

Do You Know?

The best *dairy cattle* came originally from Asia, but were developed in the cool climates of Holland, Denmark, Scotland and the Channel islands.

Baled *cotton* in storage can be protected from ordinary sources of ignition by dusting with sodium bicarbonate; when exposed to heat from a spark or lighted match, it liberates carbon dioxide, a fire extinguisher.

Canadian *scientific industrial research* centers in laboratories operated by the Canadian National Research Council; the Council has a full-time civilian staff of about 1,500 persons.

A shield of treated wood is not sufficient protection against *termites*; these wood-destroying pests can build their tunnels across treated wood to reach wood that is unprotected.

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MEDICINE

Diseases Strike Unborn

More than 12 per 100,000 of the American population are crippled or killed by diseases that attack them before they are born.

➤ AMERICANS of the future are being killed at the rate of more than 12 per 100,000 population each year by diseases that attack them before they are born, the nation's health fighters, members of the American Public Health Association, were told.

The causes of this loss of life and the crippling among those who survive pre-birth damage are "largely accidental and preventable," Drs. John E. Gordon and Theodore H. Ingalls of the Harvard School of Public Health declared.

The discovery that German measles in the mother during the first three months of pregnancy may cause many different defects in the baby, even blindness, deafness and deformities of the heart, has acted as a veritable ferment in medical research during the past decade. The discovery implied that there is an unfathomed relation between disease in the mothers and defect in the babies.

Many of the structural diseases of the human body may date back to a cause operating years before its full effects show themselves, it is now believed.

The usual preventive methods used by doctors caring for expectant mothers are not enough to insure perfect development. Further evidence for this and for the existence of an unsolved public health problem comes from the fact that about a third of the country's youth was unfit to meet the physical requirements for induction into the armed forces.

Influenza, smallpox, syphilis and typhoid fever as well as German measles have been shown to play an important part as killers of unborn babies. Almost half of one group of expectant mothers who got 'flu during the 1918 epidemic died. Of those who survived, two-thirds lost their babies either before, at or shortly after birth.

Three significant points on the causes of defects in development before birth were stressed by the Harvard scientists. These are: 1. Unrelated agents acting during pregnancy may give rise to the same type of arrest. 2. Different types of defect may be caused by a single agent. 3. The resulting malformation can be expected to be a function of the stage of the unborn baby's development at

which the cause or agent is active.

Two avenues of approach for further study leading to prevention of pre-birth deaths and defects were suggested: 1. search of maternity records to determine the responsible agent which produced a defective birth; 2. observation of pregnant women who have any form of infection and of the effects on the child when born.

Science News Letter, October 25, 1947

FOOD RESOURCES

Precious Meat Supplies Cut by Premature Deaths

➤ MEAT wouldn't be so scarce if so much of it were not allowed to die on the hoof without ever reaching market, headquarters of the American Veterinary Medical Association in Chicago pointed out. One way to increase meat supplies, both for home use and for relief shipment abroad, would be to stage an all-out campaign to stop the needless deaths of so many meat animals, dairy cows and poultry.

One-third of all pigs in this country die before they reach the packing-house, officers of the Association declared. One-fifth of all dairy calves die before they come of milking age. A quarter of all egg-farm pullets never get a chance to lay an egg. Parts of millions of hogs are condemned annually by inspectors because of tuberculosis, and careless shipping of livestock results in an estimated 75 million pounds of lost meat every year.

Science News Letter, October 25, 1947

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