Scientists Row Over Pesticide Ban Issue

CORVALLIS, Ore. (AP) — A dispute broke out Wednesday among some of the 450 scientists attending a symposium over whether pesticides should be banned and whether scientists should become involved in any fight to ban them.

Those who wanted prohibition argued that the effects of DDT and other pesticides still aren't known. Dr. Alvin M. Rezzing of Oklahoma City said, there may be subtle changes in our brains because of DDT that could change our behavior when under stress.

But others felt the benefits justified continued use.

Kenneth Walker of the Agricultural Research Service of the Department of Agriculture, said availability of food crops would be reduced from 25 to 30 per cent in three to five years if use of pesticides was discontinued altogether.

Last Friday the Agriculture Department announced a substantial curtailment in government use of DDT, saying that from now on it will use less persistent chemicals such as chlordane wherever possible in federal-state insect control programs. A department said widespread public concern over pesticide use prompted the department action so that such programs could be studied more fully.

Dr. William F. Durham of the U.S. Public Health Service at Perrine, Fla., said use of DDT on insects that carry disease have saved at least five million lives and prevented 100 million illnesses.

An undercurrent running through the meeting at Oregon State University was whether scientists should permit themselves to become involved in what they feel has become a political question.

George Chadwick of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife at Oregon State, declined Tuesday to answer a question about use of pesticides, saying the answer was for the politicians. The audience applauded.

Later that day, Dr. William P. Stephen, an Entomologist at Oregon State, took specific exception to Chadwick's remarks saying scientists ought to take a stand. He also was applauded.

But the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, in a statement, prepared on request of the symposium, said it could not recommend discontinuance of DDT.

"This compound still provides the most effective, cheapest and safest means of abating and eradicating malaria," the statement said.

WHO recommended a progressive move toward other methods of insect control. "Certainly, an attempt to force the pace by advocating the immediate discontinuation of the use of DDT would be a disaster to world health," the statement said.

Dr. Risebrough contended that pesticides already exist that could be substituted for DDT in California. a statement denied Wednesday by Dr. John E. Swift, also of California-Berkeley.

Walter, of the Department of Agriculture, said, "We believe resistant strains of crops is the ultimate answer in pest control.

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55 California Crops Facing Likely DDT Ban

SACRAMENTO (UPI)—The State Agriculture Department has announced a proposed ban on the use of all DDT and DDD on 55 major crops and animals for pest control.

Agriculture Director Jerry W. Fielder said the regulations, which will probably be adopted within a few weeks, would go into effect Jan. 1.

Fielder said the ban was recommended in a study by Dr. J. E. Swift, statewide coordinator of pesticides for the University of California, who turned the report over to the department.

Fielder said the study found that some crops "still need the use of DDT or DDD in combination with some other pesticides to control certain specific pests."

He said the University, which acts as the department's advisor on pesticides, recommended the continued but restricted use of both bugkillers until alternatives can be found.

"The report said the university hopes to find most of these substitutes within one or two years," Fielder said.

"When the university reports to us that DDT is no longer necessary for these crops, we will study that recommendation and act on it," he said. "Our goal is to phase out the use of DDT and DDD in California on an orderly and scientifically sound basis."

The department has already ordered a ban on the pesticides for household and garden use and in dust form on crops effective Jan. 1.

Earlier the Senate passed an outright ban on the use of all DDT in California, but the farm-oriented Assembly Agricultural Committee killed the legislation.

The departments proposed ban would extend to 35 consumer crops: alfalfa, almonds, apples, apricots, artichokes, asparagus, barley, table beets, bushberries, carrots, celery, cucumbers, field corn, figs, flax, lettuce, melons, oats, okra, parsnips, peaches and nectarines, pears, plums and prunes, potatoes, rice, safflower, sorghum, spinach, squash, strawberries, sugar beets, sunflower, sweet potatoes, turnips and wheat.

It would also be prohibited from use on 12 crops grown for seed: beets, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collards, ladino clover, lettuce, mustard, onions and turnips.

The regulations would ban use of DDT or DDD for fly control and killing pests of chickens, horses, cattle, pigeons, sheep, swine and turkeys.

Fielder said the ban would reduce by 50 per cent the agricultural use of both pesticides in California.

He said continued use would be restricted to the cabbage looper, the corn earworm (also known as the cotton bollworm and tomato fruitworm) and the lygus bug that attacks cotton and alfalfa.

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