McCall Asks Scientists' Help In Dealing With Pesticides

By MARGE DAVENPORT
Journal Staff Writer

CORVALLIS — Gov. Tom McCall called upon scientists Monday night to take an active role in helping to protect Oregon's environment.

Speaking to the symposium on pesticides at Oregon State University, the governor suggested that a committee on science and technology could counsel and advise the governor and legislature to help avoid mistakes, and give reassurance to citizens that technological advances are safe.

"It is not only problems involving DDT and burning of grass stubble in the Willamette Valley, or the siting of nuclear power plants. It is also to alert us in total to what is coming and how the technical and scientific changes may affect our people and give us a basis for sound planning," he said.

DECLARING THAT enhancing and improving the environment is of paramount importance in Oregon, the governor said the state must be a place where it is fit to live.

"Yet we have waited until 'pesticide' is a household conversation starter and the latest rumor on radiation spills from nuclear power plants and the imminent danger from the reckless atom dominates the social hour,' the governor said.

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OSU Symposium Told Pesticide Use Unwise

By MARGE DAVENPORT
Journal Staff Writer

CORVALLIS — The opening session of the symposium on pesticides at Oregon State University was told Monday that their continued use is "unwise, if not sheer folly."

Dr. Tony J. Peterle, the Ohio State University professor who has gained international recognition for his use of radioactive tracers in following the movement of pesticides in the environment, warned the 450 scientists and others attending the three-day symposium that "time is running out" for stopping pesticide use.

"THE PLEA for more time to do research can always be made, but based on my evaluation of the current evidence, time is a commodity we no longer have," Dr. Peterle said.

He explained that persistent pesticides have been found widely distributed in the biosphere. These are distributed by winds, water, various animals and biological organisms.

Frequently pesticide residues have been found in wild animals and individuals living in areas that have never received treatment with that particular form of pesticide, Dr. Peterle explained. This long-distance transport is not well understood, he added, but scientists do know that pesticides in water runoff end up in the oceans.

DR. PETERLE studied DDT residue in antarctic snow melt and estimates from his research that 2,684 tons of DDT could have accumulated in the snow melt in the 22 years from 1947 to 1969. He said this could be as high as 26,841 tons. Since 3.5 billion pounds of DDT were manufactured up to 1965, the presence of residue in the antarctic snow melt did not come as a surprise, Dr. Peterle said.

DDT applied in fields in Texas was traced to Cincinnati, Ohio, and pesticides from other sources have been determined to be part of the air pollution over Great Britain, the scientist explained.

In his research, Dr. Peterle also found that pesticides are persistent and large percentages of applications were found to be present as much as 12 years later.

"CONSISTENT quantities of pesticide applied worldwide during the past two decades have built up until there is a large store of material available for transfer to and from the various segments of the biosphere," Dr. Peterle concluded.

The pesticide symposium, which continues through Wednesday, is being held to assess the impact of the pest poisons on the environment.

DR. ROBERT RISEBROUGH, University of California researcher, said pesticides are causing catastrophes in some bird populations.

Brown pelicans and petrels which nest on islands off the California Coast produced no young last year or this year because their eggs had no shells, he said.

He blamed the pesticides, DDT and dieldrin, as well as long-lasting industrial chemicals.

James Kieth, of the federal Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife, asserted that the continued existence of some species of sea birds is endangered by pesticides.

"MAN IS FOOLISH if he continues to put long-lasting pesticides and industrial chemicals in the ocean," Risebrough said.

He added that the fish in some areas are highly polluted with DDT and predicted that when the Food and Drug Administration gets around to looking at them that a large portion normally used for food will be declared unfit for human consumption.

Dr. Donald G. Crosby, chairman of the pesticides division of the American Chemical Society, declared pesticides are here to stay.

HE SAID THAT if it had to be pelicans or man, he voted for man. He cited many beneficial uses of pesticides and chemicals and said they had given man domination over pests and fungi.

"If DDT is important to man, let's seek ways to live with it," Dr. Crosby suggested.

He expressed confidence that chemists could also find new, more satisfying chemicals for pest control.

The symposium, being attended by about 450 scientists, continues through Wednesday.

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