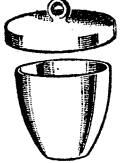


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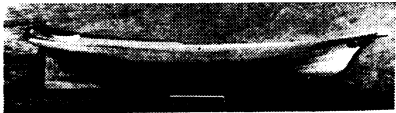
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normally reached slaughter weight only after five or six years at a stocking rate of one beast to 20 acres. With Townsville lucerne, slaughter weight can be achieved in less than three years at a stocking rate of one beast to five acres. On one commercial ranch near Katherine, 1,300 acres sown with the legume last year carried 600 cattle throughout the dry season.

Dr. Norman says research showed that Townsville lucerne has two vital effects upon pastures: it enriches soil by adding nitrogen from the air and it increases the protein content of the pasture for stock.

On Cape York Peninsula, Australian and American developers are planning to sow 10,000 acres a year from the air. At Katherine the company which began with 1,300 acres last year is planning to increase sowing at a rate of 5,000 acres a year.

W. A. Scholes

FROM SWEDEN

Polluted Fish Sale Banned

The Swedish Medical Board has banned the sale of fish from 40 Swedish lakes and rivers. A high level of poisonous methyl mercury has been found in fish taken from these waters, which are both in the south and the far north of the country.

Many other lakes and rivers have been exempted from the ban because the Medical Board has decided to adopt a relatively high acceptability limit for methyl mercury levels before declaring the fish unfit for human consumption. The board has decided that there will be an adequate safety margin if the limit is put at one milligram per kilogram of fish compared with the internationally recommended upper limit of 0.5 milligram per kilogram in food stuffs.

Nevertheless, the board issued a warning to regular eaters of large quantities of fresh-water fish taken from waters known to have a significant methyl mercury content to moderate their consumption. Other waters are likely to be added to the list as investigations proceed.

The ban will have serious consequences for hundreds of fresh-water fishermen; fishmongers are already finding strong sales resistance to all fresh-water fish. Though pollution has been stopped or severely reduced in recent years, the ban is bound to stay in force for many years. The source of the problem is mercury released by pulp factories. It breaks down into methyl mercury, and it takes decades for the methyl mercury level to become diluted.

H. J. Barnes

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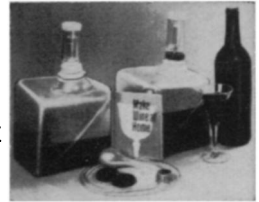
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