

Government News

President Gerald Ford vetoed a six-month extension for the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) Sept. 13.

Ford termed a rider in the extension amendment, which would permit either house to veto pesticide actions by the EPA within 60 days of their release, unconstitutional. The amendment would have extended funding of FIFRA until October 1977.

EPA's Russell Train was pleased with the veto saying the rider placed improper restraints upon the Agency.

Ford said in the veto statement that if Congress should pass the amendment without the rider he would sign it. Apparently, the President approves of the Agency's actions.

Existing legislation funds EPA until May 1977.

The USDA has proposed nurserymen pay the cost of testing new barberry varieties for resistance to Black Stem Rust. The proposal affects only the testing of new clones and does not change annual inspection.

The EPA has reached an agreement with seed companies that will temporarily extend the manufacture and use of mercury compounds as seed disinfectants and fungicides. A February EPA cancellation would have stopped treatment of wheat, oats and other seeds with mercury-based chemicals. Now, by terms of the agreement, the use of such pesticides will not be phased out until August 31, 1978. However, a ceiling of about 50,000 pounds of the pesticides over the next two years has been imposed.

The EPA has approved the use of a virus pesticide for control of the tussock moth. The naturally occurring virus was developed successfully by Forest Service scientists in the USDA.

The final version of the Tax Reform Act agreed on by the Senate House Conferees requires corporate farms to use accrual accounting and maintain inventories but there is an exemption for nurseries. The actual wording is: "This section shall not apply to the trade or business of operating a nursery."

Errett Deck has been named coordinator, environmental quality activities, for the USDA. Deck, deputy director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture, is resigning that post to head USDA's Environmental Quality Unit. He will be concerned with programs on pesticides; land, water and air resources; and solid wastes.

The first screwworm flies artificially raised and sterilized in Mexico to help eradicate screwworms were released last month over the Baja California Peninsula. This fly-drop marks the beginning of efforts by the Mexico-American Commission for Screwworm Eradication to eliminate the pest.