

Miller Amendment Means Increased Workload for ARS

State control officials told their cooperation can help USDA meet problem of more work and less money

WASHINGTON.—During the past fiscal year the USDA registered more than four thousand new pesticides. Three thousand products were accepted for registration for new or revised usage under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. This is the highest annual registration since 1948 and 1949, the two years immediately following the passage of the act. Some of the problems associated with the increasing number of pesticide registrations and other responsibilities of the Agricultural Research Service in the regulation of pesticides were outlined by M. R. Clarkson before the recent meeting of the Association of Economic Poisons Control Officials.

As a result of the recent reorganization of the USDA the pesticide regulatory functions have been transferred from the marketing to the research area of the department. In the recently formed Agricultural Research Service manpower and

operating funds are split about evenly between research and routine regulatory work. The regulatory responsibilities of the ARS extend from protecting crops and livestock to meat inspection.

The pesticides regulations section of the ARS is one of six units of the plant pest control branch. Under this branch the pesticide regulation program is more closely tied in with other regulatory activities and is also under the same administrative responsibility as the cooperative control operations concerned with area wide control programs of agricultural pests.

Another major advantage of the shift of regulatory activities from marketing to research has been the closer liaison effected between research scientists and the regulatory personnel.

Although the shift in the organization of the USDA is expected to result in increased efficiency of administration of the

federal pesticides act, the work load of the group is still increasing at a greater rate than personnel. The recently passed Miller Bill (P.L. 518) will create additional administrative problems for ARS. The responsibilities of USDA processing requests for pesticide tolerances will fall almost exclusively on the ARS, increasing the workload at a time when there has been a substantial cut in the appropriation for regulatory work.

Dr. Clarkson, deputy administrator of ARS, discussed some of the implications of this manpower squeeze to the regulatory functions of the USDA. He told the control officials that their cooperation was needed especially in helping the USDA discharge its responsibilities for educating farmers and other users of agricultural pesticides.

One alternative to the manpower squeeze on the regulatory section is the suggestion that the regulatory functions of the Miller Amendment be handled on a fee basis. The law does contain provisions for industrial fees to pay for the costs of processing tolerance applications in the FDA.

Parks A. Yeats of Oklahoma, former president of AAFCO, and R. W. Ludwick of New Mexico, current president, with Russell Coleman, president of NFA, at the banquet. Right:

Henry A. Lepper, retired FDA official, was honored by AOAC for his work in the association. Admiring the silver tea set presented him are K. D. Jacob of USDA and Mrs. Lepper





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Dr. Clarkson believes that there would be a conflict of interest if the USDA initiated a fee charging practice. One of the objectives of the ARS is to promote the use of effective pesticides. There might be a danger of loss of objectivity or prestige if the farmers thought that the USDA was working with money obtained as fees from industry.

Another alternative to meeting the problem of pesticide regulation which seems more attractive to Dr. Clarkson is more effective liaison between state and federal control officials. He said that the AOAC has done a commendable job in working for uniformity of pesticide regulation, and educational programs to impress the value of properly used pesticides on the public.

The AEPSCO has had an active program for adequate precautionary labeling which Dr. Clarkson said is taking the lead in educating the public on the need to study directions and follow them. He said that, through the efforts of the association, users are becoming aware of the importance of labels in reducing the chance of injury to people, livestock, and crops.

These educational jobs which can be handled by organizations such as that of the state control officials are good examples of effective cooperation between state and local agencies. It is cooperation in areas such as this that Dr. Clarkson believes will greatly help the ARS to accomplish its increasing job on a decreased budget.



FDA Commissioner Larrick talks it over with his former boss and former FDA Commissioner, Paul Dunbar

Foreign

Ag Chemicals Play Small Role in Latin American Plans

Foreign exchange squeeze means food production goals must be met with limited technology . . . Markets do exist in export regions

NO MORE than 5% of the total area of South and Central America is arable land and only about 3% of the total land area is cultivated annually. The vision of subtropical plantations to feed the world may, in fact, be an illusion. Cropland potential in Latin America is vastly below that of Europe, where 30% of the total land area is under annual cultivation; 10% of the world land area is cropland. The concept of a vastly promising Latin American agricultural frontier may be proved specious as a result of land surveys now in progress.

The perennial problem of increasing population on a limited land base is heightened in the South American republics by the fact that the population of the region is increasing at such a rate that it will rise by about 25% in the next 10 years, the most rapidly expanding population of any major world land mass. Even to maintain present standards, the population increase curve indicates that agricultural production standards will have to increase at a rapid rate. Demand for food promises to increase even more rapidly than population.

A situation such as that presented by Latin America in which demand for agricultural products is increasing at a rate even greater than that in the U. S. should present ideal opportunities for applications of agricultural technology. The question is—opportunity for whom?

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN recently published a com-

prehensive study of agriculture in South America with a discussion of future production trends. The year 1956-57 has been established as a target period for improvement programs of the region. At recent regional meetings of UN representatives various programs for increasing production on the regional and national levels have been discussed and the year 1956-57 could be a period of decision not only for the people of Latin America but also for North Americans interested in future trade possibilities of the region.

Achievement of the targets for the 1956-57 period will require a substantial increase in the per acre yields of crops and livestock. These production targets have been established as possible achievements, using the natural and financial resources of the various South American nations. The potential for participation of American industry in these programs on a free enterprise basis appears to be somewhat limited.

Fertilizers

Consumption of fertilizers in South America is extremely low, in most cases per acre application is almost negligible. Nearly all the fertilizer used is applied to the principal export crops, cotton, sugar, and coffee. The fertility of the cultivated area of the region is generally agreed to be deteriorating. In many areas land which was originally deficient in plant nutrients has never been brought up to a level of fertility to produce even moder-

ate yields. In some districts of Brazil, about 95% of the organic matter of the tropical soils has been lost after only two years of cultivation.

The over-all situation has been one of intensive though primitive agriculture depleting the soil resources of a continent which has almost reached the limit of its agricultural area exploitable by current techniques.

There has been no appreciable increase in fertilizer consumption for the Latin American region in the last four years. However, a few countries have shown substantial increases in consumption—Brazil, Cuba, and Mexico. These increases in fertilizer consumption have probably been due to increases in export prices for agricultural products rather than a change in the farming practices.

As a regional market South America does not loom on the horizon of opportunity for U. S. manufacturers. General opinion of the FAO report is that any increase in fertilizer consumption to be attained in South America will only come as a result of production of fertilizers in that region. World trade conditions might have some influence on possible fertilizer markets in areas where such exportable agricultural products are produced as cotton, coffee, and sugar.

The report sees no evidence of an appreciable increase in fertilizer consumption to contribute to the over-all problem of increasing food production for the people of the area by 1956-57.

Pesticides

Use of pesticides in South America is also extremely limited. One of the major reasons for this seems to be that there is very little pest control practice by the individual farmer or land owner. Pest control programs are usually conducted by the national government to combat crises presented by major pests. Locust and grasshopper control and control