MEDICINE

Link Hot Foods to Cancer

Drinking or eating very hot food may injure the lining of your stomach and predispose you to stomach cancer, which claims 45 percent of all cancer deaths.

➤ A VERY HOT cup of coffee or other hot food can injure the lining of your stomach. And it may play a role in the origin of one of the most deadly forms of cancer, a scientist suggested.

Dr. Andrew C. Ivy of the University of Illinois indicted very hot foods at a meeting of the National Advisory Cancer Council at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Md. The Council announced a new attack on the problem of gastric or stomach cancer. A national conference to study methods of fighting this killer is being called for Dec. 13-14 in San Francisco.

Food that has a temperature of 122 degrees Fahrenheit or more can damage the tender tissues of your stomach wall, Dr. Ivy explained. But in tests he conducted, some persons drank liquids which were as hot as 131 degrees or above.

The conference planned on gastric cancer will include papers by scientists whose studies may shed some light on whether hot foods are involved in this disease.

This form of cancer claims 45% of the deaths from all types of cancer. It is estimated that 90% of the patients who get it die within 18 months after it is diagnosed, Dr. John R. Heller, director of the National Cancer Institute, said.

"We are probably a long way from a gastric cancer cure," Dr. Heller cautioned. "But even with present methods many people who now die of cancer would stand a good chance if the disease could be caught early enough," he added.

There is still no effective method for mass screening of the population to detect this form of cancer. The fluoroscope has been used, but it has been dangerous because patients and doctors were exposed to large doses of radiation from this source.

Several projects to improve this method by reducing the danger from exposure are going on in institutions such as Johns Hopkins University and Westinghouse Electric Corporation. However, this method has several disadvantages. The numbers of people who would have to be surveyed would be tremendous. There are not enough physicians in the nation for such a project.

There is one hope with this method. It is believed that chronic irritation of the stomach predisposes a person to stomach cancer. Papers to be presented at the San Francisco conference will attempt to prove or disprove the theory that people who have little or no secretion of acid in their stomachs are likely to get the disease. If true, this might mean that patients who develop duodenal ulcers, 75% of whom are known to have over-secretion of this stomach acid, may be immune.

If this theory is true, perhaps some other method can single out the people with little or no acid secretion. Then, only these persons would have to be given mass screening tests with the fluoroscope.

At present, the disease is more prevalent in men than in women. On the other hand, it is known that men secrete more acid than women, which seems to contradict the low acid theory. A reason for the sex difference in cancer may be that men are less careful in their eating habits, the scientists suggested.

Science News Letter, October 2, 1948

TECHNOLOGY

Plastic Cloth Promising For Tobacco-Raising Tents

➤ GREAT TOBACCO FIELDS in the Connecticut Valley, where thousands of acres of cigar wrappers are raised each year under "tents," have a promise of a new covering material. It is a plastic screening cloth, to replace the cheesecloth-like material used for the past decades.

The new material, which was tried on approximately seven acres this year, has finished its summer work successfully and is in condition for re-use probably several times. In this it differs from the cloth ordinarily used, which has little value after the end of a single season. Early tests also indicate that perhaps this plastic fabric provides a greater diffusion of light, permits a higher degree of moisture retention, and affords greater protection against frost. It is a Velon plastic and is a product of the Firestone Plastics Company, Akron, Ohio.

The Connecticut Valley tent or shade-grown tobacco is a Sumatra type of cigar wrapper tobacco that can not be grown successfully in New England in the open. The tents are flat coverings held aloft on poles and wires high enough to permit men and horses to work under them. They offer shade during the day, and hold in heat during the night. They also hold in moisture, and offer a degree of protection against storms and tobacco-destructive hail.

This Velon screening cloth may find other important applications in the agricultural and forestry fields. Among these are its use in raising shade-grown coffee and certain seedlings that need protection during their first season. Its first cost is higher than cloths now used but the fact that it can be used for several seasons will make it economical.

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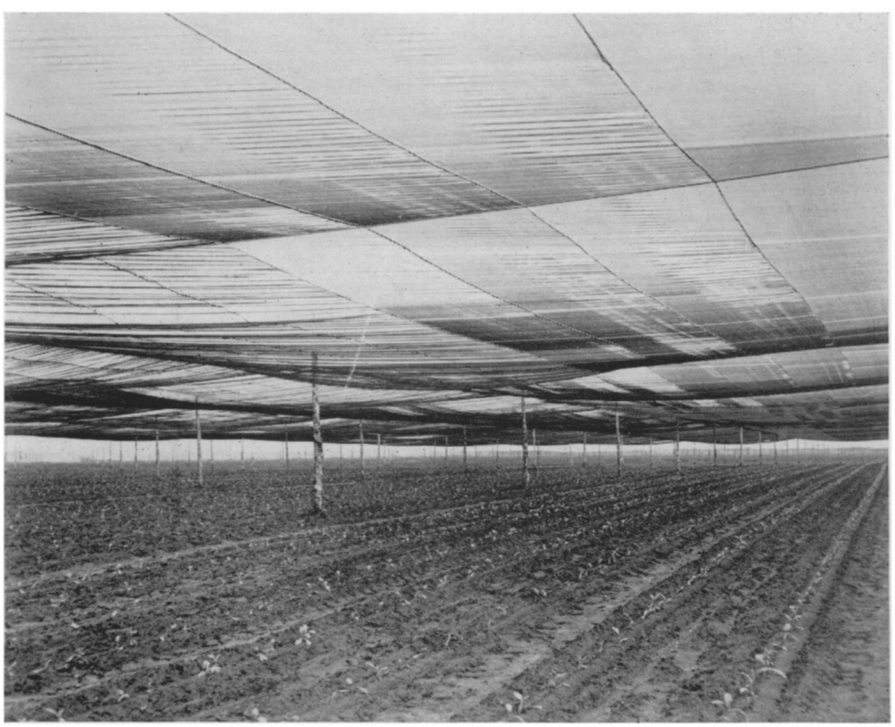

PLASTICS AID AGRICULTURE—Open mesh screening cloth made of plastic is being used to protect an acreage of Sumatra-type, shade-grown tobacco at Windsor, near Hartford, Conn.