

# Government News

New safety regulations for farm equipment will affect farmers as employers. Effective since June 7, all agricultural equipment, despite age, must have a completely guarded power take-off drive line, and shields and guards that stay in place. Farmers are required to train employees in safe operations. After June 7, signs are required "at prominent locations" on tractors and power take-off driven equipment to warn employees about keeping shields in place. Other warning signs are also needed if removal or a guard or access door exposes employees to a moving part after the power is off. Employees are advised to look and listen for evidence for rotation and not remove the guard of access door until parts have stopped.

Sod farmers have won another soil depletion case. U. S. Tax Court upheld the right of sod growers to claim cost depletion allowance for soil removed in cutting sod. The ruling followed testimony proving soil would be of no value after 16 cuttings and could not be restored economically. A government appeal may follow.

According to research by Dr. Hardin B. Jones, professor of physiology and medical physics at the University of California at Berkeley, chlordanes and heptachlor function more like cancer suppressants than causative agents. Many pesticides tests don't have proper controls, he says, and cancer results from toxic overdoses hundreds of thousands of times higher than farm applicators actually use. Dr. Hardin's studies support research by Dr. Bruce Ames and his co-workers also at Berkeley.

The EPA will have reviewed and classified pesticides by September. Although only private and commercial applicators will have power to make "restricted applications," chemicals falling under the 'general use' category are available for application by the public. Some 45 states are going through the final stages of preparing applicators certification plans, 11 have plans contingently approved by EPA. EPA plans to approve plans for eight states and 14 states are near completion. Applicators' certification is required by October, 1977.

Mallinckrodt, Inc. unsuccessfully filed a motion to reopen mercury hearings after they claimed to have proof of mercury used to control snow mold on golf courses. EPA, however, said the evidence is not substantial enough to affect the order and that the motion was filed too late.

Agencies have increased highway expense monies for all highway functions from \$13.5 billion to \$25.5 billion in 10 years but find themselves facing a steadily deteriorating highway system. Inflation makes the 1975 funding only \$12.8 billion in 1975 dollars. As highways take punishment from 139.2 million registered vehicles (up from 1965's 91.7 million) contributing 1.3 trillion miles on 3,825 million miles of highways (compared to 1965's 888 billion miles on 3,690 million miles), the Department of Transportation is considering a new mode of funding for highways. Whether it will be a highway trust fund or transportation trust fund or use of more general sharing money, is theory at present. The Department seeks to prevent highways from becoming like the railroads.