

HAPPENINGS

by Stanley Rachesky
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An inquisitive, but uninformed, group of concerned citizens demanding and recommending what should be done in Illinois about our environment, seemed to set the mood of the April meeting held in Chicago of the Interagency Committee on the Use of Pesticides.

Elementary questions concerning Dutch elm disease control, which could have been avoided by reading a simple pamphlet, is a prime example of the questions being asked.

Questions concerning methoxychlor for Dutch elm disease spraying were brought up before the panel. Research recently completed gave this insecticide a clean bill of health concerning its safety to fish, birds and mammals. The committee did say, however, that the snail was the only animal that stored methoxychlor. All other animals immediately excreted the insecticide to innocuous materials. If a bird or fish ate a snail the methoxychlor would still be excreted to innocuous materials.

In 1969 marijuana became classified as a noxious weed. Over 50% of the weed in Illinois has been under control. A pilot project in Champaign county with the cooperation of the Department of Agriculture will begin shortly. Champaign county, where the University of Illinois is located, has had its problems with pot smokers. In 1967 5% of the students were smoking the weed. This has risen sharply so now over 40% are puffing.

Three facets of the program are under way. They will include a stiffer law to get at the pushers; an improved recreational program to involve more young folks; and a weed eradication program using 2, 4 D or amitrol-T herbicide. It is hopeful that desirable grasses will eventually crowd out marijuana weed areas to naturally eliminate the regrowth of the problem.

New labels for parathion have been adopted by the U. S. Department of Agriculture as a safety measure. Parathion is a very dangerous material. Special tags for identification of the product; the elimination of selling the insecticide in glass bottles to eliminate breakage; a special release signed by the farmer for its application; and dated placards to be displayed in treated fields warning all to keep away.

Milk monitoring programs will also get into full swing. Two dairy herds have been taken off the market because of dieldrin being found in the milk. We have approximately 12,000 dairy herds in Illinois.

In the last ten years Illinois has had 24 accidental deaths due to pesticides. Only one was an agriculture accident, and 23 have been due to gross homeowner neglect and misuse. Many Chicagoland residents will be applying chemicals on their property. A word to the wise — Know what you are doing — Read the label.

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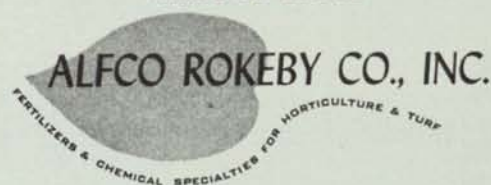
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