

Ag and Food NEWSLETTER

Pesticide Fertilizer Problem

INCREASING POPULARITY of pelletized fertilizers and insecticide fertilizer mixtures adds interest to recent findings that stratification of aldrin granules in such mixtures is a distinct possibility. Danger can be greatly reduced by using larger than normal aldrin granules. Field test data on insect control with larger granules is not yet available. Best solution for present seems to be addition of aldrin to pelletized fertilizers by liquid impregnation.

Western Phosphates

DEMAND FOR FERTILIZERS from Western Phosphates' new plant at Garfield, Utah, has been so great that expansion is already under way. Plant, in operation since February, has been producing treble superphosphate, phosphoric acid, and ammonium phosphate at rate of 300 tons per day. New production unit scheduled to go on stream next spring will increase output 50 to 100%. Western Phosphates is owned by Stauffer, American Smelting and Refining, and Kennecott Copper. Plant gets phosphate rock from Stauffer, sulfuric acid from Garfield Chemical, and smelter gases from AS and F.

Unrest Behind Iron Curtain

SOVIET SATELLITE COUNTRIES will be short of food again this winter according to statements in Russian newspapers. Importance of food shortages is indicated by fact that Communist controlled newspapers are criticizing agricultural bureaucrats. Latest Russian agricultural plan for all satellites has not lived up to promises. Peasants and school children were told to work 'round the clock this fall to overcome serious lag in harvest operations. Food scarcity in Romania is so serious that armed convoys are being organized to move farm produce to state warehouses. Even Red China has had trouble. Russian-type collectivization program has resulted in armed clashes and reprisals.

The Elections

TUGS-OF-WAR should characterize most forms of agricultural legislation for the next two years if recent national elections are any guide. Party-wise, Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson became the hero of the hour as breadbasket states came out with a strong vote for Republican candidates. May indicate acceptance of flexible price supports, especially in view of Sen. Guy Gillette's (rigid supports) defeat by Republican Thomas E. Martin in Iowa's senatorial race. Rub comes with a Democratic Congress where Sen. Allen J. Ellender (D.-La.) will head Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry and Rep. Harold D. Cooley will head House Agriculture Committee. Both favor return to 90% parity.

Surplus Food

THE BILLION-DOLLAR surplus food disposal program is slowing to a crawl as it meets heavy weather on the seas of international finance. Delay in sales involves disagreement as to how the foreign currencies will be used by the U. S. after food is purchased. Many are trying to get the U. S. to spend the currencies in the issuing country for internal improvements. Initial sale of \$384 million in food has not materialized. A month ago Agriculture said it expected authority for the sale within a few weeks. Expectation then was shortened to "a few days." Most recent statement says it is impossible to predict when the first negotiated sales will be announced.

Business Farmers

BUSINESS ASPECTS OF FARMING and importance to careers in agriculture are reflected in the number of students taking courses in management as part of program in agricultural economics. University of California reports a doubling in enrollment in management over past year. Chairman of Ag. Econ. Department, Edwin C. Voorhies says, "Complex marketing situation today demands business training to make intelligent decisions." Some of his students are aiming for jobs in businesses that serve farmers or dispose of agriculture products. They believe that training in agricultural economics is preparation for leadership in any agricultural occupation.

Hay Dryer

COAL-FIRED CROP DRYERS which cut down drying time for hay and shelled corn have met good response in test marketing, according to Bituminous Coal Research, Inc. Portable trailer mounted unit permits farmers to harvest crop at peak of protein, carbohydrate, and mineral content. According to USDA, hay dried with heated forced air retains 11% more protein, and results in 4% higher milk production when fed to cows. Field drying destroys up to 75% of vitamin A, and an average of 100 pounds of protein per ton of hay. Operating cost of dryer unit: about \$1.50 per ton of hay, 1.5 cents per bushel of shelled corn.