

Central American coffee yields.

Dr. William H. Cowgill, 36-year-old plant scientist, heads the U. S. technical team. There is a high-altitude research station at "Finca Chocola," Guatemala.

Working with agricultural scientists in the cooperating countries, the Americans improve coffee production by applying techniques of U. S. fruit growers. Selection of superior trees, culling out of "loafer" trees, crop rotation and better culture methods are among the tricks being taught.

Improvements cannot be put into general practice overnight. But already yield increases are a reality. The U. S. experts hope to see the Guatemalan average, for example, boosted from one pound per tree to three, four or even five pounds.

In 1949 this country imported 2,917,000,000 pounds of green coffee, Department of Agriculture reports. Eighty percent of it came from Brazil and Colombia, only 11.5% from Central America.

If by scientific methods Central American growers can increase their production several-fold, the effect will be quickly felt in U. S. coffee supplies and grocers' prices, the Agriculture Department believes.

Science News Letter, April 1, 1950

#### METEOROLOGY

### Predict Colder April than Normal for Most of U. S.

➤ IT will be colder than normal the first half of April over the eastern two-thirds of the country. In the far west and along the Gulf of Mexico coast, temperatures for the last of March and first of April were predicted to be not far from normal.

This is the second U. S. Weather Bureau extended forecast to be released to publications. The first half of March generally bore out the monthly prediction made at the beginning of March.

Heavier rainfall than normal from mid-March to mid-April was predicted for the south central, southeastern and northwestern portions of the country. More than

enough April showers, at least for the first half of the month, to bring May flowers.

In the rest of the country, rainfall will be generally normal, or slightly less than normal.

Jerome Namias, chief of the Bureau's Extended Forecast Section, warns that his predictions do not hold good for limited areas and represent averages over an entire month.

Science News Letter, April 1, 1950

#### GEOLOGY

### Phosphate Deposits Found Off Florida Coast

➤ MAJOR deposits of phosphates may lie on the floor of the Gulf of Mexico off the Florida coast, Robert H. Stewart, a Government geologist, reports.

Within the past year the spotlight has been turned on phosphates, the fertilizer raw material that can make an acre of land feed more people. Scientists discovered phosphate rock contains low concentrations of uranium and other fissionable materials vital to atomic energy.

Little is known about underwater deposits of phosphates. A unit of the U. S. Geological Survey is in Plant City, Fla., studying land deposits which make Florida the nation's leading phosphate producer. Survey officials admitted the study is part of U. S. atomic research.

While on a fishing trip off Tampa, Mr. Stewart and another geologist with the unit found evidence of phosphates. They took samples, and found the material covered the bottom of the Gulf over a 25-mile area, Mr. Stewart told the Geological Society of Washington. Fishermen's reports indicate the deposits may extend as far south as Fort Myers, he said.

The possibility they could be exploited commercially is "remote," Mr. Stewart added. Too little is known about them. Technical processes do not exist for separating them from sea-water sands.

But more attention may be paid to such underwater phosphates. In January the

semi-annual report of the Atomic Energy Commission said the extraction of uranium from low-grade materials is of major importance to the nation's atomic energy program.

Science News Letter, April 1, 1950

## RADIO

Saturday, April 8, 3:15 p.m., EST

"Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, director of Science Service over Columbia Broadcasting System.

Dr. H. H. Schrenk, Research Director, Industrial Hygiene Foundation of America, Mellon Institute, Pittsburgh, will talk about "Pure Air for America."

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