

# Ag and Food NEWSLETTER

## Herbicide Ban in Texas

USE OF 2,4-D HAS BEEN PROHIBITED in seven Texas counties. State Commissioner of Agriculture issued regulations following series of hearings on complaints by cotton farmers against hormone-type herbicides used in rice fields. Not all herbicides are outlawed, 2,4,5-T (2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid) can still be used, it is reported to be less damaging to cotton than 2,4-D. Aerial application is also prohibited in two Gulf Coast areas where rice and cotton farms are intermingled.

## Low Sodium Milk

SODIUM-FREE MILK is now being marketed in the Los Angeles area for patients with heart disease and high blood pressure. Product, from which 90% of sodium has been removed by ion exchange process, makes fresh milk available to many from whom it was barred. Low sodium milk is now processed by only one dairy; however, licensing arrangements are being worked out with other major companies. Price, 45 cents per quart, is about twice that of regular milk, but much less than powdered low sodium milk. About 10% of the patients in Los Angeles hospitals are on low sodium diets.

## Fat Use Down

NONFOOD USE OF FATS AND OILS in the U. S. has dropped to the lowest level in 15 years, according to figures recently released by the USDA. Agricultural Marketing Service expects the downward trend to continue through this year. Competition from other commodities were cited by the AMS as responsible for the decline. Decreasing markets for fats and oils in soap and drying oils reflect the increased competition from nonfat and synthetic product according to the report. The per capita use of nonfood fats last year was 21.1 pounds, a one-pound drop from 1952, and the 10th lowest per capita consumption since 1938.

## Dairy Situation

SECRETARY BENSON SAYS he expects butter to sell for about 60 cents per pound under the new flexible price support program which goes into effect April 1. The new program which lowers parity support on dairy products from 90 to 70% is part of the Secretary's announced intention to get the surpluses out of storage and into stomachs. The Secretary of Agriculture has also announced a promotion campaign to start April 1st to push consumption of dairy products. Dairy industry groups have pledged their cooperation in the promotion campaign. Benson says he believes that the President will veto any Congressional action aimed at the extension of rigid support program.

## Antibiotic Therapy For Bees

BEEES MAY BE GETTING DOSES OF ANTIBIOTIC to cure them of infections of Nosema disease. The disease, a protozoan infection has greatest effect on colonies started with package bees. Abbott Laboratories' Fumidil-B (bicyclohexyl ammonium fumagillin) has shown up well in preliminary tests. Most effective treatment so far is feeding of fumagillin-treated syrup to bee colonies. Increases of honey production from 25-30% have been reported following treatment.

## New Look for FDA

AN UP TO DATE REVISION of existing food and drug law is in the works. A bill incorporating the legislation of the past 70 years into a single law has been introduced in Congress by a subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee. A committee representative says that the bill H.R. 8221 is not intended to make any changes in the existing statutes, but is aimed at simplifying the obsolete provisions and making a section revision of the existing law. Congressman McCulloch, chairman of the subcommittee, says that the legislation is noncontroversial and plans to hold no public hearings, but has invited comments from interested groups.

## Forward With Research Progress

TREND TOWARD PREPARED MIXES for biscuits, and cakes, has now reached south of the border with development of a tortilla flour mix. It is supposed to simplify and improve methods of making enchiladas, corn chips, and tamales, as well as tortillas. From England a new weed eradication technique: the British electrical and allied industries research association reports that portable electrical packs have been developed for electrocuting weeds. Weeds are killed by touching them with a charged probe. British are now studying economics of the process. A chemist in Washington, D. C., has a program to solve the wheat surplus; he plans to make wallboard of puffed wheat.