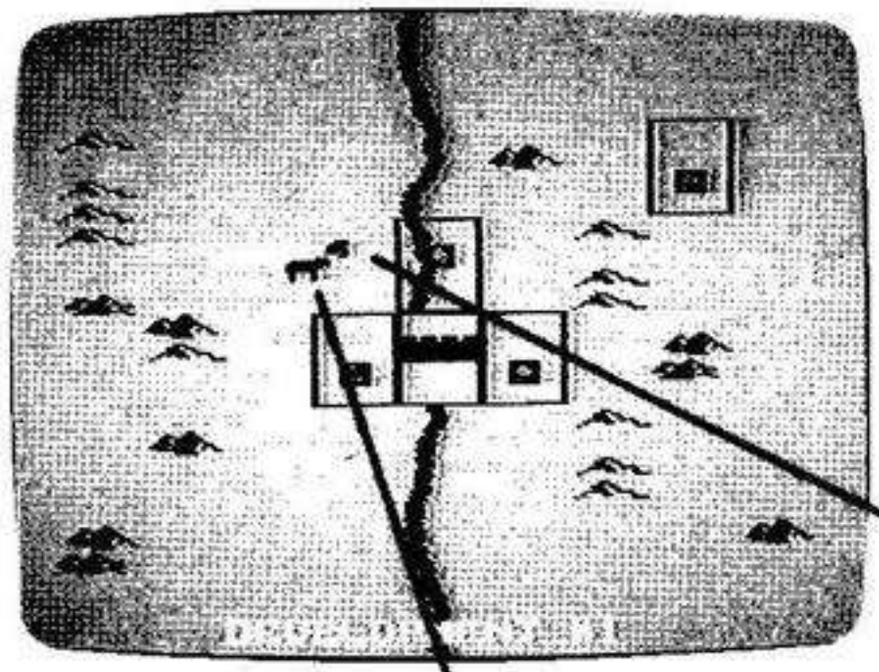
You decide to produce Food on your river land.
Your plot of land will flash when it is your turn. Decide what you want to do with your land. Mountains are best for mining Smithore, river land is best for farming for Food, and flat land is best for producing Energy.

5. Outfitting Your M.U.L.E.



You outfit a M.U.L.E to produce food.
Go to the corral, get a M.U.L.E., and take him to any outfitting shop.
When the time bar runs out, your turn ends regardless of what you are doing.

6. Installing Your M.U.L.E.



HOUSE (ON LAND) PLAYER'S MULE PLAYER

You outfit a M.U.L.E.
To install a M.U.L.E., lead him out of town, by walking him off screen either to the left or to the right, to your plot of land. Press the A button when you character is directly over the house.

When installed, your M.U.L.E. turns into a production symbol. Your property is ready to produce Food, Energy, or Smithore.

Whenever you want to go back into town, just walk your character to the town symbol in the center of the screen (see the screen shot shown under the heading *Deciding What to Produce*).

7. Wampus Hunting

You still have time left. Can you catch the Wampus?
The Wampus lives in caves in the mountains. When he opens his door, his bell rings and his black door flashes. If you catch him, he will pay you to let him go.

To catch the Wampus, you have to be outside of town, without a M.U.L.E. Then, when you see his light, jump on him. Good hunting!

