

Business Newsletter . . .

NEW HOPE FOR FOOD ADDITIVES LAW

This Congress may well pass food additives legislation before it goes home to campaign. Bill H.R. 13254 has the support of the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, the Manufacturing Chemists' Association, the Food and Drug Administration, and several other interested groups. The same bill has been introduced by Senator Lister Hill (D-Ala.) on the Senate side, where it is called S. 4193. MCA does not like the licensing approach of this bill, but goes along with it because "it is in the public interest to clarify existing procedures at the earliest possible time... , it is important that the procedures be settled in order that the scientific development of further improvements in the Nation's food may progress without uncertainty as to future legal requirements... (and) the enactment of a Federal law at this time will set a pattern for state and municipal legislation..." The bill provides that additives manufacturers must petition FDA for advance ruling on how an additive may be used and prove that it is safe for the intended use.

SOLID NITROGEN FERTILIZERS FOR KETONA

Ketona Chemical, the nitrogen producer owned by Hercules Powder and Alabama By-Products, will add facilities for two solid nitrogen fertilizer materials. Company now makes anhydrous, nitric acid, and nitrogen solutions. The two solids will be prilled ammonium nitrate and ammonium nitrate-limestone. Chemical & Industrial Corp. will build the new 75-tons-per-day facilities, which are to be completed early in 1959. Both will be produced by a new process that forms spherical particles said to have superior storage and handling properties. Ketona says the prilled mixture of ammonium nitrate and dolomitic limestone will be especially advantageous to Southeast farmers because of its lime and magnesium content.

LAW SUITS

Monsanto has won a permanent injunction against its' former employee, Charles M. Miller, forbidding him to appropriate, use, or reveal any trade secrets or other information on its phosphorus furnace. The company is now a legal step closer to preventing Central Farmers' Fertilizer from manufacturing elemental phosphorus by the Monsanto method. Miller is employed by F. C. Torkelson Co., the engineering firm that is building CFF's plant at Georgetown, Idaho. Meanwhile Central Farmers' has switched its plans, will now manufacture triple superphosphate, not calcium metaphosphate as planned originally. CFF says Monsanto suit has nothing to do with its change in plans. Reasons for the switch, it says, are: economical (TVA's superphosphoric acid process permits manufacture of a higher grade triple super, economics of which were not known six to eight months ago) and agronomic (Western Farmers' Association, which will take much of the plant's output, sells in an alkaline soil region, where calcium metaphosphate is not too effective). CFF says calcium metaphosphate developments in the Midwest have not progressed as it anticipated. However, CFF says it will manufacture cal meta eventually. Georgetown plant is expected to begin rock phosphate production in October and triple superphosphate next April.

Minority stockholders of N. S. Koos & Sons Co., a Wisconsin fertilizer producer, have won their case against the present officers and majority stockholders. A Wisconsin court has ordered the officers to

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repay more than \$75,000 in excess salaries they paid themselves, plus interest and costs. Court is now studying whether the company should be put in the hands of a receiver.

PESTICIDE SALES

Preliminary figures from the Tariff Commission indicate sales of pesticides in U. S. during 1957 were up 8% over those in 1956—from 399 million pounds (\$173 million) to more than 433 million pounds (\$178 million). Production dropped 10%—from 570 million pounds in 1956 to 512 million pounds in 1957. For cyclic pesticides, production was 407 million pounds (down 14%), and sales were 340 million pounds or \$132 million worth (a drop of less than 1%). Acyclic compound production was 104 million pounds (up 8%), and sales were 94 million pounds (up nearly 40%) valued at \$46 million (up 21%).

For the current year, some indications can be drawn from second quarter financial reports. Stauffer, whose net sales for the quarter were down 1% from sales in the second quarter of 1957, says its agricultural chemical sales for the first six months were "substantially ahead" of those for the same period last year, primarily because of growing demands for new pesticides, such as Trithion. Merck and Pfizer also report sales of agricultural products as good.

NEW PACKAGES

Spencer has started packaging part of its ammonium nitrate in 50-pound polyethylene bags. Advantages: Fertilizer can be stored outdoors on the farm, and bags can be reused in many ways. A basic producer of polyethylene, Spencer says that if half of the total ammonium nitrate made in this country every year were to be packaged in polyethylene, it would take some 7 million pounds of resin. Chippewa Plastics, Chippewa Falls, Wis., worked with Spencer on development.

