

Ag and Food NEWSLETTER

Radiation Sterilization Here?

FOOD AND DRUG has previously stated that radiation sterilization looked like a possibility for the future but it would not approve it for processing of food and drugs at present; Food and Drug may be bypassed in latest development. Bradley Container Corp. recently announced development of machine for filling polyethylene tubes to be used as containers for foods and pharmaceuticals. Tubes resemble the traditional "tooth paste" metal variety. High voltage particle accelerator can be incorporated in tube filling machine for radiation sterilization. Several pharmaceutical manufacturers are using process for test lots of radiation sterilized eye-wash solutions and ointments. FDA may be bypassed because these preparations are not ordinarily sterilized and may be outside its jurisdiction. Radiation sterilization may be nearer than previously believed.

National Plant Institute

RUMORED MERGER PLANS of the National Fertilizer Association and the American Plant Food Council have been confirmed by presidents of the two organizations. Proposed new organization to be made up of membership of the two organizations will be the American Plant Food Institute. Details of consolidation plan have been distributed to NFA members who will vote on it at the fall meeting in Hollywood Beach, Fla., Nov. 10 to 12. Board of directors of American Plant Food Council meet in Washington Oct. 28 to consider the plan.

Expansion of Nitrogen Storage

NEW EXPANSION GOAL for nitrogen storage facilities is not needed at this time, according to majority of Fertilizer Industry Advisory Committee which met with Commerce Department officials last week. Some storage facilities undoubtedly will be needed to meet expected higher production, but industry is building more storage areas itself without government tax amortization aid. Weight of committee's recommendation is still unknown, since Commerce has yet to pass on official report to Office of Defense Mobilization, which would set up the goal. The committee generally opposed reopening of nitrogen production goals last spring, but to no avail.

Organic Phosphate Poisonings

ACCIDENTAL POISONINGS with organic phosphates have caused concern on part of state officials in California. State bureau of chemistry recently reported on poisonings for the year; score—18 cases have been reported involving 4 deaths and illness of some 20 persons. State officials are particularly concerned over fact that in each case reported it was established that the product was properly labeled and labeled according to present requirements. Blame for illness and death is placed on complete disregard for precautionary measures outlined on labels, and lack of ordinary personal cleanliness. Officials fear that unless some method can be found to keep organic phosphates from irresponsible persons, value of the pesticides could be lost in more complicated legal restrictions on their use.

FDA Proposes Tolerances

TOLERANCES AND OPERATING PROCEDURE for establishing pesticide tolerances under the recent Miller Amendment were issued by the FDA recently. Lea S. Hitchner of National Agricultural Chemicals Association says the proposed regulations are a further step in the establishment of official tolerances for foods but emphasized that they are proposed tolerances and not final. Hitchner pointed out that the tolerances and crops listed by FDA are based on knowledge that was available from hearings conducted in 1950. Industry has 60 days to file objections to the FDA proposals, or it can accept the proposals and file for new tolerances later. (For more on the FDA proposals see page 1133.)

Phosphoric Acid In Midwest

SMALL SURPLUS OF PHOSPHORIC ACID in Midwest during past year or so has stimulated interest in developing agricultural outlets. Scattered, relatively small producers have been entering ammoniated solutions business since early 1954 and report good local reception to date. At least one anhydrous ammonia contractor is experimenting with simultaneous application. Cost is important, and here complete analysis solutions have a distinct edge over acid for direct application. Nearly all acid offered is a crude electric furnace product.

French New Deal

FRENCH ECONOMIC REFORMS being initiated by Premier Mendes-France include important realignments in agricultural planning. Production of industrial alcohol from sugar beet is being reduced. Sugar beet acreage is being made available for oilseeds and corn production. Also proposed: elimination of 15% of existing vineyards in view of persistent over-production of wine.