

Ag and Food NEWSLETTER

Nitrogen Increase

THE NEW ODM NITROGEN CAPACITY GOAL, 3,500,000 tons by Jan. 1, 1957, may not mean as much actual new capacity as indicated on the surface. Recent unofficial Department of Commerce estimates of domestic nitrogen production predicted 3,227,000 tons by 1955-56. If these figures are dependable, the new goal can be achieved with 273,000 tons of new capacity, not the 570,000 tons representing the difference between the 1955 and 1957 goals. Amortization benefits should then be needed for only 273,000 tons. In line with USDA recommendations, it is rumored that geographic preference may be a factor in awarding new certificates.

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RECENT HEARINGS IN WASHINGTON and the Southwest on the controversial topic of herbicides and regulation of their application seems to indicate that in states of Washington and Texas the principle of local permits will be followed. The commissioner of agriculture must approve use of herbicide in each county. However, herbicide question in the irrigated and mixed agricultural areas is still a hot topic and seems certain that new regulatory action can be expected in the near future.

Future for Endrin

SHELL CHEMICAL'S NEWEST INSECTICIDE seems headed for the big-time. Approved earlier for control of cotton bollworm, endrin now has been okayed for control of tobacco insects and the boll weevil. USDA says it is best all-purpose insecticide tested thus far for cotton. Approval for tobacco is result of two years of field tests by major tobacco companies, who report that endrin has no effect on tobacco flavor, cause for disapproval of previous insecticides. According to tests reported at recent meeting of the American Society of Sugar Beet Technologists in Denver, endrin provided excellent control of sugar beet webworm. Approval for use against this pest by the USDA is expected in the near future.

Mexican Fruit Fly

THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE FIRST MEXICAN FRUIT FLY ever observed within several hundred miles of the California border has resulted in an organized search to determine if infestation actually exists. The single specimen, an infertile female, was found two miles south of San Diego County. The county agricultural department has established 300 traps on California side of the Mexican border and the state bureau of entomology is surveying the situation. The flies enter the southern Texas citrus area each summer and generally infest the orange and grapefruit groves of the Rio Grande Valley; however, hot weather at end of growing seasons destroys them and prevents their becoming a serious problem. In California continuous growing season could provide a succession of host plants, and control would be far more difficult. USDA says Mexican fruit fly infests apples, apricots, peaches, pears, tomatoes, and all deciduous fruits in addition to citrus.

Rice Disease Control

THE ANSWER TO RICE-RUINING WHITE TIP DISEASE, a seed borne nematode, may be Stauffer Chemical's new N-244. The University of Arkansas Experiment Station has achieved up to 99% control in field tests over the past few years. Yield gains have averaged 10 bushels an acre, roughly 20%, reaching a maximum of 28 bushels in some areas. The material, containing 31% 3-*p*-chlorophenyl-5-methyl rhodanine and 8.8% related compounds, is said to be easy to handle and nontoxic to rice plants.

Fungicide for Strawberries

CALSPRAY'S ORTHOCIDE (a formulation of Captan), which was offered to orchardists last year for fungus control, is now expected to give similar benefits to the nation's strawberry growers. The USDA has approved the fungicide for strawberries as a result of tests which indicate that no harmful residues remain following harvest of treated berries. The product not only gives protection during growing season against Botrytis Rot; it also prolongs transit storage life. Commercial growers in California report a 1% incidence of rot in treated berries, contrasted to 30% in treated berries stored for a period of time equal to transcontinental shipment.

Beet Sugar Quota

SUGAR BEET INDUSTRY, which last fall planned for acreage increases to give 2.25 million tons of sugar this year, has revised the planned expansion downward, to stay within quota limit of 1.8 million tons. However, industry still plans an expansion over 1953. California, with a quarter of the nation's sugar beet acreage, may increase to 200,000 acres this year, a 20% increase over 1953. Meanwhile domestic sugar producers, both beet and cane, are meeting in Washington, D. C., this month to discuss quota revisions. If cane asks for increase, beet sugar industry will do likewise. Any increase will mean a cut in imports from Cuba, hot political subject.