

Ag and Food NEWSLETTER

Smog Damage

SMOG DAMAGE TO PLANTS can be prevented by application of smog neutralizers to the plant surface. Plant pathologists from Riverside, Calif., report that sprays and dusts of dithiocarbamate fungicides prevent smog damage to plants. Plant researchers are also investigating the use of antioxidants to prevent smog damage. Lab tests with fungicides are expected to lead to field tests to determine effective length of time and most effective dosages. For more on smog see (page 910).

Ammonium Nitrate in Alaska

AN AMMONIUM NITRATE PLANT could be constructed and operated economically in Southeastern Alaska or the Kenai peninsula according to the Alaskan Development Board. At a recent meeting, in Juneau, federal and territorial officials discussed possibilities and concluded that sufficient low cost hydroelectric power is already available. Plant, if constructed, would parallel development in Iceland where hydroelectric power has made nitrate production possible for domestic consumption and export. Alaskan market for nitrate fertilizers has not been outstanding. High shipping costs have made price of fertilizer almost prohibitive in the territory. Consumption of ammonium nitrate was 152 tons in 1952-53, up 11 tons from 1951-52; total nitrogen consumption in Alaska last year was about 170 tons.

Insects Threaten Soybeans

SOYBEANS, LONG CONSIDERED FREE FROM INSECT THREATS, have suddenly fallen prey to green clover worm. Reports from Illinois indicate that this pest, occasionally troublesome on red clover, is unusually abundant just now and is seriously damaging many soybean fields. Serious damage may appear unexpectedly; farmers in one area reported one third to one half of foliage gone in fields which had shown no evidence of trouble three days before. Because problem is new, fully proved control measures are not available. However, preliminary tests indicate that DDT, toxaphene, and aldrin will give control.

Grasshopper Control Program Short

FOUR-MILLION-ACRE GRASSHOPPER CONTROL PROGRAM, called for in Eastern Rockies area early this year, did not prove as large as expected. The cooperative grasshopper control program for rangeland is based on federal and local financial support. Ranchers and/or county agencies contribute two thirds of funds, Federal Government pays one third. Partially because of drought, ranchers in a number of areas did not contribute their share; as a result there was less control work than desirable. This year's program has just about been completed with a total of about 825,000 acres treated.

Cotton Leads Exports

COTTON WAS THE BIG FACTOR in U. S. farm exports reaching nearly \$3 billion during the past fiscal year. USDA's report on foreign markets shows this total 4% higher than the previous year, primarily as a result of a large gain in cotton exports during the first six months of this year. The report says cotton exports reached 452,000 bales in June 1954 as compared with 232,000 bales the previous year. Whole foreign market curve took an upswing in June over last year's totals. Over-all exports were 36% higher, highlighted by a 90% gain in wheat. Other crops showing export gains include peanuts, cottonseed oil, and fats.

Diverted Acreage

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE has listed crops which will be included in its diverted acreage program. Farmers, to be eligible for price supports, must comply with allotments set up for wheat, corn, or any of the other basic crops. In addition, if more than 10 acres is diverted to other crops, total acreage allotment must be observed. Only a few items, such as hay and clover crops, will be exempt. Total allowances will be figured on 1953 production of nonbasic crops and 1955 basic crop allotments. Adjustments will be made in cases where the 1953 crops were not up to par because of drought or other disasters.

Gulf Tuna

DEVELOPMENT OF A TUNA FISHING INDUSTRY is being discussed by Gulf coast fishermen. Tentative plans include promotion of a cannery to be located at Port Isabel, Tex. Good catches of yellowfin tuna in Gulf of Mexico were reported recently by U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Fish averaging about 100 pounds have been caught on survey fishing cruises this summer. Current slump of shrimp market may add impetus to tuna fishing in the Gulf.