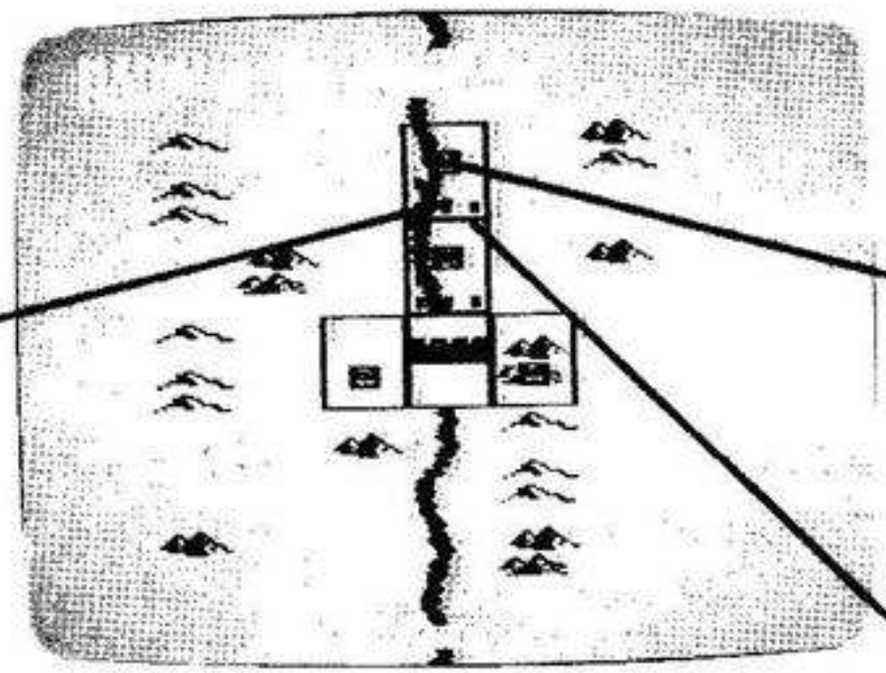
8. The Pub

Going into the Pub is an automatic way to win money. But it also ends your turn. The more time remaining, the more you win.

9. Random Events

You can't really plan for "random events" like Planetquakes, Acid Rain, and Pest Attacks, but they can happen.

10. Production



Your river land produced Food.
Production happens automatically; you just watch your land produce. Each little box that appears in your land plot represents one unit.

11. The Store

There is a Store in the game, played by the Nintendo. During the Auction, the Store buys and sells Food, Energy, and Smithore.

It starts out with 16 units of Food, 16 units of Energy, and no Smithore. After that, the number of units it has to sell depends on what the players sell and buy.

12. Player Status



You have a surplus of Food.
There are three Auctions each round, one each for Smithore, Food, and Energy. Each auction starts by showing "Status" in that good. A line grows and shrinks to show how much you started with, how much you used, how much spoiled, and how much you produced during your last turn.