Niagara Chemical has changed the specifications of lined steel pails and drums used in shipping liquid formulations of pesticides. Pigmented phenolic linings developed by Jones & Laughlin have ended Niagara's trouble with corroded steel shipping containers that leak and contaminate products.

NEBRASKA LABS COMBINE FOR MORE SERVICES

Harris Laboratories, Inc., Lincoln, Neb., has purchased Lexington Laboratories, Lexington, Neb., an independent soil, feed, and agricultural laboratory. Harris says it has leased a new location for Lexington, giving it more than twice the space it formerly had. New electronic and automatic equipment is to be installed, and facilities will be available to handle more than 80,000 soil samples a year, in addition to dehydrated alfalfa and feed samples. Lexington will also be able to provide research and product development services on soil fertility, use of trace elements, and on new fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides.

PATENT FOR AMOBAM

Roberts Chemicals, Nitro, W. Va., has been awarded a U. S. Patent (No. 2,844,623) on Amobam, a salt of ethylene bisdithiocarbamate. Amobam can be used to control rust mite on citrus, as an insecticide, or as a soil fungicide. It is also used as a fungicide by mixing it in the spray tank with calcium hypochlorite to form ethylene thiuram sulfide for control of brown spot on peaches and cherries, apple scab, and other diseases.

ADD TO ABBOTT RESEARCH LABS

Abbott Laboratories has started to build an addition to its North Chicago research laboratory. Construction will take 18 to 20 months, and is a major step in the company's five-year, \$20-million capital expansion program. Addition will more than double space for research, development, and control, enabling Abbott to enlarge its scientific staff from about 600 to more than 1000.

THE FALL MEETING CIRCUIT

The American Chemical Society's fall meeting opens in Chicago on Sept. 7, crowding a record 220 sessions (1544 papers) into five days. Five divisions will celebrate 50th anniversaries, among them the Division of Agricultural and Food Chemistry and the Division of Fertilizer and Soil Chemistry. Program for the meeting will be found in the Aug. 4 issue of Chemical and Engineering News. The Ag and Food Division will present five symposia—on food science and the future, on fermentation kinetics and continuous processes, on control of physiological processes in plants by chemicals, on microbial enzymes, and on deleterious compounds in foods and feeds. The Fertilizer Division will present no symposia, but it has 24 papers scheduled for four sessions beginning Monday afternoon. Division of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry will present a day-and-a-half program on the food processing industry. And there is a day-long symposium on viewpoints on food additives before the Division of Chemical Marketing and Economics.

Canadian Agricultural Chemical Association will hold its meeting at the Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg, on Sept. 15, 16, and 17.

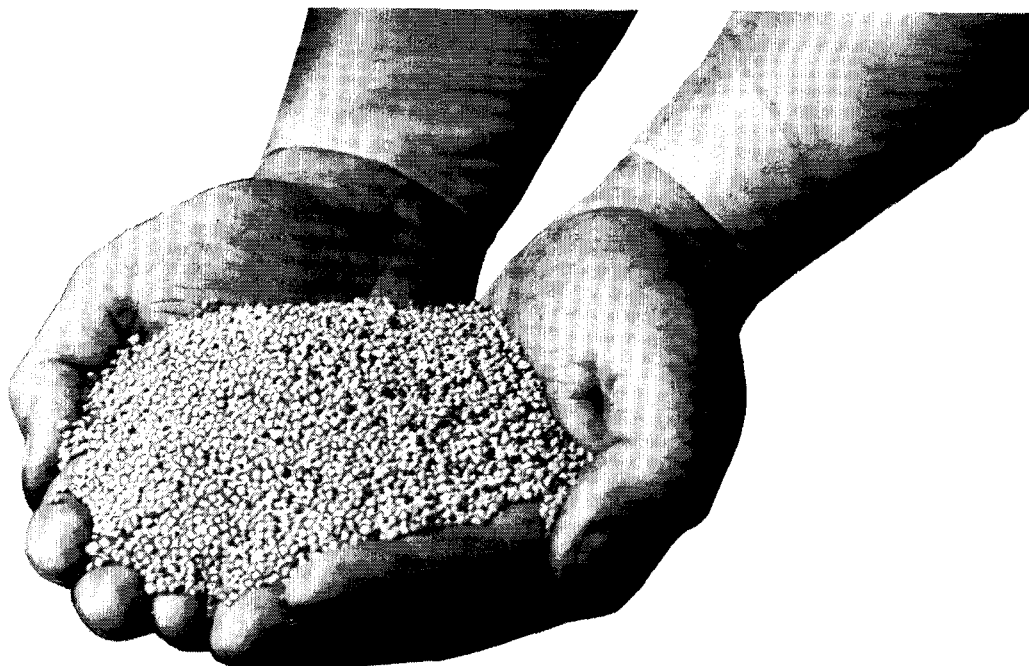
National Agricultural Chemicals Association celebrates its 25th anniversary this year at its meeting on Oct. 29, 30, and 31. Location of the meeting has been changed—to the General Oglethorpe Hotel, Savannah, Ga. On its program are two panel discussions—one on public relations and the other on new and expanding markets.

