

Business Newsletter . . .

AFTER 10 YEARS—A FOOD ADDITIVES LAW

The House and Senate both passed the food additives bill in the closing hours of the 85th Congress. It is now on the President's desk awaiting signature. Some of the law's provisions are listed in the August Ag and Food, page 563. The House tacked on an amendment outlawing any cancer-causing substance from food. The Senate version includes a raise in salary for George P. Larrick, FDA Commissioner. Each body approved the other's amendments.

U. S. CHEMICAL FIRMS GOING ABROAD

Dow and Walter E. Ripper, noted British agricultural chemist, will form a new company, called Dow Agrochemicals, Ltd. The London firm will build a plant to produce Dowpon weed killer. Until the London firm's plant is ready, it will import the chemical from the U. S. Eventually the new firm will also market other agricultural chemicals. Dow owns majority of the paid-up capital in the firm, Dr. Ripper the rest. He will be managing director.

U. S. Rubber and Rumianca Co. (Turin, Italy) will form a joint company to manufacture and sell in Italy a line of chemicals developed by the Naugatuck Chemical division of U. S. Rubber. A group of agricultural chemicals, not specified in the announcement, will be included. Rumianca makes industrial and heavy chemicals, and fertilizers. The new company, called Naugatuck-Rumianca, S.p.a., will headquarter in Turin and erect its plant in suburban Turin.

W. R. Grace has a contract with the International Cooperation Administration to guarantee the convertibility into dollars of up to \$17.5 million in proceeds from its planned investment in fertilizer facilities at Trinidad, B. W. I. The \$16-million plant is to be built and operated by Federation Chemicals, Ltd. In addition to the Grace investment in the company, capital will also be supplied by Colonial Development Corporation of the United Kingdom. The new plant will have facilities to make ammonia, sulfuric acid, ammonium sulfate, and urea. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has approved the project.

NEW PRODUCTS

Spencer is introducing a line of nonpressure direct application nitrogen solutions, called Ura-Green (the extra "e" in the name indicates these solutions contain a corrosion inhibitor recently developed by the company). Compounded of urea, ammonium nitrate, and water, they will afford buyers a choice of 32, 30, or 28% nitrogen. Solutions will be produced at Vicksburg, Miss., and Henderson, Ky. Joe Tuning will coordinate solution sales, as well as anhydrous sales. Distribution program will be set up through regular distributors of Spencer's N ammonium nitrate. Mr. Spencer will lease tanks to its fertilizer distributors, who will make them available to their dealers.

FDA has cleared gibberellins for seed treatment of lima, snap, and soya beans, and peas, at rate of 0.5 grams per 100 pounds. Also cleared by FDA are dipping of potato seed pieces in solution of 1 p.p.m., and spraying of Thompson Seedless and Black Corinth grapes with concentration of 5 to 50 p.p.m. at rates of 5 to 50 gallons per acre.

Merck plant pathologist Reed A. Gray reported to recent meeting of American Institute of Biological Sciences that gibberellins can help speed development of hybrid plants by doing away with need for cold storage to break dormancy. Another possible use of gibberellins is in

Business Newsletter . . .

crab grass control. Crab grass seeds are encouraged to germinate all at one time, thus making it possible to knock out crab grass with one early-season application of herbicide.

Imperial Chemical Industries is introducing a method of fumigating stored potatoes to depress growth of sprouts. The chemical used is 3,5,5-trimethylhexanol, called ICI nonanol sprout depressant. It is used at first sign of sprouting, stopped when dormancy is achieved.

Dow is working on clearance for a new preventive for coccidiosis, severe disease of poultry. Called Zoalene, it has already been cleared for use in Canada.

SALES GAINING IN CHEMICALS FOR AGRICULTURE

April-May-June quarter for California fertilizer sales was best on record—426,032 tons sold. For fiscal 1957-58, another record was established—1,123,235 tons (4% above 1956-57). Tonnage of ammonia solutions dropped a little, but ammonium nitrate solutions increased slightly. Tonnage of ammonia-ammonium nitrate solutions more than doubled.

Another sign of good times in chemicals for agriculture came from Dow Chemical, which reported that 6% of its \$636,201,143 in 1957-58 total sales came from agricultural chemicals. This group of chemicals represented the one broad area of Dow's business that showed a slight gain over preceding year.

