

Ammonia joining list of materials that are heading upward in cost . . . Soil conditioner production in first year, 2,833,000 pounds

ADVANCING COSTS for basic materials entering fertilizer and pesticide compounds continue a major item of consideration as the 1952-53 season draws to a close. In addition to upturns in sulfuric acid (AG. & Food, May 27, page 417), higher quotations have been announced for Du Pont's Uramon, and for the commercial grade of anhydrous ammonia. According to trade reports one large manufacturer has advanced superphosphate prices for the new season. The advance amounts to 5 cents per unit or \$1 per ton, and is believed to reflect higher costs, particularly in sulfuric acid.

At this writing no action has been taken on prices for fertilizer grade anhydrous ammonia, although some in the trade would not be surprised if this basic nitrogen product is compelled to join in the upward movement. Urmon, a fertilizer compound containing 42% urea nitrogen, was advanced \$5 to \$5.50 per ton to a tank car level of \$128.00 per ton of nitrogen, effective July 1.

Trade reports indicate that unsettlement has crept into the entire nitrogen materials market. The market for coke oven ammonium sulfate has been upset by large imports at low prices, and domestic sellers refrained from writing contracts in sulfate during the period of price control, for one reason or the other. Producers may be willing to write contracts again for the new season beginning July 1.

New Plant Capacity Under Way in Sulfuric

Sulfuric acid plant capacity in this country leads that of any other nation (13,372,000 tons in 1951), but it evidently is not yet sufficient to meet agricultural and industrial demand. Allied Chemical's General Chemical Division, to mention one leading producer, has announced plans for a new contact plant in addition to the one now under construction at Baton Rouge. The latest project will be placed in Painesville, Ohio.

Apart from what others may be planning, the two new General Chemical facilities will bring the number of sulfuric acid plants in the country to 221. Ohio, Georgia, and Illinois will lead the

nation in production with 16 plants each when the Painesville project is completed. If fully utilized, the country's sulfuric plants are probably capable of an annual output of 13.5 to 14 million tons, if spent acid for fortification is included.

There is a more balanced distribution of sulfuric plants geographically than is true of some other chemicals. California has nine, for example, three of which are operated by General Chemical; four by Stauffer, one by Monsanto, and one by American Smelting & Refining. Florida has 13 sulfuric units to meet the needs of phosphate fertilizer processes.

First Data Issued On Soil Conditioners

Production of soil conditioners, presumably the new polyelectrolytes for the most part, totaled 2,833,000 pounds in the past year, according to the report on organic chemicals for 1952 issued by the Tariff Commission. This is the initial government report on these products, and the total probably is not as large as might be expected. Last year was the first, however, in which manufacturers were able to offer the chemical conditioners on a commercial basis.

Of the 2,833,000 pounds of soil conditioners made, manufacturers sold 1,485,000 pounds and the value of these sales was \$1,078,000. The unit sales value was 72 cents per pound.

The Tariff Commission summary reveals the effects of last year's drought on insecticide production. The total output of cyclic insecticides in 1952 was 251,730,000 pounds, compared with 315,667,000 pounds in 1951, or about 20% less.

Acyclic insecticides, in which tetraethyl pyrophosphate dominates, were turned out to the extent of 2,027,000 pounds, against 3,095,000 pounds in the year before. The output of TEPP was only 922,000 pounds contrasted with 1,870,000 in 1952.

Continental Can's Quarter Sales Up 16%, Profits Up 45%

Sales and net earnings after income taxes of Continental Can Co. in the quarter ended March 31 were at record

levels for the quarter, shareholders were told at the annual meeting.

Earnings after income taxes were equivalent to 67 cents per common share on 3,304,602 shares compared with 50 cents per share earned for the March quarter last year on 3,165,067 shares.

Net sales of \$107,977,816 for the quarter were 16% higher than those for the initial quarter last year, when they totalled \$93,104,982. Physical volume was up approximately 12.5%.

Earnings of \$5,070,670 before income taxes compared with \$3,496,522 earned in the March quarter last year—an increase of 45%. After income taxes of \$2,593,224, net earnings of \$2,477,446 compared with \$1,850,447 for the similar period in 1952.

Normally the first and last quarters of the year are the least active for the company, it was indicated. Combined, they usually account for less than one-third of the annual profits.

The new fiber drum plant at Pittsburg, Calif., will commence production late in May and a new Canadian can plant at Vancouver, B. C., will be in operation this fall.

Other steps for broadening the base of the company's operations include the recent acquisition of the Betner Bag Co. and the purchase of Perga Containers, Ltd., of Hamilton, Canada. The principal item of production at Perga is a paper milk bottle which has a good market among Canadian dairies.

U. S. Rubber's Profit Up 14.5% in 1st Quarter

Net profit of United States Rubber Co. for the first three months of 1953 was \$7,156,608, an increase of 14.5% over profit of \$6,247,733 for the same period last year, according to a report to stockholders.

This is equivalent to \$1.10 a share of common stock, compared with 94 cents in 1952, after providing for preferred dividends. Profit for the quarter was 3.2% of sales, compared with 2.8% last year.

Net sales for the first quarter set a new record of \$226,933,883. In the same period in 1952, sales were \$220,518,963. The previous high was \$222,972,353, in the second quarter of last year.

The report listed \$18,950,976 for federal and foreign income taxes and renegotiation of defense business for the quarter; last year the figure was \$19,142,704.