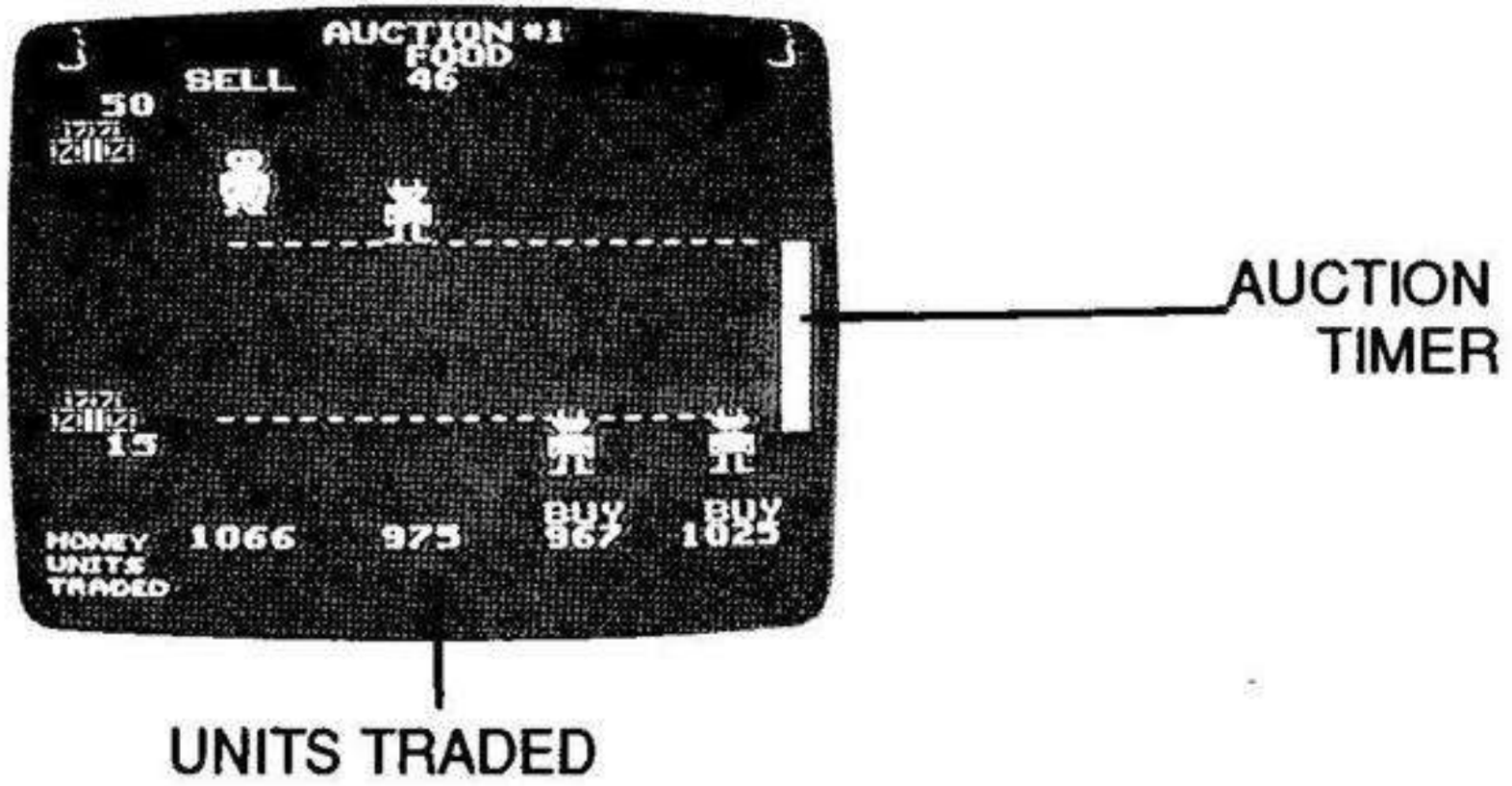
A "critical line" tells you if you have a shortage or a surplus for your next turn. (Except for Smithore, which is not "critical for survival.") Finally, there is a message telling how much of that product the Store has.

13. Declaring

You declare yourself to be a Seller in the Food auction.
Push the control pad up or down to declare whether you are a Seller or a Buyer. You can change back and forth as often as you wish until the Declare Timer runs out.

Hint: If you have a surplus, you should sell it (your character will automatically jump to the SELL position). If you have a shortage, BUY!

14. The Auction Begins



You are a Seller, and you lower your price.
The auction starts with the sellers on the top of the screen and the buyers on the bottom. Now the units row shows the number of units traded during the auction, instead of the number of units owned by each player.

Sellers move down to lower their prices. Buyers move up to raise their bids. Dashed lines indicate the highest bid and the lowest price among all four players. All characters can move at the same time, racing to buy and sell before the auction timer runs out.

