

Ag and Food NEWSLETTER

Magron Cotton Defoliant

DOW WILL INTRODUCE MAGRON, MAGNESIUM CHLORATE, as a defoliant for cotton by harvest time this summer. Following field tests of magnesium chlorate in Texas last summer Dow has started production in its Texas division and plans to have quantities of the material available this summer. A liquid concentrate, Magron is adaptable for ground or aerial spraying. Good defoliation is reported with application rate of 3 quarts per acre of cotton.

Herbicide Production

DU PONT'S TWO NEW HERBICIDES, Karmex and Telvar, will go into full scale production sometime this fall. The weed killers will probably be coming shortly after S. & W. Chemical completes its phosgene plant on the Houston Ship Canal. The substituted urea compounds are now being made on a pilot plant scale in Cleveland, but La Porte will be the first full scale production unit. Du Pont is now test marketing Karmex, a pre-emergence herbicide, in selected cotton areas of the Mississippi Delta and Southeast Piedmont.

Organic Phosphates Banned for Home Gardeners

CALIFORNIA CONTINUES TO CLAMP DOWN on the sale of organic phosphate insecticides for home gardeners as a result of recent cases of accidental poisoning. Actually, home gardener size packages of parathion, EPN, OMPA, and demeton have never been approved and control officials will not permit their use by home gardeners. A year ago, manufacturers and control officials agreed to replace small-size packages of TEPP (approved for sale in small packages) with less hazardous malathion as the TEPP stocks became depleted. Interestingly enough, the accidental death of two children this year in California and Oregon did not result from home size packages—the insecticide was in commercial size containers—strongly suggesting the need for greater understanding of proper handling, use, and storage on part of approved insecticide users.

Mississippi Joins Pink Bollworm Fight

AN APPROPRIATION OF \$50,000 for pink bollworm research has been approved by the Mississippi legislature. Funds are to be used by state experiment station in cooperation with federal, state, and other agencies engaged in research. Mississippi joins Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Texas, the Federal Government, and the Oscar Johnston Foundation now financing pink bollworm research center at Brownsville, Tex. (AG AND FOOD, Feb. 3, page 110).

Pasture Pest Control

MORE ATTENTION TO PEST CONTROL on pasture lands could pay handsome dividends, according to Roy Blaser, Virginia Experiment Station's head pastureman. In reply to our direct question he estimated that a 15–25% improvement would be possible. Dr. Blaser told the NFA Virginia pasture tour group that a ripe target for research is variety improvement for pasture crops. Among other things this would mean more efficient use of more fertilizer to lower per unit costs for animal products.

Pacific Northwest Fertilizers

FERTILIZER EXPANSION CONTINUES in the Pacific Northwest. Following Cominco's recent start up at Kimberly, B. C., and its announced ammonia expansion at Calgary, Columbia River Chemicals is reported to have firm backing for ammonia plant at Pasco, Wash. Engineering will be done by the Fluor Corp., with output set for 160 tons ammonia and 140 tons ammonium sulfate per day. Meanwhile, Shell is barging ammonia to the area from California, Union Oil is constructing aqua storage tanks at Portland, and McCall Farm Chemicals, distributor of Phillips Ammonia, is expanding facilities. Still further expansion could come from Cominco, which has been investigating urea production for several years at its own facilities. Two of its executives were inspecting urea technology in Europe early this year. Developments indicate a better outlook for the nitrogen-short Pacific Northwest.

Farm Shift

THE FEDERAL RESERVE BANK of Chicago has recently issued a report on the changes in American agriculture. During the period 1920 to 1953 farm population dropped from 34 million to 25 million while U. S. population rose from 106 to 160 million. This decline in population was accompanied by an improvement in the national diet. The report says that this growing effectiveness of agricultural methods has resulted in a flow of manpower into industry and conversely an increased movement of implements and fertilizers from factories to farm which has contributed to the further increase in farming production. Capital investment in farms has risen over 47% since 1930, although the total has decreased as a proportion of the entire U. S. economy.