

California Farm Pests Listed In Order Of Damage Done In 1958

The State Department of Agriculture has released a list of what it considers the 10 most important insect and mite species which attacked California crops last year. The pests caused an estimated

damage of \$79,409,414 last year. This was a sharp decrease from the 1957 figure of \$108,397,716.

Ronald Hawthorne—economic entomologist who prepared the list for the State Bureau of Entomology—placed the corn earworm as the number one pest in the state last year. This pest cost \$7,426,661 in damage and control expense last year.

The spotted alfalfa aphid lost its 1957 second place position to lygus bugs, which cost growers \$6,611,188 last year. The alfalfa

aphid dropped to ninth place in 1958 because of effective biological control and the success of ladybird beetles in weeding out the insect.

Grasshoppers were considered as the third most important pest last year from an economic standpoint. Grasshoppers were blamed for losses totaling \$4,836,133. Losses from grasshopper in 1957 were less than two million dollars.

Peach twig borer retained its fourth place although Hawthorne's

report shows that peach twig borer control measures increased early one million dollars.

Loopers moved from sixth place into the fifth place spot in importance.

New additions to the list this year are grape leaf folder and two-spotted spider mites—replacing red scale and San Jose scale.

In the forest insect group, the western pine beetle was consid-

ered the number one pest of pine trees. Timber killed by the beetle was estimated to have a stumpage value of between four and eight million dollars.

Mountain pine beetle was second on the list of pine insects.

Hawthorne says his list of animal pests are not yet complete but cattle lice are first. Tabanids and hornflies ranked second and third.

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Road Program Aided By Soil Tests

OREGON STATE COLLEGE — Soil tests are widely used throughout Oregon today as a valuable guide to better farming, but a different type of soil test being made by an Oregon State College engineer is aimed at better highways for Oregon.

The soil tests are concerned with determining the engineering properties of soils—such things, for example, as soil strength, compressibility, grain size and water content.

Such information will have great value in county and state highway design, route location, and economic analyses of highway construction. A wide variation exists in engineering properties of soils, tests show.

The long-range project by the OSC engineering experiment station is part of an extensive program in which the Oregon State Highway Department, U.S. Bureau of Public Roads, and U.S. Soil Conservation Service are cooperating.

Glen L. Martin, instructor in civil engineering at OSC, is making the soil tests. His work will be supported by a state highway department grant of \$4209 each year through 1962.

Thirty pound samples of the top three layers of soil are used in the tests. Samples are taken by soil conservation service workers as they do soil mapping in various counties of the state. Samples to date have come from Sherman and Tillamook counties, but eventually the soil tests will cover the entire state and nation, Martin said.

Testing is done in the soil mechanics laboratory with samples subjected to five different tests.

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'58 Crop Yields, Farmer Incomes Down In Oregon

Mother Nature turned the heat on Oregon farmers last year, lowering crop yields and causing farm income to slip a little.

After an excellent early-season start, 1958 crops ran into high winds, untimely hot spells, grain diseases, shriveling, black stem rust, and one of the longest dry summers on record. As a result, income from crops lagged behind the year before, reports Mrs. Elvera Horrell, extension agricultural economist at Oregon State College.

Reports from the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimate Oregon farmers' cash income at \$391 million in 1958, down \$6 million from the year before. Mrs. Horrell said. Most of this drop came from lower income from crops, she explained, as receipts from sales of livestock and livestock products in Oregon showed little change from 1957.

Total net income per farm last year, after adjustment for inventory changes, also showed little change, averaging \$2,680 compared to \$2,684 the year before. On a realized net basis, however, before inventory adjustments, Oregon's

income per farm from farming amounted to only \$2,477. Mrs. Horrell said—down 7 per cent from 1957 and the lowest since 1954.

On a national basis, cash receipts from farm sales gained 12 per cent in 1958 to reach a new record high. Most states shared in this gain, with largest upturns in Midwest states which had been plagued by drought in 1957.

With farm population declining and farm income increasing, the average income of farmers over the nation improved a bit. But there is still a wide gap between the income of farm and city people, Mrs. Horrell indicated.

Last year, 12 per cent of the nation's people lived on farms, but these 12 per cent received less than 7 per cent of the national income. On a per-person basis, the income of farm people in 1958 averaged \$1,068—an increase of \$101 per person over 1957 and a record high. About a third of this amount came from nonfarm sources.

But this \$1,068 was still considerably below the income of \$2,634 averaged by nonfarm people, Mrs. Horrell emphasized.

Forestry Researchers Turn To Radioactive Isotopes In Drive To Boost Timber Crop

CENTRALIA, Washington — Radioactive isotopes, spectrophotometers and controlled growth chambers are among the new tools being used by forestry researchers to help "keep the nation's wood basket filled," Weyerhaeuser Timber Company's annual forestry research report reveals.

At its newly expanded forestry research center at Centralia, the company announced that 13 full-time forestry specialists are at work in the fields of silviculture, regeneration, management, physiology, soils, and protection from insects, disease and wildlife damage. They are aided by statisticians, field assistants and administrative personnel.

The "Caution-Radiation" signs at the research center, the terrifying and destructive aspects of atomic energy are taking a back seat to more peaceful uses. Identifiable radioactive tracers are introduced into the complex system of trees to provide foresters with a clearer insight into the basic biological processes, the report said.

An experiment aimed at reducing damage to tree seedlings by rabbits, mice and other rodents, uses isotopes in the development of repellents distasteful to these animals. Researchers hope to divert the rodents' eating habits to native vegetation.

According to the report, a big killer of ponderosa pine is dwarf mistletoe—a parasitic plant which drains the life from trees. Using photographs of beta- and gamma-particle radiation, called radioautographs, the foresters are testing the introduction of elements into the tree that are toxic to the dwarf mistletoe but not to the tree.

Other highlights of the year's forestry research work include:

Soil nutrient experiments were successful in boosting seed cone production five-fold and increased annual tree diameter growth 50 per cent.

Experiments with repellents indicated that rodents' eating habits can be changed so that the 15,000 to 25,000 pounds of tree seed planted each year by the company survive the hungry mice to germinate and produce new trees.

To reduce natural mortality of trees due to the intense competition within a forest and to attain maximum use of all wood grown, thinning studies are showing increased growth and yield from treated areas.

Tests of new chemicals are continuing in efforts to find better selective herbicides which remove undesirable brush competing with young forest plantings.

Destructive girdling of immature trees by bears increased in 1958, the report stated. Aerial surveys show that over 200,000 acres on three of the company's 13 tree farms sustain considerable bear damage. Control methods are being adapted on company tree farms in cooperation with state game departments.

The impact of insect damage to Douglas fir seed cones has curtailed reforestation programs during poor seed years such as 1958. Studies on control of the cone and seed insects involved testing ten insecticides for application on cone production areas.

A multi-million dollar bill for damages has been run up by the balsam woolly aphid in its attacks on approximately half billion feet of timber in the Pacific Northwest. Canadian and U.S. federal forest entomologists have imported natural enemies of the dangerous aphid. Weyerhaeuser research foresters aided in the colonization of these predators in infested stands of timber.

W. H. Cummings, Weyerhaeuser forestry research supervisor, says that the team of specially trained foresters who have the peaceful uses of atomic energy and other such valuable tools at their command, will grow higher quality forest products at a faster rate for use both today and tomorrow.

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