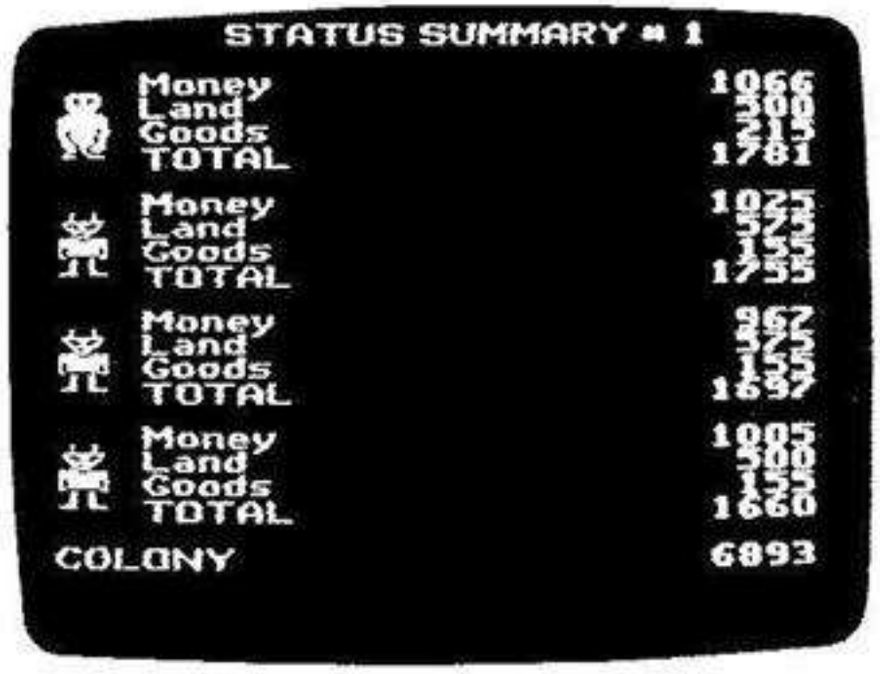
15. Trading



You make a transaction.
When the Buy Line and the Sell Line meet, the Buyer and the Seller start flashing. Trading begins, one unit at a time. As trades are made the Buyer's money decreases, the Seller's money increases, and both players' Units Traded increase.

Either player can stop trading at any time, simply by moving away from the line. Otherwise trading continues until the Seller runs out of extra product, or the Buyer runs out of money.

16. Summary Report (Again)



After the first turn, you are losing, but not by much.
The Summary Report shows your points, or your "Net Worth" after each round. Don't feel bad if you're in last place now. The losing player gets some advantages. For instance, if you and another player both try to get the same piece of land during the Land Grant, you will get the land. And if you and another player both try to Buy or Sell at the same price, you will get to make the trade, even if he or she is also on the trading line.

17. Transferring M.U.L.E.s

Later in the game, you can move M.U.L.E.s that you have installed. You can even take them back into town and re-outfit them for a different type of production.

You can transfer a M.U.L.E. to your plot with or without a M.U.L.E. in tow. When you press your A button, the M.U.L.E. you are leading (if any) will be installed and the one previously installed will be following you. You can take the new M.U.L.E. to another plot or you can re-outfit him for a different type of production (by taking him back to town). If you have no other use for the M.U.L.E., return it to the corral for $100.

You are now ready to play the Beginner's game of M.U.L.E. The game will last 6 rounds. Whoever has the highest value, or "Net Worth," at the end will be the winner, the "First Founder." Good Luck!

Questions and Answers

Q: *Why don't I always get the plot of land I want in the land grant?*

A: It may be because you and another player are both pushing your buttons at the same time, and he or she is getting the land. That happens because the Nintendo figures out who has the least amount of money, land, and goods and gives that player the land. Or else it is because your "trigger finger" is just a little too slow.

Q: *Why can't I watch the Nintendo-controlled player install a M.U.L.E.? Is it cheating on me?*

A: Since the Nintendo never makes mistakes, it's not much fun to watch. Of course, the Nintendo can't catch a Wampus either.

Q: *My M.U.L.E. keeps running away. What can I do?*

A: M.U.L.E.s don't really like to work. If they get a chance, they will run off. If your time runs out before you get your M.U.L.E. properly installed, it will scoot. If you realize you don't have enough time to lead your M.U.L.E. all the way to your land, you can return it to the corral and get your money back.

Q: *Why can't I catch the Wampus?*

A: Three reasons: you may be pushing your button, which keeps him away; you may be standing on his mountain, which keeps him from opening his door; or maybe you aren't really cut out to be a Wampus hunter.

Q: *I get to the Buy Line just as fast as another seller and I don't get to sell anything. What's going on?*

A: Remember that the player with the least amount of money, land, and goods always gets the advantage. If you are richer than the other seller, he or she will win all the "ties." The same goes when you and another player are both trying to buy something.

Q: *Yes, but can't I sell just one unit?*
A: Once a trade begins, no other players can break into it. Your only hope is to get one of the players to stop trading.

Q: *The store was out of food and I still wanted to buy some. But I couldn't quite reach the seller. Is something wrong?*
A: Nope. If the seller doesn't want to sell you anything, he or she can just stay on the top of the screen and you can't reach.

Q: *How come I can't always go as high as I want to in the auction?*
A: You can't bid if you don't have enough money.

