

## Chlordane Capacity Boosted by Velsicol

Velsicol Chemical Corp. is increasing its manufacturing capacity for technical chlordane by 50 percent.

"The environmental pressures on other insecticides have increased the demand for chlordane, worldwide," said Robert N. Morris, Velsicol's president and chairman of the board. "We expect approximately half of the increased capacity to be on stream by October of this year and the other half by mid-1975."

Sales of chlordane have increased not only for agricultural and pest control uses, but also for the home, lawn and garden markets.

## Floratom Grass Hits Consumer Market

Floratom, a new variety of St. Augustinegrass resistant to chinchbugs and St. Augustine Decline (SAD), is now available to homeowners, notes Dr. Walter Walla, plant pathologist for the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

The new grass was developed jointly by the Florida and Texas Agricultural Experiment Stations. It was released to commercial sod producers in 1972.

"Besides being resistant to SAD and chinchbugs, Floratom is also tolerant to downy mildew and gray leaf spot.

However, brown patch and rust still pose problems, and the new grass is less hardy than Common St. Augustinegrass," points out the Texas A&M University System specialist.

The new grass is moderately coarse-textured, is fast-growing and has a dark-green color. It also has a larger root system than common St. Augustinegrass. Floratom can be used in establishing a new lawn or for interplanting in established lawns that are affected by SAD. However, late fall planting is not recommended.

"When interplanting, plant the sprigs on 18-inch centers. For new lawns or seedbeds, plant on 12 to 18-inch centers," suggests Walla.

"Keep unplanted sprigs out of heat and drying conditions. After planting, water the grass thoroughly and keep it watered. Apply a complete fertilizer when the new runners begin to grow.

"Be sure to purchase Floratom sod or sprigs from a reputable nursery since it is hard to distinguish from Common St. Augustinegrass," advises Walla.

## Fiber for Paper Making Discussed in Bulletin

Kenaf, a promising new annual source of raw material for paper pulp, could help solve the national shortage of timber used in paper manufacture. An important step in evaluating the com-

mercial potential for kenaf has been taken in a study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) showing how to predict yields of kenaf crops that might be grown in different parts of the country.

Kenaf is a rapidly-growing fiber plant found in a wild or cultivated form in Africa, Central America, Russia, and other temperate and tropical parts of the world. Paper pulp can be made from the woody stems of the plants, which reach a height of 12 to 20 feet at time of harvest.

Yield estimates derived in the study appear realistic and are timely because kenaf is nearing commercial production, according to scientists of USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS). The report also indicates that more work is needed to develop an ideal system of yield prediction — one that would give greater consideration to the effects of soil moisture. However, this need is common to studies of yield predictions for all crops.

The ARS bulletin describes how kenaf yields might be predicted by a systematic evaluation of leaf development and stem heights. More than 20 tons per acre of kenaf could be expected under good conditions in southern Florida and Texas. Between 10 to 12.5 tons per acre might be obtained as far north as eastern North Carolina. Yields are also shown for Glenn Dale, Md., where the research was conducted.

Details are given in Technical Bulletin No. 1477, "Kenaf Leaf Development and Stem Height: Index of Crop Yield in the United States." Copies are available at 35 cents from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

## Railroad Elimination Challenged by Vistron

A plan proposed by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to eliminate extensive railroad lines in the Midwest has been challenged by a mid-continent petrochemical company.

The Vistron Corporation, Cleveland, Ohio, said that abandoning rail service to the area would deprive customers of the fertilizer they need, or it would have to be shipped in by other means at substantially higher costs.

In testimony before the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), company representatives indicated that they had built or purchased 106 retail fertilizer outlets in six Midwestern states. The outlets marketing fertilizer under the Sohigro brand, are located on railroad sidings. Only 31 of the outlets would be left with rail service under the proposed plan.

Two basic plant nutrients, potash and phosphate, are mined at considerable distances from the Midwest. This necessitates long-haul traffic. According to a company representative, the

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The company said this alternative would increase transportation costs for fertilizer from a low of \$4.88 per ton, to a high of \$9.40 per ton. "This additional cost would have to be passed on to the customer in the form of higher fertilizer prices."

The elimination of branch lines would not only increase fertilizer costs but all equipment, chemicals and materials formerly transported by rail would undergo similar price increases.

