

# Ag and Food NEWSLETTER

## Urab Herbicide

ALLIED CHEMICAL'S General Chemical Division has publicly unveiled its phenyldimethylurea herbicide with the tradename Urab. Under research wraps for several seasons and referred to as PDU and Compound 2049, it is expected to be available in commercial quantities soon. Experimental work with two pounds of Urab an acre gave 95% control of broadleaf weeds and 100% control of grassy weeds with only "slight to moderate effects" on cotton, soybeans, corn, and wheat, when applied after crop planting. Eight to 16 pounds an acre gave complete control of weeds and crop plants, indicating that Urab has good potential for use in areas such as railroad and highway right-of-ways, where complete eradication of vegetation is desired.

## Phosphate Freight Rates Down

RAIL SHIPPING RATES on dicalcium phosphate feed supplement have been lowered, placing the supplements within reach of western feeders, who previously could not consider them. New rail schedules have been approved by the ICC and will become effective Aug. 15 for points in the western trunk line territory, roughly the area between the Mississippi and the Rockies, north of St. Louis. Similar rate decreases for transcontinental shipments went into effect on July 25. The freight reductions range up to 40%, averaging about \$14 per ton. Monsanto tells us that since it entered the market last year with two feed grades of dicalcium phosphate, one containing 21% and the other 18% phosphorus. The 21% grade has gradually stolen the market since savings realized on shipping costs, storage space, and the inherently better handling qualities of the higher grade material gave a smaller per unit cost of phosphorus in the finished product.

## Cannery Walkout in California

CANNERY WORKERS IN CALIFORNIA walked out on July 28 just as 2 million tons of California fruits and vegetables were being readied for market and with most of the harvest scheduled for processing. About 90 to 95% of the state's canneries, 68 in all, were closed. Management and union have been negotiating since March, when contracts ran out. We hear that two sides were within 3.5 cents in hourly rate adjustment demands, but health and welfare funds were the bigger obstacles to agreement. Should strike continue for two weeks, \$60 million in fruits and vegetables will be lost.

## Farm Machinery Down

FARM EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS are concerned about the fall-off in sales of farm machinery and harvesting equipment. Decline is attributed to the 5% drop in farm income for the first half of the current year. International Harvester with sales last year of \$1.2 billion is curtailing operations at a number of its plants, and other manufacturers are following suit. A somewhat pessimistic dealer in drought-stricken Texas observed: "A farmer sitting on his front porch watching his crops burn is not very enthusiastic about buying new equipment."

## Food Protection Policy

FIRST FOOD PROTECTION policies ever drawn up jointly by food industry and public health officials on a national basis came out of three-day organizational meeting of National Conference on Food Protection. Meeting was sponsored by National Restaurant Association and public health officials under auspices of National Sanitation Foundation. As a starting point, attendants at Ann Arbor, Mich., meeting declared its aim would be "the development and promotion of agreed principles for the protection of health and the coordination of the efforts in industry, health agencies, and the public in the betterment of food services and environmental conditions surrounding such services in the home, the public and private eating place, and throughout the community." Committees on education, research, ordinance and code, and preparation of an interpretive reference manual were established and will report at next meeting in November.

## Bugs vs. Insects

LADYBUGS are being imported into Texas to combat the bollworms in the west Texas cotton fields. The Greenbug Control Co. of Oroville, Calif., is flying about 21 million of the ladybugs into Texas to eat bollworm eggs. The Greenbug Co. claims that ladybugs are more effective than any sprays used thus far to combat aphids, red spiders, thrips, and other farm and garden pests. The going rate on ladybugs—about \$3.50 for 30,000 or \$12 per gallon. The bugs are being shipped into afflicted areas by airlift, to avoid hot weather delays. However, one large shipment was made successfully by refrigerated rail car.

## Mushroom Airlift

FRESH MUSHROOMS are being flown from Bavaria to Michigan State College. Reason for the airlift—Eugene Lucas, professor of horticulture at MSC, has been collaborating with the Sloan-Kettering Institute for several years on the extraction from the mushrooms of a substance active against tumors in experimental animals. Until now all work has been done with the dried material and, although the active principle of the fungus has been isolated it is not as yet identified. Dr. Lucas hopes to propagate the fungi in submerged or surface cultures to acquire larger quantities of the material. The Air Force is cooperating in shipping the mushrooms. The first shipment arrived in the U.S. only 24 hours after being picked in Germany.