The Fertilizer Industry Roundtable, because of conflict with other meetings, has changed plans—will now meet Nov. 5, 6, and 7 at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D. C.

The National Plant Food Institute's conference on chemical control problems takes place at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington, on Oct. 16.

- Working against a deadline imposed by nature, grasshoppers fighters beat the worst plague in 20 years (page 571).
- Although lime use on the farm is far below that considered adequate, some warn of over-liming, urge intelligent use (page 572).
- High speed electronic computer is the key to operations research program aimed at better crop prediction, but large amount of data must be collected first (page 573).

● Colors and odors are the newest ingredients in fertilizers—especially those intended for lawns and gardens of suburbia (page 574).



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PESTICIDE HAZARD STUDIES

The Public Health Service is going to study effects of the fire ant control program on fish and aquatic life in streams and rivers of areas being treated in the Southeast. H. Page Nicholson, who is being transferred from PHS' Kansas City office to Atlanta, Ga., will direct the investigation, which begins Aug. 15. Study will determine the extent to which insecticides may be reaching lakes and streams through run-off and whether they are affecting fish and fish food.

From Dow Chemical comes word that there is no practical hazard to cattle from use of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T according to label directions. A 1000-pound cow would have to consume 25 gallons of a spray solution mixed at 4 pounds of herbicide in 100 gallons of water in order to show any symptoms of intoxication. Death resulted once in the course of Dow's tests: a 650-pound steer ingested 10.3 ounces of a 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T mixture daily for three days—enough herbicide to clear half an acre of heavily covered brush land. With dalapon, Dow scientists gave up, concluded that the only way they could kill a cow with dalapon was by drowning the animal in it. Worst reaction they could get—even to 5.5 pounds fed over a 10-day period—was a passing digestive upset.

NATURAL GROWTH PROMOTERS

Growth promoting chemicals, similar to gibberellins in the results they produce, have been found in sunflowers, sweet clover, and other common plants by Louis G. Nickell of Chas. Pfizer & Co. He feels other strong growth promoting substances may be found in many plants, perhaps throughout the whole plant kingdom. His work was reported in Science, Vol. 128, No. 3315.

University of Michigan scientists find that gibberellins double the stem length of rice without loss of yield or quality. Four-foot stems, instead of usual two-foot ones, will be a boon to harvesters. Peter B. Kaufman, assistant professor of botany who directed the research, has found also that gibberellins will cause stems of rice, stunted by irradiation, to return to normal.

RADIATION OUT AS NEMATOCIDE

USDA scientists are disappointed to find that nematodes can withstand large doses of radiation. It takes 120,000 roentgens to kill the golden nematode, up to 20,000 to sterilize the female. Some other nematodes require 350,000 to 640,000 before giving up the ghost. (Humans will invariably die from a 650-roentgen dose.) Plants cannot withstand the dosage necessary to kill nematodes, so there is no prospect that radiation can be used for killing nematodes on living plants.

Spotlight

- One-step process produces granular triple super from either wet-process or furnace phosphoric acid (page 584).
- Enzyme urease makes it possible to determine urea content of nitrogen solutions in 30 minutes (page 587).
- A five-minute method determines water-soluble P₂O₅ content of superphosphate (page 589).
- Esters of 6-methyl-3-cyclohexene-1-carboxylic acid showed considerable attractiveness to the male Medfly in olfactometer tests (page 592).