

Ag and Food NEWSLETTER

Cyanamid Shake-up

THE RECENT REORGANIZATION of Cyanamid's divisions will have an impact on the company's widespread agricultural operations. The Agricultural Chemicals Division will remain intact and continue production of fertilizers and pesticides. Lederle Division continues to produce veterinary products, but its animal feed products are now shifted to the Fine Chemicals Division. The new Fine Chemicals Division will also operate the antibiotics plant recently purchased from Heyden Chemical at Princeton, N. J. Fine Chemicals Division will also handle bulk sales of antibiotics and pharmaceuticals, including products previously sold by Calco Chemical Division of Cyanamid. The latter has been abolished. The new division will also operate the Cyanamid plant near New Orleans, which will produce a variety of products including anhydrous ammonia and ammonium sulfate.

Hawaii Ammonia Market

BREA CHEMICALS, soon to become the West Coast's second largest ammonia producer when its new plant goes on stream at mid-year, is already making a bid for Hawaii's 18,000 ton per year nitrogen market. First lot went to Honolulu in November, another to Hilo at year's end. Brea, noting that aqueous ammonia is the cheapest nitrogen source for island growers, expects to take a part of the market now held by urea and ammonium sulfate. Solid forms are still preferred in some cases, spray application being preferred in hilly areas, for instance.

Strict Liability And Crop Dusting

THE QUESTION OF STRICT liability as applied to farmers and the pilots they employ for crop dusting will be argued before the California Supreme Court this year. The decision in this case could be far-reaching. Previous decisions in other states have ruled on crop dusting damage cases, but all these have involved some degree of negligence. The case in California is believed to be the first in which negligence is not involved. California Supreme Court has previously set precedent in applying the strict liability concept in cases involving damage from blasting, fumigating, and oil well drilling. One immediate result of strict interpretation would be boost in liability insurance rates for crop dusting. The current issue of the *Stanford Law Review*—Vol. 6, No. 1, Dec. 1953—advocates strict liability principle for crop dusting.

Farmer's 1953 Share

THE FARMER'S SHARE of the consumer's food dollar in 1953 averaged about 45 cents. According to preliminary estimates, this is about 2 cents less than in 1952, and the lowest share for the farmer since 1941, but still considerably more than in most of the pre-WW II years. Farmer's share varies from 14 to 15 cents on bakery and canned goods, to 65 to 70 cents on meats and other animal products. Meat products share explains fact that retail prices on these items fluctuate percentage-wise about same as farm commodity prices, although usually with a time lag.

Green Trends

ON THE CHICAGO GRAIN MARKET, 1953 receipts were slightly below 52, with total less than 200 million bushels, 30 million short of 1952 mark. Futures trading was up—soybeans and major grains totaled 12,600 million bushels, a 1,500 million bushel rise. Soybean meal contracts increased 200% to 1.2 million tons.

Next Year

IN CALIFORNIA 1954 farm cash income will be down 7.5%, from 1953, to \$2.5 billion, according to predictions by Pacific Gas and Electric. Also foreseen: Santa Clara Valley—income from major crops including prunes, apricots, pears, and strawberries to top 1953; Salinas Valley—generally no change except for some shifting from irrigated pasture to row crops such as beans and beets; Sacramento Valley—rice and safflower increases expected; San Joaquin Valley—major problem will be crop shifts because of cotton cuts, with permanent pasture, alfalfa rice, sugar beets, vegetables, and barley taking up some slack. Equipment-wise PG&E says big 1954 item may be irrigation sprinklers. They point out some 2 million acres in California suitable for sprinkler irrigation.