

Ag and Food NEWSLETTER

Chlorthion

ANOTHER NEW ORGANIC PHOSPHATE INSECTICIDE from Germany, to be called Chlorthion, has a prime advantage of low mammalian toxicity. Developed by Gerhard Schrader at Farbenfabriken Bayer last year, the compound has an LD₅₀ (dosage required to kill 50% of experimental animals) of about 1500 mg. per kg. for rats, which means it would take 500 times as much of this material to kill a rat as it does with parathion, LD₅₀ 3 mg. per kg. Currently available only in research quantities through Robert Geary, Blue Point, Long Island, chlorthion may be manufactured commercially in the U. S. next year by Chemagro Corp. Compound may find some important use on cotton (it reportedly kills most cotton insects). Recent tests indicate it may also be effective when used orally to kill blowfly grubs in cows. Chlorthion differs structurally from parathion in being a dimethyl rather than a diethyl ester, and has a chlorine in the meta position on the benzene ring.

More Ammonia

THE TREND TOWARD MORE AMMONIA continues upward. Two weeks ago one plant —1184— went on stream in the West. Another is under construction and consideration of yet another new entry into the business was made public, AG AND FOOD, Dec. 9. Now from the Southwest another new entry is planned. A \$17 million plant to produce anhydrous ammonia at the rate of 180 tons per day is in the offing for the Chillicothe Chemical Manufacturing Co. About a half of the ammonia will be used for urea synthesis, giving 160 tons per day of this high nitrogen material. Rest of anhydrous ammonia will be made available as direct application material for farms in west Texas and Oklahoma.

Fertilizer for Mexican Cotton

EXPANSION OF MEXICAN COTTON ACREAGE has attractive aspects for some producers of fertilizers and agricultural chemicals. Increased outlets for fertilizers and pesticides are developing in the lower Imperial Valley, Mexico's cotton bowl. Ammonium sulfate exports to that area in 1954 are expected to be 2 to 4 times the tonnage of 1953, a record year. Ammonia producers are watching this development. Aqueous ammonia can take advantage of bulk shipments, but it appears that other hurdles may have to be overcome before the anhydrous form reaches large-volume use. Mexico has developed a relatively mechanized form of cotton farming, compared to other foreign countries. This mechanization permits Mexico to take advantage of high volume U. S. fertilizer and insecticide techniques.

Foreign Cotton

LAST YEAR THE COMPETITIVE PRICE ADVANTAGE of U. S. export cotton was reversed, with the result that foreign sales were stimulated, U. S. exports declined. Anderson, Clayton & Co., leading world cotton merchandiser, reported that over-all volume sales were down about 6%, total sales of U. S. export cotton were down 22%, export sales of other cotton nations were up about 51%. Trends shaping up in the world cotton areas seem to indicate that a sharp reduction in acreage will occur in Egypt. Mexican acreage will probably continue to boom; Brazil also will emerge as a major cotton exporter. Brazilian coffee growers who suffered damage in frosts this July are expected to switch to cotton to recoup their losses.

Saskatchewan for Potash

THE POTASH CO. OF AMERICA has signed an agreement with the provincial government of Saskatchewan for prospecting rights to a large area near Princess Lake (100,000 acres, near Saskatoon). The exploration agreement also is reported to include a commitment on the part of PCA to spend several hundred thousand dollars on development and exploration facilities to be completed not later than 1956. The existence of potash in the area has been rather well known. However, big drawback to development of the Princess Lake region has been the great depth of the potash deposits, reportedly about 3000 feet underground, compared to the 1000 to 1500 feet in Carlsbad, N. M. Previously industry opinion has been that it would not be economically practical to exploit these deposits; perhaps PCA has a new angle. This is the first evidence of action which could eventually lead to commercial production. Coupled with recent reports of more expansion of mining facilities at Carlsbad, indications are that major potash producers are anticipating demand for potash to continue to increase.

Farm Policy and Politics

FARM POLICY WILL BE A MAJOR PROBLEM facing the returning Congressmen when they get back to Washington this January. The American Farm Bureau at its recent meeting in Chicago adopted a resolution favoring the flexible support system advocated by Allen B. Kline and also re-elected Kline president for another term. From other quarters, however, opposition to the flexible support program is shaping up. Many Congressmen from farm areas seem determined to get 90% parity rigid support program through this year for vote-getting possibilities back home in the fall. With Benson lined up against the rigid support system, looks like the Administration may face difficulties on that aspect of its announced legislative program.