

## UPDATE

### Japanese beetle count up

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that the adult Japanese beetle population in the eastern United States this year was the largest in five summers. Favorable conditions last summer at egg-laying time was the cause for this resurgence. Also, a mild spring made it possible for more beetle grubs to survive to maturity. A heavy adult population indicates severe larval attacks on turfgrasses this fall and again in the spring of 1983.

### Equipment causes most agricultural injuries

The National Safety Council reported that 1900 people died in 1980 in the agriculture sector. Another 200,000 were injured. Most were farmers but the council's category includes occupations such as logging, fishing, horticulture and veterinary medicine. The death rate for agriculture was 56 per 100,000 workers while the figure for all industries was 12 per 100,000 workers. The main cause of accidents involved equipment.

There is a controversy among farm organizations about the role of government (Federal or State) in farm safety. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) attempt in the mid-1970's to write safety standards was shot down in the Congress. Only a few standards were developed and they were limited to farms with more than 10 employees—this exempted about 80% of U.S. farms. OSHA plans no more activity in farm safety including inspections in the 20% of large farm operations. The Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is phasing out the program which helped pay for a state extension safety specialist. We must then study our operations and train our own employees to cut down the injuries and deaths in our industry.

### Hiring 14- and 15-year-olds

The U.S. Department of Labor proposal that would allow 14- and 15-year-olds to work more hours will probably not be applicable to the nursery and allied industries. The new provisions, the first major changes in child labor laws since 1938, still contain prohibitions against employment in occupations which might interfere with their health. Work in areas where exposure to fumes or chemicals might be harmful or the operation of power-driven machinery is expressly forbidden—this would apply to most aspects of nursery or lawn care operations. The changes are designed to help the fast food restaurants and amusement parks. The Labor Department proposal would also make it easier for employers to obtain permission to pay less than the minimum \$3.35 wages.

### Insects return to Mt. St. Helens

Two years after Mt. St. Helens began smoking and ejecting lava, the insects are moving back into the ash-strewn slopes and countryside. Officials of the U.S. Forest Service believe that some species of ants survived the explosion, either deep in the ground or deep inside some of the trees. Now the winds are blowing insects and spiders in from the surrounding undestroyed forests. Earwigs, beetles, ants, bees, wasps and spiders have been detected. The beetles are beginning the destruction of the fallen trees which cannot be harvested for timber. Hopefully, the bodies of the dead insects will supply the nitrogen needed for revitalizing the barren soil.

In his speech at the convention, Porter encouraged independent distributors to improve their selling, merchandising, motivation and financial controls in the year ahead. Despite high interest rates, depressed housing market and the shrinking size of home sites, Porter still feels optimistic about the future of the two-step distribution system, providing that distributors adjust their business practices to succeed in the economic climate.

He emphasized the need for new sources of financing for dealers and consumers and urged distributors to improve advertising, marketing and sales skills in order to compete with media oriented mass merchandisers. He also stressed that diversifying the product line is an essential step toward withstanding economic cycles.

Porter is the president of Porter Brothers Inc., a distributor of various lines of equipment throughout North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

### CHEMICAL

### Ortho Ag Chemical promotes Eckart

Joseph Eckart has been named the vice president of Chevron Chemical Co. and general manager of Ortho Agricultural Chemicals Division. In this position, Eckart is responsible for worldwide research, development, manufacturing and marketing of Ortho's line of agricultural pesticide products. He is succeeding Earl Stripling, who is retiring after 32 years with the company.



Educated as a chemical engineer, Eckart joined Chevron research Co. in 1946 as a research assistant. He later worked in such posts as Chevron's vice president of development for Europe and assistant to the vice president as Standard Oil of California before his most recent position as manager of manufacturing for Ortho Agricultural Chemicals.