

Herbicides join pollen as springtime pest

By ARDEN SNYDER
Of the Emerald

With the arrival of spring and its floating pollen comes the inevitable sneeze. For someone with hayfever, a walk in the Oregon countryside is less than blissful. But there is a danger in the air more foreboding than pollen, and its effect is less sudden and less obvious than a runny nose and scratchy eyes.

The use of phenoxy herbicides by the national forests is causing concern and even anger among rural citizens who say their property and cattle are being sprayed carelessly and without regard to health hazards. For most, the polluting effect of herbicides involves more than the inconvenience of not being able to swim in the local stream or walk in the woods while the forest service helicopter is spraying. Many feel their livelihoods are being threatened.

Ugo Pezzi and Jean Anderson from Indian Creek Ranch near Deadwood were ready to file suit against the Siuslaw National Forest when, in the spring of 1972, the forest service sprayed land they used to graze purebred Charolais cattle.

Pezzi, in his letter to regional forester Theodore Schlapfer, said "The so-called plans and guidelines with which the U.S. Forest Service surrounds its spray program bear little resemblance to fact and its actual procedures. The deliberate release of toxic substances into the atmosphere, capable of drifting onto private property, constitutes an invasion of privacy."

The plans and guidelines of which Pezzi spoke are those set by the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which is required by the National Environmental Act of 1969, covering vegetation management of herbicides.

Pezzi and Anderson were, as organic beef growers, certified by the Northwest Organic Food Producers. Any chemical such as herbicides would decertify them. After seeking an injunction against the SNF, the forest service told them they were finished spraying in that area and agreed not to spray any further. Though the problem was resolved without litigation, the agreement was only tentative and is subject to review in the spring of 1977.

National forest directors are not always willing to compromise, though, and have turned down the request of a different group, Citizens Against Toxic Substances (CATS), to discontinue the use of phenoxy herbicides in Five-Rivers, Deadwood and part of the Blachly Quadrangle area (about 100,000 acres in all).

Tom Terpin, Siuslaw silviculturist, said the cost of manual labor versus spraying would be two to three times greater, and this is one reason the CATS proposal was rejected. The temporary moratorium on spraying ordered by Larry Fellows, Siuslaw forest supervisor in Corvallis, will be lifted May 4.

John Noell, CATS member, says the group will file suit today or Monday. CATS lawyer, Bruce Anderson, says the procedure would first involve a temporary restraining order, where the forest service is given a 10-day notice to

discontinue all spraying. A permanent court injunction would probably follow.

CATS's request to prohibit national forest spraying of phenoxy herbicides is based on their fears from studies that indicate these herbicides (specifically 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T) are dangerous. The most controversial studies were those that evolved from the government's use of Agent Orange in Vietnam. The main in-

redient of Agent Orange — 2,4,5-T — is the same herbicide currently being used in Siuslaw. A 1969 study by Bionetics Lab, Inc., under contract with the National Cancer Institute, indicated that 2,4,5-T caused birth defects in lab animals. A later study by Dow Chemicals pointed to an impurity in 2,4,5-T called Dioxin, which also caused deformities, but at a much lower level. In addition, (Continued on Page 12)

Willner claims he's 'people's advocate'

Don Willner, candidate for State Attorney General in the Democratic primary May 25 claims to be "the people's advocate."

"I want the attorney general to be a people's attorney," says Willner. "I want to see the state treat citizens in a lawful way."

He says he will accomplish this task in three ways: by supporting consumer advocacy in anti-trust actions, controlling public utility rates and helping local law enforcement.

Willner is careful to point out his long history in the consumer advocacy field, as former president of the Consumer Federation of America.

Willner says the main focus in consumer advocacy for the attorney general is public utilities.

He also says he was appalled by Portland General Electric's proposed 20 per cent rate increase. He says increases such as this, based on assumptions of growth, are uncalled for.

"We don't have a good advocacy voice to be heard at those PUC hearings," says Willner, adding that though a private organization could do the job, it would be difficult to determine who the policy makers are. He suggests an independent council on the state payroll to be the people's voice.

In general, Willner is very critical of incumbent Lee Johnson's inactivity in protecting the public from large trusts.

He points out a suit filed by the states of Washington, Montana, Idaho and Alaska against the Shell and Chevron corporations over fertilizer prices. Prices went down immediately, says Willner.

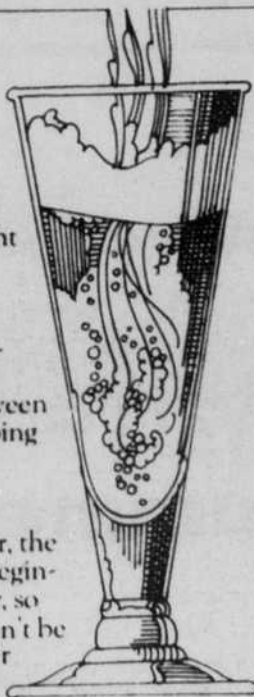
But, he asks, "Why didn't Attorney General Johnson make Oregon part of that suit?"

Willner, a lawyer for 24 years, says the statute calls for the state's attorney to head the state office of justice, not to be a prosecutor.

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