

Ag and Food NEWSLETTER

Industry Views ARA Reorganization

SPOKESMEN FOR THE FERTILIZER AND AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS industries, viewing the reorganization plans for the research arm of USDA (see page 975), see implications for their own fields somewhat differently. AG AND FOOD talked to National Agricultural Chemicals Association and the National Fertilizer Association about it. NAC hopes that when USDA announces complete details, a division on crop protection will be included in the new organization. Lea S. Hitchner, NAC executive secretary, says research on pest problems needs to be expanded and centralized to get the most from research and control programs, both of which can contribute greatly and immediately to reducing farm costs during this critical period for the farmers.

USDA's already announced plan for including soil management, production economics, and other activities in a single division is desirable, says W. R. Allstetter, vice president of the NFA. He points out that recommendations on fertilizer use must take both cultural and economic factors into consideration, which the fertilizer industry feels the new division can accomplish.

New Look at Farm Policy

CRITICISM HEAPED on Secretary of Agriculture Benson in recent weeks seems to be forcing the Administration to make some statement on a "farm program." Benson will probably retreat from his previous position that government "farm programs" are not necessary for a prosperous agricultural economy. Guarantees of an extension of high farm price supports will undoubtedly figure prominently in this reappraisal. Meanwhile this year's crops of corn, wheat, and cotton are moving into price support storage almost as rapidly as harvested. Outlay for support of these commodities alone may reach \$2.5 billion.

Ammonia Booms in Southwest

A 100-FOLD INCREASE in use of anhydrous ammonia this spring over 1950 is reported by an industry spokesman in Texas. The trend is reported to be general throughout the Southwest, where demand is in great excess of supply. Crop applications include cotton, corn, rice, and specialty items. Along the Rio Grande demand is high for ammonia on citrus and grains. A sizeable number of farmers started to use ammonia as a result of the publicity attached to it. Many who had never used fertilizer before have apparently been sold, at least on ammonia.

Cotton Confused in California

COTTON GROWERS IN CALIFORNIA, facing a \$165 million income drop if they vote to support cotton acreage controls Dec. 15, are pinning their hopes on Congress to increase minimum acreage allotments (see AG AND FOOD, Sept. 30, page 905). If the growers confirm acreage allotments and Congress fails to change cotton marketing quotas, 700,000 acres of cotton land in California will have to be diverted to other uses. Although growers have few plans as yet for shifting to other crops it seems unlikely that many acres will be idle. County agents say it is too early to predict effects on fertilizer and pesticide markets. Seems probable that if acreage controls are approved, farmers will use higher per acre fertilizer applications to get greatest possible yields from their limited cotton acreage.

Salmon Industry Gets the Squeeze

A COMBINATION OF "CROP FAILURE," rising production costs, and a decline in domestic market has the Alaskan salmon industry in such a three-way squeeze that 25 to 50% of the employees in the fishing area face unemployment by next year. Spokesmen for the industry say that the 1953 season was "disastrous" and the outlook for 1954 shows no improvement. Approximately 80 to 85% of U.S. domestic salmon is processed in the Alaskan area. Reasons for the crisis—production costs have soared in the face of a market decline. Great Britain recently cancelled a \$6 million contract to buy British Columbia's salmon pack. As a result Canadian salmon are being offered in the already strained U. S. market. Representatives of the industry have called on the Federal Government for aid to threatened fishermen and their families.

Mexican Limes in Texas Concentrates

ORANGE CONCENTRATE PRODUCERS in the lower Rio Grande Valley were stopped cold a few years ago by a big freeze which killed millions of citrus trees. At least one producer has "thawed out" production difficulties with an international twist by changing over to lime concentrate. The extract from Mexican limes juiced south of the border is shipped to Texas for processing. Although his plant was built originally to make orange concentrate, the processor says he expects to make the lime juice concentration a year-round operation because he can be assured of a steady supply from south of the border.