

# Ag and Food NEWSLETTER

## **Ammonia Still Booming**

A GENERALLY OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK for agricultural ammonia in the West is reflected in new production plants now coming on stream, and general discussion of plans for further expansion. Shell Chemical's 150-ton-per-day anhydrous plant at Ventura, Calif., comes on stream early this month, and Brea Chemical's 200-ton-per-day plant is expected to be in operation by mid-'54. CalSpray is reported to be exploring the possibility of a plant in the Fresno, Calif., area, the middle of the western cotton belt. CalSpray's plant will probably not produce ammonia for direct use, but rather complex fertilizers.

## **Dalapon Promising**

ENCOURAGING TEST RESULTS from agricultural experiment stations have been reported for Dalapon, new Dow herbicide (AG AND FOOD, Aug. 19). Dow does not plan to make the material available to farmers before next year; however, industrial users are already being supplied, and right-of-way grass control is expected to consume sizable quantities this year and next. Present evidence from the experiment stations indicates promise for Dalapon on some crops; alfalfa, for example, appears quite tolerant toward the herbicide. Corn, cotton, and other grassy crops seem to tolerate fair amounts, after they have attained considerable growth, but further research testing seems in order here.

## **Nutritional Factor Isolated**

ISOLATION AND IDENTIFICATION of the *Aspergillus niger*, AN factor, was announced by a research group from Sharp & Dohme at the recent symposium on B vitamins in Austin, Tex. The growth factor identified as biotin *l*-sulfoxide, was isolated by a complicated fractionation procedure from 20,000 liters of *Aspergillus niger* filtrate. According to L. D. Wright of Sharp & Dohme, the AN factor is a normal intermediate in the biosynthesis of biotin or biosytin.

## **Wheat Exports**

WORLD WHEAT EXPORTS FOR 1953-54 from the principal wheat producing nations will probably be off about 10%, according to the USDA. Shipments from the U. S. will probably be quite substantially below the 317 million bushels sold in 1952-53. Elsewhere international trade in grain is becoming an increasingly important political issue between the U. S. and Canada. The Tariff Commission has already recommended import quotas on Canadian oats, and pressure seems to be building up to restrict other products from over the border. Imports quotas could create serious economic problems for Canada.

## **Can Strike**

THE STRIKE OF THE CIO steelworkers has brought the production of tin cans to a virtual standstill throughout the nation. The strike against Continental Can and American Can is not expected to have any immediate widespread effect on the canning industry, all the seasonal packs having been completed this year except citrus crops. Citrus industry, however, will face a crisis if the strike continues for any length of time. Strike comes at peak of citrus canning season.

## **New Pyrethrins Analysis**

A CALOMETRIC ANALYSIS for pyrethrins, which gives a determination of activity in 75 minutes as opposed to present techniques which require about 2 days, was aired before the recent meeting of the Chemical Specialties Manufacturers' Association in Washington. The analytical method was presented by Luis W. Levy of the National Institute of Technology, Ecuador. The method has been extensively used in that Latin American country which is rapidly becoming a leading producer of this insecticide material.

## **Resins for Plant Study**

ION EXCHANGE RESINS as plant growth medium and a tool for studying ion replacement in plants were reported at the recent meeting of the Soil Science Society. Exchange resins saturated with the various plant nutrients and mixed with sand were used as medium for culture of tomato plants. Resins apparently increased the absorption of phosphorus; the introduction of chloride ions tended to reduce the availability of nitrogen.