

Mobilize to Fight Insect Pests

Entomology

THE forces that wage defensive war against the European corn borer met at the U. S. Department of Agriculture under the chairmanship of Dr. W. H. Larrimer of the Bureau of Entomology. This was the fourth conference of its kind, and the attendance represented not only the federal workers against the pest, but also all the states of the corn belt, especially those where the borer is now active, together with delegations from farm organizations, scientists and farm machine manufacturers. An international note was injected by the participation of the Canadian Department of Agriculture and of the Province of Ontario.

The area of known infestation made its usual annual advance of from 20 to 30 miles during 1929, Dr. Larrimer stated. Its most westerly point is now in Boone township, Porter County, Indiana, about 30 miles west of Chicago. From there the borer frontier sweeps across Indiana and Ohio in a wide southeasterly curve, reaching its farthest south at the southern tip of Ohio.

This does not mean that all the territory behind this frontier is overrun with borers. The discovery of a single infestation will put a whole township on the borer map; and many of the farms in the very heart of the borer country are very little troubled. The main object in plotting the distribution to include every known borer locality within the line is to facilitate the work of the quarantine men who are endeavoring to keep the pest from making a long jump into the heart of territory still uninfested as a stowaway in a load of fodder or even in a batch of "roastin' ears" carried by an automobile tourist.

Without minimizing the gravity of the corn borer situation, Dr. Larrimer declared that the situation is not alarming, and will not be alarming even when the borer shall have covered the whole of the corn belt.

"There is no hope of completely eradicating it, as there is in the case of the Mediterranean fruit fly in

Florida," he said. "The insect had become too firmly established over too wide a territory before it was discovered. Moreover, it over-winters in corn stubble and in all sorts of left-over plants and weeds, instead of just in fruits; so that a complete clean-up is out of the question. And if we could get it out of the United States, there would still remain the heavy infestations over the Canadian border, ready to invade our fields every season.

"The answer to the corn borer problem is to learn how to live with the creature, since we cannot get rid of it. Fortunately, we have been able to make considerable progress along this line. We have learned much about the borer's life history and habits and are busy learning more. This will enable us to attack it at its weakest point. In several places, experiments with insects that parasitize and kill it are in hopeful progress. And we know that cleaning the last inch of stalk off an infested field, leaving the borer the very minimum of winter quarters, will greatly reduce the number of borers during the following year. All these methods, and many others besides, are on the agenda which will be discussed at the forthcoming conference."

Pink Bollworm Menace

CONGRESS has been asked for an emergency fund to fight the pink bollworm of cotton in Arizona, by a joint resolution introduced in the House by Rep. Lewis Douglas of Arizona. The situation is represented as serious, and the money is needed to compensate planters for

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losses they will incur through the eradication methods used in fighting this pest.

The pink bollworm is not related to the boll weevil. It is the larva of a moth, while the weevil is the child of a long-snouted beetle. The bollworm, like the weevil, is native to Mexico, but has not yet succeeded in invading the United States extensively. However, its presence along the border causes continual apprehension and makes a close watch constantly necessary.

Its presence in areas devoted to the long-staple Acala and Pima cottons in Arizona is represented as carrying an unusual menace, because these cottons are peculiarly adapted to certain industrial needs not met by the shorter-staple cotton grown elsewhere. Furthermore, the lands at present infested are not visited by hard frosts in winter, which increases the chance of the survival and spread of the insects if not promptly and completely wiped out.

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Cancer Program

A group of United States Senators will shortly sit across the table from medical men and research specialists and try to decide what program the government should undertake in seeking the cause and cure of cancer.

Senator William J. Harris, of Georgia, heads a new subcommittee of the Commerce Committee, which will look into the recommendations already made by many of the country's most eminent surgeons and laboratory workers.

It is expected that many of those who have already written to the committee will appear in person for questioning and consultation. The head of the U. S. Public Health Service, Surgeon General Hugh S. Cumming, will probably be present at many of the meetings and will assist in shaping whatever plans are adopted.

Medicine

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