

Professional Hunter Hits Out At Poisoning Program On California Predators

By DEVAN L. SHUMWAY
United Press International

SACRAMENTO (UPI) — Lester Reed is a man on a crusade. A former big game hunter for the California Fish and Game Department, Lester (his friends call him Les) is shouting for all the world to hear that it's dangerous to wipe out predators with poison.

Cattle May Eat Metal

Why do cattle eat pieces of metal such as small nails, bits of barbed wire, and tin? Ranchers don't know the exact answer, but they do know that consuming such metal may cause injury and even death to the animal.

Tulelake Farm Adviser Ken Baghott of the University of California points out that a cow "slurps up" hay, grass or other feed because the animal requires a large amount of bulky material to fill its large digestive system. Unintentionally the animal includes in her mouthful of feed bits of metal. Later, the feed comes back up for chewing, but without the metal which often lodges in the digestive system.

Cattle owners who have had an unfortunate experience with such "hardware disease" are constantly on the alert to pick up wires, nails, metal tags, etc. and place these in a trash barrel. Electromagnets are available to run over fields and corrals and pick up exposed metal pieces.

Permanent magnets have been developed to attract metal from feed as the feed moves along a feed chute or is blown as forage through a pipe. This equipment is now available for both stationary and field choppers.

An electronic metal detector has been developed recently. It will detect metal in chopped feed or hay and automatically eject it from a pneumatic conveying system.

Contraband Margarine

ST. PAUL, Minn. (UPI)—A special margarine for heart patients and others on low-fat diets has led to a kind of revival of the old "speakeasy" days in Minnesota.

The product, called Emdee, cannot be sold in Minnesota because it is yellow-colored. The state, which relies so heavily on its dairy industry, allows the sale of uncolored margarines only—so there'll be no mistaking them for real butter.

As a result, according to Dr. Lowell Weber of Minneapolis in testimony before the Minnesota House health committee, some physicians are sending their patients across state lines to buy the special margarine, which contains an acid that helps to lower blood cholesterol levels.

The committee was considering a bill to legalize the sale of Emdee.

New York Honors Hendrik Hudson

NEW YORK (UPI)—This year's three-month New York City Summer Festival centers around the 350th anniversary of Hendrik Hudson's discovery of the Hudson River.

The city's participation in the state-wide Hudson Celebration is only a part of the fun available for guests arriving between June 1 and Labor Day.

He is making his point of view known through: Letters to the Editor of newspapers and a brochure he prints himself entitled "More About The Dangers and Harm of the Poison Programs."

A short time ago he took his fight to the State Legislature in Sacramento.

He can't get in any argument with his former bosses at the Fish and Game Department offices in the state capital, because they too object strongly to poison control of such animals as mountain lions and coyotes, which prey on cattle and sheep as well as on deer and small game.

Some years ago, the Fish and Game Commission adopted a flat policy that it would use no more poison. And it began systematically to lop off its about 35 big game hunters as uneconomical.

Ben Glading, chief of the game management branch, puts it this way:

"The commission policy is that by and large California has too many deer now and the people aren't harvesting what we have. There are so many deer in some areas that they're starving."

"So it's silly to spend money to further build up the deer population by knocking predators off when we're not harvesting what we get."

Over the years, the number of professional hunters hired by Fish and Game has decreased from a top of 35 to today's bottom of six, who cost the state roughly \$25,000 a year on payday.

But the Federal Wildlife Service, which actually is the target of Les' complaints, has about 90 hunters working all the time in California—and working in some instances with poison.

Les issues figures which he says indicate that poison programs have become big business. He says that in 1956, for instance, the industry made a profit of \$260,000,000 (m) and predicted a 284 per cent in-

crease over present figures by 1975.

And, typical of his breed, Crusader Reed appeals to the human side of the people.

"... Our health, our general welfare, our wildlife heritage and the future of humanity are the most truly big business of all," he says.

"We are now wondering if we must sacrifice and surrender these precious rights to the 284 per cent increase over the present figure of \$260,000,000 in 1956."

The argument against poisons is that they do not discriminate against their victims. Sometimes they get livestock and there's always the possibility they will get small children or domestic animals such as dogs and cats.

Also, they have a residual effect. That is, in common language, they stay around a long time, sometimes even remaining with the body of their victim, which is then eaten by another animal, which is eaten by another and so forth.

Traps, on the other hand, are a little more selective and not quite so fatal.

Les points out that back in 1938 he had an experience that helped him make up his mind to refuse to use poison in predator control.

"When I visited my station," he said, "I found the tracks of small children all around where they had been playing in the sand. Some of the baits were missing and I had no way of telling whether the children had taken them or not."

"I was very much worried for several days for fear I would hear that some little child had been poisoned."

But when he used traps he was able to release domestic animals—unharmed sometimes.

Game Management Chief Glading, although he personally does not support the use of poisons, points to one argument in their favor. He says that if you wanted to rid your house of mice you

could use three methods: Stand by the door and knock them on the head as they came in, use traps, or call an exterminator who would do the job effectively by using poison. He believes the lat-

ter method is the one any intelligent person would use.

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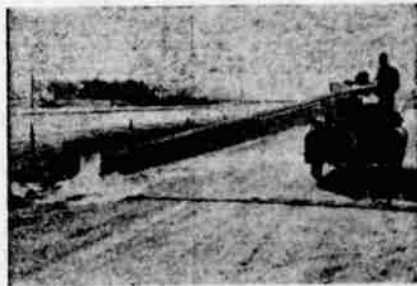


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