

Ag and Food NEWSLETTER

Fertilizers At Salt Lake

FERTILIZERS SEEM TO BE SPARKING THE TREND toward an expanded chemical industry in the Salt Lake region. U. S. Steel, reported most recent issue to be "rumbling" about ammonia production from coke oven gases, has changed rumble to active site preparation at Geneva, Utah. Plant, to be first in intermountain region, will have capacity of 200 tons of ammonia per day; co-product will be ammonium nitrate. Plant is scheduled for completion in 1956. USS development comes hard on heels of announcement by Western Phosphates that it plans to increase phosphate fertilizer production 50% by next spring (AG AND FOOD, Nov. 10, page 1139).

Stauffer Expands

FURTHER WEST, Stauffer says it will build a superphosphate and ammonium phosphate plant adjacent to its present Vernon, Calif., installation. Plant, to be completed by mid-1955 with capacity of 500 tons per day, will use a new Stauffer-developed process utilizing conventional rock and acid raw materials. Another plant using same process will be constructed later by Stauffer at Richmond, Calif. Total cost: over \$1 million.

Tonnage Down, Nutrients Up

FERTILIZER CONSUMPTION for year ending July 1 was down slightly compared with consumption the previous year, according to figures released by National Fertilizer Association. Total '53-54 consumption in U. S. was almost 20.3 million tons, consumption in '52-53 was 20.6 million tons. NFA says that nutrient consumption was probably higher than last year due to steady trend to higher analysis fertilizers. Regionally, consumption increased only in the West North Central and Far West areas. South Atlantic, with largest total consumption, showed greatest decrease in tonnage, down about 4%. Other factors in leveling off: drought in wide areas of country, acreage allotment program on major crops, reduced farm income.

Phillips' Curry Purchase

PHILLIPS PETROLEUM'S acquisition of all capital stock of Curry Chemical and its 14 affiliated companies is in line with Phillips policy. It will expand Phillips' established practice of marketing fertilizer through independently operated organizations. Curry companies are engaged in distribution of agricultural ammonia as well as manufacture and distribution of mixed fertilizers. They will continue operating as in past with present personnel at about 100 distributing plants, mainly located in Nebraska with others in Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, and Kansas. Curry has two large ammonia Hortonspheres in Nebraska, each with storage capacity of 55 carloads anhydrous ammonia.

Beetle Threat

OUTBREAK OF KHRAPA BEETLE is threatening western grain and field crops and cotton industry. Insect, first found in West in 1946, has now reached serious proportions in California, New Mexico, and Arizona. Colorado, first state to act, has placed an embargo on crops from the three affected states; other western states are expected to follow suit and throw a cordon of quarantine around the infested area. Crops most seriously infested to date are: beans, rice, alfalfa, cotton, and cottonseed products. Present control methods are limited to fumigation and heat treatment of crop shipments. Techniques for warehouse control and field eradication are being worked on by USDA.

Diet Change

MINOR REVOLUTION taking place in American eating habits could probably spread to technically advanced nations of the world, according to Francis H. Wilcox, Sunkist Growers. Trend in eating habits shows more protein and less starch; in 1953 nation consumed 15% more protein than in 1920, 79% more poultry, 26% more eggs, and 7% more dairy products. During same period, consumption of wheat and corn for food was 34% less and potato consumption was down 24%. Speaking before the convention of California Fertilizer Association Wilcox advocates more research on part of farmers to find new uses for their products and supplement the work of USDA.