Spencer Chemical's annual report was an exception to the above good news. Spencer's sales of nitrogen for fertilizer slipped enough during the first half of this year to interrupt the company's steady 10-year growth. Total sales for the year ended June 30 were \$45,148,936, down 6% from the 1957 fiscal year. Agricultural products accounted for 47% of total sales, compared with 53% the year before. One reason for nitrogen's slower sales performance was the wet weather that prevailed over most of Spencer's territory—causing deferment of application in some areas and complete abandonment in others.

PESTICIDE INTERMEDIATE EXPANSION

Pennsalt will put a new methylamines plant on stream at Wyandotte, Mich., this month. Captive use of these intermediates—for manufacture of agricultural chemicals, feed additives, and a number of other products—was primary reason behind expansion. Catalytic Construction built the plant, which will produce mono-, di-, and trimethylamines.

Another insecticide intermediate will be coming in larger quantities from Victor Chemical's Morrisville, Pa., plant. Expansion will double capacity there for phosphorus pentasulfide.

FOR THE PORK PACKERS

Hydrolyzed vegetable protein is being added to prepared cures, and injected into ham for the "old-fashioned, slow-cured flavor," says Hercules Powder. HVP is a product of Hercules' Huron Milling Division.

Several bacon packers are considering use of Sucaryl instead of sugar to cure bacon. Advantage is that bacon so cured is scorch-proof and lower in calories. Use of Sucaryl (Abbott's synthetic sweetener) in amounts up to 0.15% is permitted by Meat Inspection Division of USDA. Studies are in progress on Sucaryl use in sausage and canned meats.

EXPANSIONS

Rath Packing is installing mixed fertilizer granulating facilities at its Waterloo, Iowa, plant. Granulating unit will include TVA-type ammoniator, dryer, cooler, and screening equipment. The high analysis granules produced will range between 6 and 16 mesh. D. M. Weatherly, engineer and fabricator of the plant, expects to finish it by November.

U.S. Industrial Chemicals has completed its Morea premix plant at Anaheim, Calif. It is now shipping the urea-ethanol-phosphoric acid-trace mineral premix to Pacific Coast distributors, who will combine it with molasses for sale to cattle and sheep feeders.

MEETINGS

Two regional accident prevention schools for fertilizer industry personnel are scheduled this month. First is in Atlanta, Ga., on Sept. 4 and 5. Sept. 10 and 11 are the dates for the Midwest school, which takes place at the National Safety Council's headquarters in Chicago. Others will be held in Austin, Tex., and San Mateo, Calif., but dates are not yet announced.

A symposium on the metabolism of insecticides will be held at Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, Ont., Oct. 31 and Nov. 1. It is sponsored by the Chemical Institute of Canada.

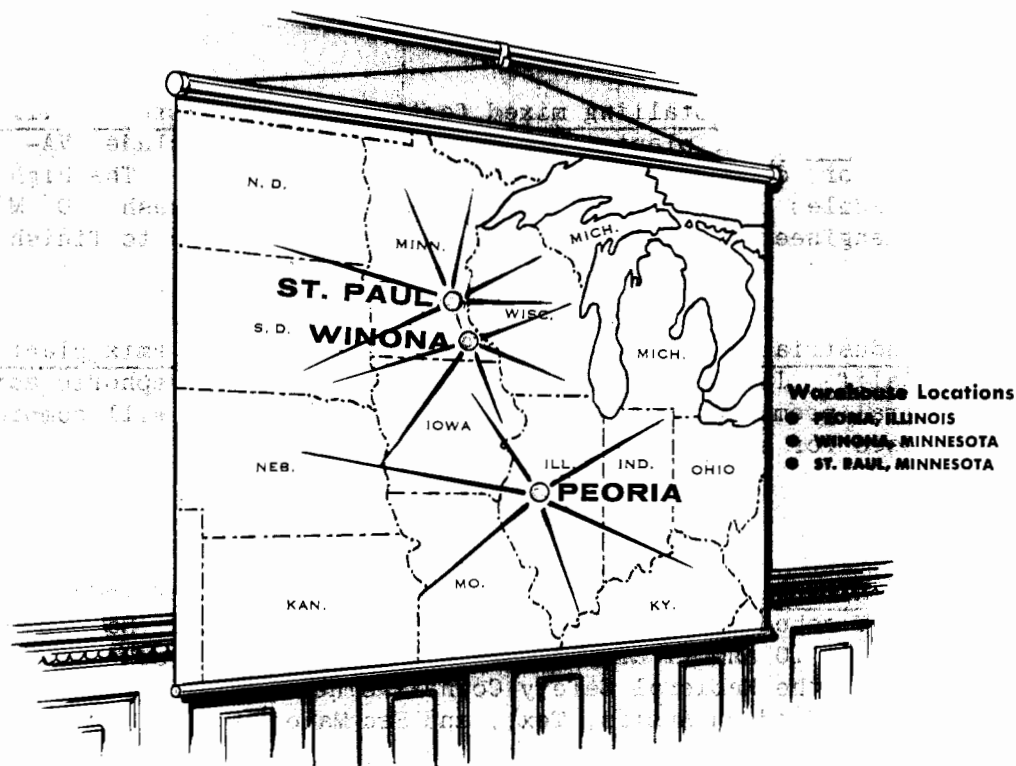
A Farm Advisors Fertilizer Technology School, sponsored by NPF and the California Extension Service, will convene on Sept. 16 and 17 at the Berkeley campus of the University of California. There will be briefings on the chemistry and production of nitrogen and phosphate fertilizers and tours at plants of Stauffer, Hercules, Shell, Calspray, and Western States Chemical.

