

## Carter blocks fertilizer shipments to Soviets

President Carter has won support from Congress for his decision to indefinitely block the shipment of one million metric tons of phosphate fertilizers to the Soviet Union this year by the Occidental Petroleum Co.

"The President has doubled the effect of the grain embargo," said U.S. Congressman Tom Harkin (D-IA). "And he has done so in a way that does not further penalize farmers, but instead, helps them by increasing the phosphate fertilizers available here at home."

Harkin led congressional efforts to convince the President to block the shipments until the Soviets remove their troops from Afghanistan. He argued that it made no sense to withhold 17 million metric tons of American grain through an embargo if we then allowed the Soviets to receive enough American fertilizer to boost their own production by about 20 million metric tons.

## EPA responds to Dow's request for 2,4,5-T

Dow Chemical's request for EPA to withdraw its emergency suspensions of 2,4,5-T and silvex should be rejected, according to EPA's lawyer Dorothy E. Patton.

Patton cited several procedural and factual shortcomings in the Dow suspension request. She said, for example, that before the administrator could reconsider his suspension orders, Dow must show that new evidence is available to support its request. Patton argued that Dow failed to meet that test and that its request relies only on examples showing that some scientists disagree with EPA's regulatory decisions on 2,4,5-T and silvex.

She said that EPA's recently completed TCDD mother's milk studies could be construed as new evidence, but the significance of the study, which showed no TCDD residues, was "highly questionable."

## USDA establishes energy centers

Two agricultural energy centers to make farmers and ranchers energy self-sufficient in ten years are being established in Tifton, GA, and Peoria, IL, by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

At Tifton, scientists will seek new and better ways to generate energy on the farm and better ways for farmers and ranchers to put that energy to work. The programs at the Peoria center will concentrate on converting farm- or forest-produced biomass into fuel alcohol or petrochemical substitutes.

At the centers, scientists and extension officials from USDA's Science and Education Administration (SEA) will work in cooperation with a number of state agricultural experiment stations and universities.

The research will cost about \$6.2 million. The SEA will fund the research at the Tifton energy center for the first three quarters of 1980 with \$1.6 million, plus \$200,000 for extension activities. In Peoria, the agency will spend \$2 million, including \$100,000 for extension work. Another \$2.4 million will be awarded for university research projects on agricultural energy.

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some countries doing a pretty good job without them, their cost is expected to rise 25 to 30 percent in the next few years. Target use will be the style of application.

Beard doesn't think mowers will be changed, but popularity of energy efficient models will. Energy is the major factor in the type of turf-grasses to be used. These will be of two types, Beard said: fast growing for high stress areas, such as athletic fields, and slow growing for aesthetic areas and lawns, which subsequently won't have to be mowed as often.

Beard also headed a session on warm season grasses. Dr. Richard Smiley from the department of plant pathology at Cornell University, and Dr. Robert Shearman, extension turfgrass specialist at the University of Nebraska, shared their knowledge in a session on cool season grasses.

Panel discussions by ASPA members on fuel saving tips and netting suggested changes in practices for the future. M.L. Beck from Alabama, said, "Saving fuel is a case of changing habits." Yet sometimes you have no choice but to do a job regardless of the energy costs. The panel on netting showed slides of the foibles and successes from using it, and all are convinced that its help in increasing production make it more attractive for the next 10 years.

Ralph White from Georgia explained how his company, Southern Turf Nurseries, is using brewery waste from Anheuser-Busch to raise sod. John Patton of Maryland showed the audience how he used aircraft to spread fertilizer over his fields. Other members talked about adapting their equipment and preparing their fields in less conventional ways.

Other stimulating talks came from Michelle Williams from Utah and Mike Swanson from Florida on their ways of marketing sod, and Richard Underwood from the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center in Houston, TX, gave a dazzling display of what NASA is doing to help the farmer.

After the two days of talks, more than 100 participants out of the more than 700 who attended the conference, took advantage of the tour through R&D Sod Farms, Inc. given by Ed Davis. On a sunny Florida day, Davis led the tour to various levels of production on his 900-acre farm.