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DEATH-KNOLL FOR DDT IS BEGINNING TO SOUND

This spring Sweden became the first country in the world to ban the use of DDT and in the United States similar moves are being made in cities and states across the land. At the federal level too, serious efforts to outlaw DDT and similar persistent pesticides are beginning to stir.

The latest confrontation, and perhaps the most significant to date in this country is taking place in Madison, Wisconsin. Focal point of the action in Madison is a hearing being conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on a petition which could eliminate DDT in that state. The department is responsible for keeping the state's water resources free of pollution, and under state law it can, upon petition, restrict or ban the use of any substance it finds to be fouling the water.

Last November the resource department was petitioned by two local groups and the Environmental Defense Fund of Brookhaven, N.Y., to determine whether or not DDT is a pollutant of the state's water

The Wisconsin hearings are significant since it is the first time that a proposed state-wide ban has been tested in court. If successful EDF and similar groups are expected to carry the battle to other states.

The first EDF witness was Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson, who has sponsored a bill in the Senate to eliminate the use of DDT in the United States.

"The specific question before us", he said, "is whether the over-all benefits of DDT are offset by the damage it does. I think the evidence is clear that the damage is far greater than the benefit. In only one