New England Fertilizer Conference takes place at the Bald Peak Colony Club, Melvin Village, N. H., on Sept. 24.

- The future of liquids is not clear but it seems certain they will face increasing competition from the less expensive bulk solids (page 642).
- As the idea of minimum tillage spreads, farmers are certain to see need for more fertilizer, more herbicides (page 644).
- New sources for fertilizer nitrogen are being investigated, but no one thinks ammonia will be displaced from top spot (page 649).
- How much money will have to be spent on research, land reclamation, irrigation, and extension to minimize the cost of feeding the population expected by 1975 (page 652)?

Spotlight

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FIRE ANT VENOM--AN INSECTICIDE?

The imported fire ant, now raging over much of the Southeast and being fought by federal-state workers, may turn out to have some useful qualities. Its venom--so annoying and, in some cases, harmful to humans--has insecticidal and antibiotic properties. Researchers at Louisiana State University find that it is highly toxic to the fruitfly, housefly, the boll and rice weevils, and one termite and two mite species. It is effective against the following microorganisms--Micrococcus pyogenes, Streptococcus pyogenes, Escherichia coli, Lactobacillus casei, and several molds. Samples of the venom vary widely in their insecticidal activity, but highly active samples were at least the match of DDT, producing an instantaneous paralysis similar to that caused by nerve poison. Infrared data suggested similarities between the fire ant venom and the lactone iridomyrmecin, which is known to have insecticidal and antibiotic properties. The work was reported in the Aug. 8 issue of Science.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH IN U.S.S.R.

Teams of agricultural experts returned from a tour of Russia last month with these items on agricultural research. U.S.S.R. puts a greater percentage of national income into agricultural research and education than does the U. S. University of Moscow soils laboratory has every instrument useful in soil research. Russian agricultural researchers have excellent resources for translation of foreign scientific literature--Russians are more familiar with U. S. work than U. S. researchers are with U.S.S.R. work. On specific problems: Weeds are serious, and the Russians are just beginning to use herbicides; use is justified despite surplus of farm labor because they want to prevent over-tillage of soil. They produce about 5000 metric tons of 2,4-D annually, enough to cover about 10% of their 100 million acres in small grains. Extensive use of fertilizer and lime is just beginning, and many fertilizer plants are being planned and built. Observers spotted many nitrogen and phosphorus deficiencies while on the farm tour.

DOW WORKING ON DUTCH ELM DISEASE CONTROL

Dow Chemical reveals it has been working for a year on a control for Dutch elm disease. The spray material under test was developed by Abbott Laboratories, but there is no hint of its nature except that it is evidently a chemical. J. W. Britton, Dow's manager of agricultural chemicals, says the material may have only one chance in 10 of clearing the many hurdles necessary before it can be released and sold to the public.

- Ultraviolet absorption method detects Phygon, Naugatuck's algicide, in the range of 8 to 250 parts per billion (page 669).
- Urea formaldehyde broadcast on the soil at a rate of 150 gallons per acre controls common scab on two varieties of potato (page 675).
- Quick curing process for normal super involves ball-mill grinding of the rock during acidulation (page 677).
- A simple method for calculations involved in formulating high-analysis, granulated, mixed fertilizer (page 684).

A graphic consisting of the word "Spotlight" in a stylized, handwritten font, with a dark, textured circular shape behind it that resembles a spotlight beam or a shadow.