Q: *Why do I have to stop selling just because I reach my "critical level?" I could have sold food when I didn't need it for my next turn.*
A: It sounds like you're ready for the Standard game.

Tips on the Beginner Game

•Always get land during the land grant, even if you can't get the one you want. It's worth $500 in figuring your net worth.
•Avoid moving through mountains and the river whenever possible. They will slow you down. The fastest way to move is diagonally.
•Learn how to transfer and reoutfit M.U.L.E.s to take advantage of shortages and surpluses that develop.

•If you have time remaining after placing your M.U.L.E.s, look for the Wampus. If the Wampus is too far away, ignore him and go to the Pub.
•Take advantage of the terrain by producing the right products in the right place. Make food in the river, energy in the flatlands, and mine Smithore in the mountains (particularly plots with three mountain symbols).
•Always get the other players to pay the highest price when you are selling, and to take the lowest price when you are buying. Learn to "tease" them into taking your price by wiggling your character up and down on the auction screen.
•The amount you produce each turn depends on three things: "Base Production," energy, and economic bonuses. Base Production is the number of units your plot will produce if nothing else affects it. This number is shown by the number of little boxes that appear in the lower right corner of your land during production.
•A M.U.L.E. will produce zero units during a turn if it doesn't have enough energy. Food and Smithore M.U.L.E.s need one unit of energy each turn, left over from the previous turn. (Energy M.U.L.E.s just use energy as they make it.)
•If you have three plots producing the same product, regardless of where the plots are located on the map, you get an extra unit of production in each plot. This reflects what is called "the learning curve theory of production," explained in the section *Economics of M.U.L.E.*
•Whenever two or more plots producing the same product are side by side, you will also get one extra unit of production in each plot. This bonus reflects the theory of "economies of scale," also explained in *Economics of M.U.L.E.* No more than one extra unit is given for "economy of scale" regardless of how many plots are touching.

The Economics of M.U.L.E.

Pricing

Prices are set by supply and demand. Prices go up when the supply is small and the demand is high; they go down when there is a large supply and little demand. For example, if there are 25 units of Smithore in the store and all the players are producing it, the store will offer a very low price to buy it.

In M.U.L.E., the store sets prices using a formula based on principles of supply and demand, and also on the latest prices paid for the product. No store price can go over $265. Food, Energy and Smithore have minimum prices of $15, $10, and $14, respectively.

Economies of Scale

The "law" of economies of scale says that the bigger you are, the better you get. If you double the size of your operation, you more than double your effectiveness. This is because of things like mass production, and volume discounts on buying raw materials and building tools. In M.U.L.E., if you have two or more plots of land side by side doing the same kind of production, your M.U.L.E.s become more efficient, and average one extra unit of production on each plot.

Learning Curve Theory of Production

In many industries, as you build more and more of a product, you learn how to do it more efficiently. The "learning curve theory" says that every time you double the total number of units you have ever built, you "learn" to build that product for 20% less. This is the reason that calculators and computers keep costing less and less every year.

In M.U.L.E., you get an extra unit (on each plot) for every three plots of land you have that are all producing the same kind of product, regardless of where they are located. This is in addition to the bonus you get from economies of scale you get from adjacent plots. For example, if you had three Smithore mines, and two were side by side, each mine would produce one extra unit for the learning curve effect, and the two adjacent plots would each produce a second extra unit for the economies of scale effect.

Diminishing Returns

Just when you thought you had it wired, economics comes through with the "law" of diminishing returns. This law says that economies of scale and learning curve effects reach a point where they get less and less important. In M.U.L.E., you can see how this works if you try to develop a Smithore monopoly. At first you get high levels of products by locating mines in the mountains (where there are rich Smithore deposits), and getting the economics bonuses as well. Eventually you have to start mining for Smithore in the flat land to increase you economies of scale and learning curve effects. Sooner or later you reach a point where you get more value from giving up

the economic bonuses and producing Food or Energy instead.

The Prisoner's Dilemma
Normally, in a free enterprise system, things work out best if everyone looks out for himself. However, there are some cases in economics, such as "The Prisoner's Dilemma," where everyone loses if each person spends too much time worrying about himself.

