

AGRICULTURE

1954 Corn Borer Loss Heavy; Outlook Is Bad

► THE NATION'S corn farmers are expected to lose more than seven percent of their grain this year to the European corn borer.

Predicting heavier attacks of the pest during the coming year than were experienced in 1954, the U. S. Department of Agriculture revealed that losses last year almost reached the seven percent mark.

The total United States loss to the pest last year was 192,000,000 bushels, valued at more than \$261,000,000.

Ironically, the European corn borer destroyed in the United States last year an equivalent of almost one-third of all the corn raised in Europe that year.

Iowa was heaviest hit of the 25 eastern and Midwestern states surveyed. The Hawkeye state lost almost one-fifth of its 581,000,000 bushel crop. The corn borer's appetite accounted for the destruction of 94,000,000 bushels in Iowa.

Illinois lost more than 38,000,000 bushels, Nebraska, 22,000,000 and South Dakota, 17,000,000.

Earlier, Agriculture entomologists warned American farmers that they face serious threats again this year from the borer. Biggest problem areas are likely to be in the same four states that suffered the biggest losses in 1954.

Science News Letter, April 9, 1955

MEDICINE

Probability of Broken Bone One Per Person

► THE PROBABILITY of having a broken bone is at least one per person in the United States, Dr. Harold E. Crowe of the Los Angeles Orthopaedic and Methodist Hospitals has figured.

He attributed the 162,000,000 or so probable broken bones to the modern machine age, violent sports, high speed travel and increased life expectancy.

The type of broken bone that can best be treated in the doctor's office, he said, is the very common fracture of the upper arm bone just below the shoulder. Older people very often break this bone, he said.

Children often break finger bones while playing. If a person escapes this, it is very likely that in later years he will become less skillful in movement, will trip and fall, and without thinking throw out his hand to break the fall.

This results in the common fracture just above the wrist. Such breaks can be treated in the doctor's office but will almost invariably result in visible deformity. Even so, full use of the wrist can be obtained.

"Many cowpunchers are thrown from their horses, suffer fractures of this type, and never seek medical care," Dr. Crowe said. "Many make a complete recovery as far as use of the wrist is concerned."

Science News Letter, April 9, 1955

NUTRITION

No Free World Famine

UN agency tabulation indicates that there will be enough food in 1955 for countries outside of the Iron Curtain. There are shortages, but also ample surpluses.

► FAMINE WILL not plague the free world this year.

Areas of the free world are now facing serious food shortages, but ample surpluses in neighboring countries will hold the famine horseman from galloping across the line between hunger and wholesale starvation.

Tunisia, Laos, Cambodia and Liberia have suffered heavy grain losses. They might not have enough domestic supplies to feed their populations. But despite empty national larders, there is little evidence that the shortages will reach emergency proportions requiring international action.

Of the 71 member nations of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization, only Liberia in Africa has reported a food shortage.

Reports from Communist North Viet Nam indicate that the people in that area are threatened with starvation and unless Red China comes to their aid, more than 1,000,000 face death.

There have been no similar reports from either Russia, Communist China or the satellite nations that famine conditions are threatening. It should be pointed out, however, that the Communists consider food production as strategic information and particularly when it is adverse, suppress its publicity.

The Communist nations are not members of the FAO, which is the UN's clearing house for the world's food problems, and there is no official information available.

Threatened shortages in the free world nations, on the other hand, are reported to the FAO.

This is the present state of the free world's food shortage situation as compiled by FAO headquarters in Rome for SCIENCE SERVICE:

Drought has seriously affected the grain crops in Tunisia, but it is still too early to tell how great the total loss will be. Improved weather might alleviate the situation in part, as harvesting does not begin for several more weeks.

Tunisia has put an embargo on soft wheat exports. Even then, if domestic crops are not enough to feed the population, there should be no difficulty in obtaining food from neighboring countries in North Africa, or from France, which has very ample supplies.

Cambodia has had a bad rice crop, estimated at only one-half the normal production. There is talk, however, of importing 200,000 to 300,000 tons of rice.

Laos is reported to have had the worst rice crop on record. South Viet Nam, which is a neighbor to both Laos and Cambodia,

on the other hand, has a substantial export surplus.

Liberia, which has reported a shortage officially, asked for 1,000 tons of rice which is interpreted by observers as an indication that the extent of the threat is very small.

Thailand has some areas where food is short, but the nation as a whole has large reserves of rice.

Science News Letter, April 9, 1955

PSYCHOLOGY

Commentators May Read Worse Than Engineers

► WRITERS AND commentators who deal with words much of their life sometimes are worse readers than engineers or accountants. This is shown by tests at the Yoder Reading Improvement Center in New York.

One stockbroker was found to read almost twice as fast as another stockbroker of the same age and of similar educational background. Two playwrights, same age and background, were tested. One read 200 words a minute; the other 600 words a minute. Three hundred fifty words a minute is average, according to accepted reading standards. One radio commentator read extremely slowly, even to himself. He could not learn to see more than one or two words at a time. Another commentator, without much special training in reading skill, can glance at a page, look up and repeat it almost word for word.

Personality helps to determine your reading ability, says Mrs. Hilda W. Yoder, director of the Center.

"It is hard to make certain personalities turn loose of each word and learn to look for only important words in their reading," Mrs. Yoder says. This is the slow, sure person, one who inspects every detail. True enough, it is this type person who generally seeks out work dealing with such precise professions as engineering or law.

A good reader, no matter what his occupation, has developed his imagination and sense of judgment to the point where he can quickly comprehend what the author is trying to say. He adjusts his reading speed to the material. He slows his gait to read contracts, great books or technical papers where every word counts. He speeds his pace to pick out only the key words and ideas when he reads business correspondence, reports, newspapers—material that comprises about 90% of an average person's reading.

Science News Letter, April 9, 1955