

Tally Shows World's Hops Crop Decline

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Department of Agriculture estimates the world's 1953 hops crop to be 7.1 per cent smaller than last year. The total is estimated at 132 million pounds, compared with 143 million in 1952. The United States total was 41,732,000, compared with 61,263,000 the previous year. The department reported that the U. S. exported 14,265,000 pounds, compared with 12,255,000 in the previous year.

"The outstanding feature of the nation's export trade in hops was the extraordinarily large quantity sold in European markets, the total amounting to 4,854,000 pounds, compared with only 615,000 pounds a year earlier. Undoubtedly this reflected not only the poor crop harvested in Europe in 1952, but also such factors as a desire on the part of European brewers to build up reserve stocks, the price advantage enjoyed by United States hops in those markets, an assurance of prompt delivery of high grade hops from the U. S., and an upward trend in beer production and consumption," the department reported.

Keen Competition
The report added: "Competition for export outlets will be unusually keen this season. In the first place, the crop outside the U. S. appears to be 9,428,000 pounds larger than a year ago. Prices of foreign hops are declining, early September reports indicating that Continental hops would be available for export this year at \$98.10 to \$112.11 per 112 pounds, compared with \$180.87 a year earlier. This would make the current price of 43-46 cents per pound for U. S. hops much less attractive to foreign buyers than a year ago. In addition, such importing countries as are confronted with a dollar shortage will undoubtedly purchase as much as possible of their requirements from non-dollar areas.

Draw on Reserves
On the other hand, indications are that a number of importing countries may have drawn heavily on reserve stocks during 1952-53. To that extent they may have to increase their purchases. There are also reports of an upward trend in beer consumption, especially in the countries of Continental Europe. In addition, the preliminary crop estimate for Canada, which has been purchasing the bulk of its import requirements from the U. S., indicates a low crop. This should result in a substantial increase in our exports of hops to that country during 1953-54."

The report noted that U. S. imports of hops went down 5.3 per cent to 3,539,000 pounds this year, and added that the outlook was for no increase in imports in the coming year.

Hardening of Artery Shown By Blood Test

CHICAGO (INS)—A simple, three-way blood test may reveal hardening of the arteries—chief cause of dangerous heart attacks—long before the first twinge of pain, a scientist reported recently.

Trials of the new technique on 33 heart patients and 197 presumably normal persons indicate that the disease, or even a tendency to develop it, can be spotted in its earliest and perhaps reversible stage, he added.

Dr. Thaddeus D. Labecki of the Mississippi State Health Board reported the results of extensive studies at the annual Scientific Meeting of the American Society for the Study of Arteriosclerosis in Chicago.

First Phase
The first phase of the three-step test measures the concentration of cholesterol, a fatty substance believed to line and thicken artery walls, in the bloodstream.

In a second, a "chylomicron determination," a high-power microscope, is used to measure the size of fatty particles in the blood serum. Dr. Labecki explained. If the particles are more than three millionths of a millimeter in diameter, there may be trouble ahead.

The third test, in which a blood sample is whirled 55,000 times a minute in an ultracentrifuge, measures even tinier particles—lipoproteins, or combinations of fat and protein.

Test Base
Dr. Labecki said the tests are based on a mass of evidence indicating that arteriosclerosis begins when the body fails to utilize fatty substances and high concentrations appear in the blood serum.

Until now, he explained, only the cholesterol measurement—a relatively crude index—has been available to practicing physicians.

In an earlier study, also supported by a grant from the U.S. Vitamin Corporation, the specialist reported successful use of methiscol, an amino acid and vitamin combination, to reverse early abnormalities in blood fat levels.

Production of honey is the least important of the bee's services to man says the National Geographic Society, pollination of food and other crops being far more important.

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