In M.U.L.E., if the colony doesn't survive, everyone loses. If one player is really doing poorly, he can't afford to pay high prices to buy all the Energy or Food that you are producing.

If you want a real challenge, try placing the Humanoid character against three Nintendo players and see if you can get a total colony score of more than 100,000. If you can, we'd like to hear about it. Good luck!

There are several new rules in the Standard game that give you almost unlimited strategies. First, the Standard game lasts 12 turns. Second, the entire colony must have a total worth of at least $60,000, or you will all get sent home to work in a M.U.L.E. factory. Here are the other changes:

Land Auction

In the Standard game, the store auctions land immediately after each Land Grant. The number of plots auctioned each turn averages 1, but can vary from 0 to 6. The plot to be auctioned will be displayed by a black flashing square. After all players press their A buttons, the auction begins. To bid, simply move your character up the screen above the minimum price shown. Your bid will change as you move just as it does in other auctions. When the timer runs out, the player with the highest bid (above the minimum) receives the plot. If no player moves above the minimum bid, the plot doesn't sell. The plot may be valued at $500 in figuring your net worth during the Summary no matter how much you pay in the Auction.

Selling Land

In the Standard game, you can sell your land. If it sells, you receive all the money paid for it. If your plot doesn't sell, it will not be auctioned again unless you offer it again.

To mark your land "For Sale," enter the land office without a M.U.L.E., and then go to the plot you wish to sell. When you are in the center of the plot, push your A button and return to the land office. To help you, the timer is turned off when you enter the

land office to mark a plot. Land marked "For Sale" will be offered in the Land Auction the next turn.

Selling land works differently than selling goods. When the Seller moves his control pad up and down to raise or lower the asking price, the price changes but the Seller doesn't move on the screen.

The Seller can change his asking price at any time. If he does this, if he moves the asking price either up or down, the Buyer's bid is automatically rejected, and he has to move above the asking price again. When time runs out the Buyer who is highest, and above the asking price, gets to buy the land. There is no maximum price.

Development

In the Standard game the price of M.U.L.E.s varies from turn to turn depending on the number of M.U.L.E.s available and the number of undeveloped plots owned by players.

Each game starts with 16 M.U.L.E.s in the corral. When these are gone, they can only be replaced in one way: by building more from Smithore. It takes two units of Smithore to build a M.U.L.E., and only the store knows how. Because of the difficulty, it takes the Store an entire turn to build a M.U.L.E. from the Smithore it buys. Need-

less to say the prices of M.U.L.E.s and Smithore skyrocket when the colony begins to run short of M.U.L.E.s.

Another change in the Standard game: the M.U.L.E. will run away when you try to install him on your land, unless your character is directly over the house when you push your A button. Pressing the A button at any place, other than your plot, will also cause the M.U.L.E. to run away.

Auction

Two changes have been made to the Auction phase. First, you can use your own judgement and sell products below your "Critical Level" if you think it is wise.

Second, when the store has no more units, the selling price for a unit of any product may go as high as Buyers are willing to bid. In other words, if one player really wants something, you can make him pay for it. Because the screen is only so big, it may look as if the buyer isn't moving, when his bid price is actually rising fast; so watch the bid price. So long as the seller does not move down from the top of the screen, no transactions are made, no matter how high the bid goes.

This allows shrewd players to take advantage of their friends.

One odd visual effect occurs if one player is bidding very high while other players stop raising their bids: the bidder doesn't seem to move anywhere and the non-bidders seem to be going backwards. The reason: it's all relative. The non-bidders last bid doesn't change, only their relative positions on the screen.