## Sulphur Price Rise Announced by Freeport

Freeport Minerals Company announced a general increase of \$5.50 per ton in its domestic prices for sulphur.

Also its charges for transportation, terminaling and insurance for delivery of the sulphur to its customers would be increased to reflect its costs of providing those services.

The increase makes Freeport's price for regular dark sulphur f.o.b. Port Sulphur, La., \$33.50 per ton, and in the Florida market, the largest sulphur-consuming market in the world, \$36.50 per ton, f.o.b. Tampa terminal. They did not announce specific prices in other markets but said that these prices

reflected the differences in transportation, terminaling and other costs to these destinations from Port Sulphur.

The domestic price schedule will apply as government price regulations and contract provisions permit.

## U.S. Forest Service Plans Go-ahead for DDT

Last month the Environmental Protection Agency authorized the emergency use of DDT for control of tussock moth. The conclusion on probable need to use DDT is the subject of an analysis and final proposal developed by the Forest Service, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Interior's (USDI) Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Indian Affairs, Oregon State Department of Forestry, Washington Department of Natural Resources and the Idaho Department of Public Lands.

John R. McGuire, chief of the Forestry Service, said the final environmental statement on tussock moth control was filed recently in Washington, D.C., with the Council on Environmental Quality.

McGuire added that the analysis indicates the necessity to plan now to use DDT to control the outbreak, in order to prevent widespread damage to the forests and related resources. The conclusion is based on the latest count of natural occurring virus that kills the

caterpillar stage, the count of living eggs, consideration of all alternatives and public response to the statement.

The effects of natural factors will have to be determined by field observations in specific areas before spray plans are made final. Exact acreage figures, therefore, will not be available until the time that spraying must begin, in late May or June.

In addition to control efforts, field experiments and pilot projects will be conducted this year. Scientists have developed formulations of a natural virus and a bacterium which have shown control potential but further testing is needed.

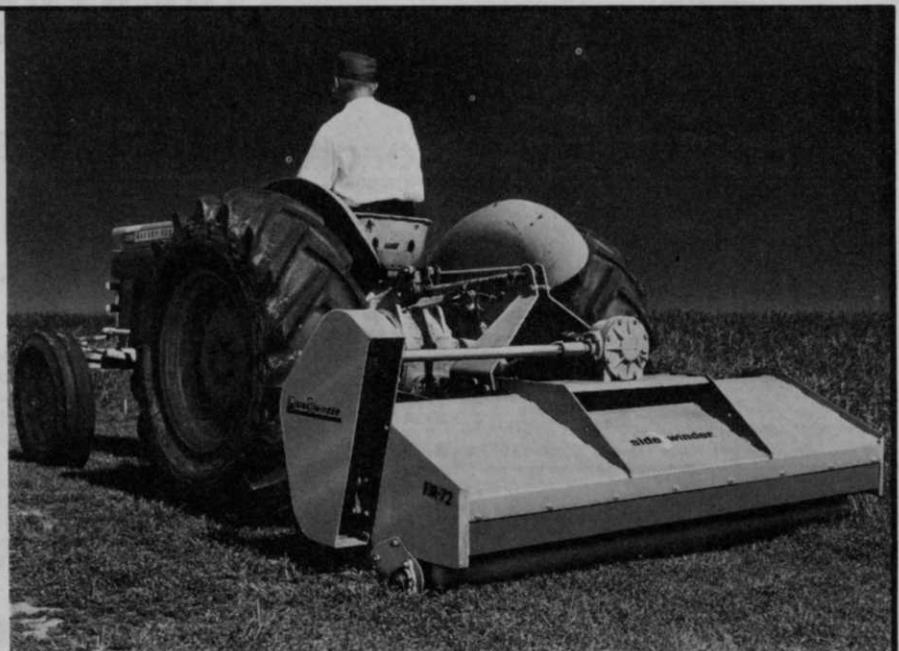
Congress is considering a request for \$3 million in supplemental funds to control the outbreak. It had earlier appropriated funds to expedite research and to salvage timber killed as a result of earlier defoliations by the tussock moth.

If treatment is necessary, helicopters will apply DDT at the rate of ¼ pound in one gallon of fuel oil per acre, probably starting about June 1. Chief McGuire said all applications will be carefully supervised and monitored in a cooperative effort involving the Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and USDI's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Bureau of Land Management, and some 30 state agencies and organizations.

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