

Researcher Says 2,4-D Not Harmful to Animals, Humans

Following a report that more than one hundred birds of possibly ten different species were found dead on an Indiana farm in May as the result of ingesting a weed spray, R. Milton Carleton of the Vaughan Garden research center in Chicago said that he doubted if the facts were correctly presented.

As for the lethal effects of 2, 4-D, supposedly responsible for the death of the birds, Carleton pointed out that the herbicide is not toxic to insects, animals and humans. He said that he had worked on the development of the material as early as 1943 and even then researchers were impressed with its lack of toxicity to anything other than plants. Since then, Carleton said that he has repeatedly drunk solutions containing enough 2,4-D to kill weeds in a 100 square foot lawn area without suffering any ill effects.

Carleton questioned whether as many different species as were said to be killed by the weed spray could make their habitat on a small farm. Robins, barn swallows, purple martins, kingbirds, redwing blackbirds, bluebirds, wood thrushes and other thrushes were reported to have been killed. He maintained that these birds usually aren't found living closely together and a farm capable of maintaining them would have to be several miles in area.

Say He Doesn't Know Birds

Several persons who wrote to a Chicago newspaper contended that although Carleton may be correct in stating that 2,4-D isn't injurious to birds, he is no ornithologist. All of these people, who either live on farms or had at some time during their lives, stated that it isn't uncommon for perhaps 50 different species of birds to live on farms encompassing no more than 100 to 200 acres.

"Hole Notes", published by the Minnesota GCSA, told of an incident where a Minneapolis TV station showed pictures that tended to overdramatize the death of robins caused by a pesticide. There was no clearcut proof, said the "Hole Notes" account, that a pesticide was responsible. It went on to say that the misuse of chemicals can't be defended, but there seems to be a tendency to brainwash the public as to the harmful effects of herbicides and pesticides now that Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" has been published.



Jim Cihak, Coach Robert Lamson, Ted Bailey and Eliot C. Roberts, agronomist, all of Iowa State University, are shown in front of memorial plaque at the school's Veenker Memorial GC (above) and checking a green (below).



Jim Cihak and Ted Bailey, turf management majors at Iowa State play on the school's golf team partly because Eliot Roberts of the agronomy school insists that his students play golf. Turf management, says Roberts, involves not only knowing soils, fertilizers, disease and insect control but understanding the problems a golfer has to contend with.

A Senate subcommittee has been holding hearings in recent weeks to determine whether congressional action is needed to prevent possible harmful effects of the allegedly increasing use of pesticides, particularly in farm insect control.