Tips of the Standard Game

•Conserve cash for the Land Auction. Land is very valuable. You should be greedy for land. Make the other players pay dearly for it.
•During each player's turn, there is a 25% chance of a random event, and there are 21 different events. The losing player will never receive a bad luck event, and the winning player never gets lucky.
•In the Standard game, the production on each plot varies from turn to turn. Base Production is only the average production, and it varies from 0 to 8 units even if the M.U.L.E. has enough Energy. You might want to save a little extra Food and Energy as "safety stock" just in case you hit a streak of bad luck.
•Random events may also come up just before the Production phase. There are 8 different types. Most affect all players, but a few only affect individuals. Watch out for the Pirate, he plunders everyone's Smithore. (In the Tournament game, he plunders Crystite, explained later.)
•The Standard game invites player interaction. Diplomatic and persuasive skills are often more important than knowledge. This is like life in the rest of the galaxy.

•Don't be afraid of losing a M.U.L.E. or two–especially if you have been hoarding Smithore. Remember: your opponents can't develop their land without M.U.L.E.s. And after all, it only hurts them if they're ahead of you (and their turn comes after yours). All you have to do is get a M.U.L.E. from the corral, outfit him for Food, leave the town, and press your A button. That M.U.L.E. will disappear faster than you can say "which way did he go?"
•Speaking of "cutthroat" play, an occasional cutthroat maneuver may put you well out of reach of other players. For example, if you have food and the others don't, try buying out the store instead of selling surplus. This may keep a close challenger from catching you, and next turn you may have a monopoly.

Tournament Game

The Tournament Game adds two new concepts to M.U.L.E. - Crystite and Collusion. These two small changes turn it into a game that's almost entirely new.

Crystite

Crystite, which is found underground, is the fourth product available for discovery and development. Crystite varies with underground contours, rather than terrain type like other products.

In each game, there are always 3 plots which each have base production of 2 and 1. Crystite cannot be mined in the river valley, because the boggy land makes mining impossible.

There are two ways to discover Crystite. You can install a Crystite M.U.L.E. on your plot, and hope you have made a good guess, or you can take an "assay" first.

To do this, enter the assay office in town, then visit the plot you wish to check. When you are in the center of the plot, press your A button to obtain a soil sample. When you take the sample back to the assay office, it will report Low (1), Medium (2), High (3), or No (0) Crystite deposits on the plot.

You may take soil samples on any plot on the map, even those that no one owns yet. However, it might be tough to find the center of a plot that isn't owned, because you won't be able to see the shape of the plot. Keep trying. You'll get it sooner or later.

Collusion

You agree to Collude in a private trade so the leading player can't buy your Food.

Collusion is a powerful technique that allows players to make private deals. When

collusion is in effect in an Auction, only the players involved can trade and others are shut out. Although the basic approach is the same, Collusion works differently in Product Auctions than in Land Auctions.

To start a Collusion during a Product Auction, two or more players push their A buttons at exactly the same time. (To make sure that the timing is perfect, you may even have one person push BOTH the A buttons.) This starts a special Collusion timer, changes the color of the screen to pink, and causes the other players and the Store to fade into the background. Until time runs out, the players involved can concentrate on working out a deal between themselves. The game returns to regular auction after collusion is over.

Collusion works differently in the Land Auction. The Seller gets to set the price and select the Buyer. No prearranged signal or special timing is necessary. Here's how it's done:

First, the Seller pushes his or her A button to begin the Collusion timer. The Buyer on the left will be highlighted and the others will fade into the background. That Buyer is the only one who can make a bid on your land. To select another Buyer, simply push your A button to select the next one on the right. Whoever you select can move his bid up or down, while you, at the same time, raise or lower your price. (Notice that the house does not move on the screen, but the price changes nevertheless.) As soon as the Buyer meets your price, he or she gets the land. If Collusion time runs

out before anyone meets your asking price, the game returns to normal Auction. Don't forget: if the Buyer you select isn't going to meet your price, you can always shut him off and "activate" another Buyer.

