

PUBLIC HEALTH

Hay Fever Season Due

➤ HAY FEVER sufferers should prepare for their seasonal bout with ragweed from mid-August to mid-September, when the pollen count is highest.

Several million Americans are already well-stocked with anti-ragweed ammunition, tissues, inhalers, nose drops and antihistaminics, in anticipation of the coming hay fever season. Some have begun to experience the familiar symptoms of sneezing, nasal discharge and weeping eyes.

But many others have not yet begun to suffer seriously because, in most parts of the country, the peak of the season occurs during late summer when ragweed pollen fills the air, the Allergy Foundation of America has pointed out.

What can victims do in preparation of the season that is fast approaching? The Foundation advises these procedures:

1. Begin taking anti-hay fever shots well before the onset of the hay fever season. Continue them through the entire season.
2. Avoid exposure to pollen as much as possible. Air condition the home and place of employment.
3. Antihistaminic drugs can be taken to relieve the symptoms. These drugs lessen

the nasal and sinus congestion and relieve itching.

4. For the very sensitive victim, the dust-free room is the best haven.

5. Avoid trips into the country during the high pollen count season.

6. Watch the local communication mediums for the latest pollen count in the area in which you live or must travel.

The pollen index figure for each community is based on three factors that directly affect individual pollen exposure. First, the length of the season; second, maximum aerial concentration of pollen; and third, the total pollen catch on test slides throughout the season.

Any city having a pollen index above ten (and few during the coming weeks will not) is sure to be a trouble area. A count between five and ten is fairly good, while below five is good and a count below one is the hay fever sufferer's paradise.

The heaviest concentrations of pollen occur in the central states, the Mississippi Valley area. The best refuges are the Southern tip of Florida, the Pacific coast, and the wooded areas of northern Minnesota, Michigan, Maine and New Hampshire, a report

issued by the Abbott Laboratories of North Chicago said.

A booklet entitled "Hay Fever and What You Can Do About It" has been prepared by the Committee on Public Education of the Allergy Foundation of America. It contains the advice of leading allergy specialists in the United States. The booklet may be purchased for 25¢ in coin by sending a request to the Allergy Foundation of America, 801 Second Ave., New York 17, N. Y.

Science News Letter, August 9, 1958

GEOGRAPHY

Addition of Alaska Changes U. S. Center

➤ THE ADDITION of Alaska as the 49th state will shift the geographical center of the United States approximately 439 miles northwest, Rear Admiral H. Arnold Karo, director of the Coast and Geodetic Survey, reported.

The new center will be some 11 miles west of Castle Rock, S. Dak., or 20 miles east of the corner where South Dakota, Wyoming and Montana meet. Now the center is near Lebanon, Kans.

Survey scientists point out that because there is "no great degree of precision" in the methods used to determine the geographical center, the point, given as latitude 44 degrees, 59 minutes north and longitude 103 degrees, 38 minutes west, may be "off" as much as ten miles in any direction.

Center of gravity methods were used to compute the new position. Admiral Karo describes the method as follows:

"If one imagines a weightless spherical shell on which the areas of only the United States and Alaska are painted with an absolutely uniform thickness, then the center of gravity, or the geographic center, might be said to be that point at which the shell will balance."

Science News Letter, August 9, 1958

NATURAL RESOURCES

Predicts Bright Future For Seaweed Feed

➤ SEAWEED, with its exceptionally high vitamin content, may one day soon provide food for man and animals.

Experiments indicate that livestock gains many benefits from being fed seaweed meal. Milk production increased in cows and the vitamin A content of their milk was greater. Sheep produced more lambs and pelts of unusual quality. Hens laid better eggs, turkey mortality was reduced and pigs fattened faster.

Seaweed is the only known vegetable source of vitamin B-12 and is a very good source of carotene, vitamin B-1, vitamin E and folic acid. It contains about the same amount of fat and protein as plants grown on land.

Seaweed may also be useful as a fertilizer to return minerals to the soil, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports in *Commercial Fisheries Abstracts*.

Science News Letter, August 9, 1958



ACCELERATOR COUNTER—Test trials have begun on the *Midwestern Universities Research Association's* electron accelerator, forerunner of the world's largest atom smasher. Shown checking the machine's electron counter are physicists R. O. Haxby (left) of *Purdue University* and Fred Mills of *MURA*. The model has unique spiral-shaped magnets. *MURA* headquarters are at the *University of Wisconsin*.