Tips on the Tournament Game

•The Tournament game starts with just enough resources to keep the Colony alive for one turn. You also get less time during the Development phase to place M.U.L.E.s on your plots. A good way to offset these changes is to be self-sufficient during the beginning of the game. Try to get one to the River plots for Food, and occasionally take an Energy plot next to the Food plot you've made. These two plots will probably keep you going for 3-5 turns of the game.
•Crystite prices vary from $50 to $150 per unit, but are not affected by supply and demand on the planet. The way to make a killing on Crystite is to buy it cheap and sell it when it gets to its highest peak.
•In the early stages of the game, look for Crystite by assaying plots if you have extra time. You should look for Crystite in preference over hunting Wampuses. The best way to earn enough cash to stay flexible is by speculating on Crystite. If you can find and obtain the richest Crystite plots, you will be well ahead toward winning the game.
•Speaking of Crystite, it is better to group lots together around a low or medium producing plot than to go for the plot with high concentration. By taking advantage of "the learning curve," and "economies of scale" you can produce much more Crystite than by going for the high concentrations and scattering your land holdings.
•Don't be shy about transferring and re-outfitting M.U.L.E.s particularly toward the end

of the game. Victory can often be pulled out during the last 1-3 turns by swiftly converting all your plots to the product selling at the highest price (usually Crystite). Build up a surplus of Food and Energy (particularly Energy) for the last turns, then go for it!

•Trade Land by using Collusion! If you can talk one of the other players into trading a plot you need, work a private deal through Collusion. If you are skillful at negotiation, you should be able to make deals that are good for both of you. For example, you can greatly enhance your standing just by getting a key plot (particularly a plot which connects several other plots you already own).

•The Pirate Ship is very dangerous in the Tournament game. No more than 2 Pirate Ships ever arrive during a game. If, for example, no Pirate ship has arrived, it is turn 9, and you have 50 units of Crystite in storage, SELL!

•Watch for the "Fire in Store" special event. When it happens, the price of products will increase, particularly Smithore if M.U.L.E.s are scarce.

•The Nintendo player(s) in the Tournament game receive an extra $200 to offset your superior play. Try playing the Humanoid (advanced) character against the Nintendo. You will be hard pressed to beat him!

Food determines the amount of time you have during Development. Average production for food in the River Valley is 4, in the Flatlands 2, and in the Mountains 1. Food Prices ranges from $15 to $250. The outfitting cost for a food producing M.U.L.E. is $25.

Energy is used in the production of all products except Energy itself. The amount you need is based on the number of non-energy plots with M.U.L.E.s plus 1. Average production of Energy in Flatlands is 3, in the River Valley is 2, and in Mountains 1. Energy prices range from $10 to $250. The outfitting cost for an energy producing M.U.L.E. is $50.

Smithhore is used in the production of M.U.L.E.s in the Standard and Tournament games. The store will produce 1 M.U.L.E. for every 2 Smithore units it buys from players. Average production of Smithore in the Flatlands is 1, in the River Valley is 0 (you may not mine Crystite or Smithore in the River Valley) , and in the Mountains 1 plus the number of mountain symbols in your plot (1 to 3 mountain symbols). In the Beginner's game, Smithore has a fixed price of $50. In other games, Smithore prices range from $25 to $250. The outfitting cost for a Smithore producing M.U.L.E. is $75.

Crystite can only be found when playing the Tournament game. All Crystite found is shipped off planet. Please refer to the Tournament games instructions for the locations of Crystite. Crystite prices range from $50 to $150. The outfitting cost for a Crystite producing M.U.L.E. is $100.



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COMPLIANCE WITH FCC REGULATIONS

This equipment generates and uses radio frequency energy and if not installed and used properly, that is, in strict accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, may cause interference to radio and television reception. It has been type tested and found to comply with the limits for a Class B computing device in accordance with the specifications in Subpart J of Part 15 of FCC Rules, which are designed to provide reasonable protection against such interference in a residential installation. However, there is no guarantee that interference will not occur in a particular installation. If this equipment does cause interference to radio or television reception, which can be determined by turning the equipment off and on, the user is encouraged to try to correct the interference by one or more of the following measures:

–Reorient the receiving antenna
–Relocate the NES with respect to the receiver
–Move the NES away from the receiver
–Plug the NES into a different outlet so that computer and receiver are on different circuits

If necessary, the user should consult the dealer or an experienced radio/television technician for additional suggestions. The user may find the following booklet prepared by the Federal Communications Commission helpful:

How to Identify and Resolve Radio-TV Interference Problems
This booklet is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, Stock No. 004-000-00345-4