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## WORK OF FORESTRY SERVICE

The losses to the cattle men in the western states from larkspur poisoning every year have been so serious that the government is making a vigorous effort to find an antidote for the poison, as well as to eradicate the plant itself.

In the Gunnison national forest, Colorado, the losses to the stockmen last season from larkspur were conservatively estimated to equal almost five per cent of the total number of cattle grazed upon that forest.

Its effects are almost immediate. Death follows the eating of the plant within a few hours. For this reason remedies are of little avail because the animals are generally dead before they are discovered.

Experts from the Bureau of Plant Industry, in co-operation with the forest service, have made careful and painstaking investigations in the field, with a view of lessening the losses as far as possible, while several different plans have been tried in hopes of completely destroying the plant.

Larkspur grows very luxuriantly in the early spring. On Gunnison forest in June, 1908, the forest officers counted more than 1300 plants in blossom upon a single square rod. The plant seems to be more poisonous in hot, damp weather than in dry seasons, and it has been observed that when the ground is hard and dry, so that in eating it the stems break off leaving the roots in the ground, it is not so deadly in its effects.

Since certain areas are well known to be badly infested with larkspur, the stockmen have been in the habit of herding their cattle from such places. As far as possible, these areas will be fenced by the forest service. On other areas where it is not so plentiful the plants will be dug out by the forest rangers and also mowed off to prevent seeding again.

It has also been found that the plant will not hold its own against certain kinds of grasses, such as timothy. A few acres, sowed in timothy, are being carefully watched and it is believed that it is crowding the larkspur out. It seems probable that, by sowing timothy on the mountain meadows the larkspur could be gradually smothered and replaced by a valuable forage plant.

If this is supported by good evidence this season, timothy will be extensively sowed later on. Meanwhile upon this, as well as several other national forests where the losses from this plant are very serious, the building of fences to keep the cattle off the most dangerous areas is being pushed by the forest service, and will be continued as fast as funds are available for the purpose.

Mr. J. G. Thomas of Crawford, Colorado, made an experiment in feeding the larkspur some years ago to determine, if possible, just what part of the plant contained the poisonous properties. A yearling steer was fed a large quantity of the leaves, with no injurious results. A few days later, the same animal was fed a quantity of the roots and within ten hours it was dead, thus justifying the suspicion that the poisonous matter was contained in the root.

**Poisoning Prairie Dogs.** Attempts made last spring at poisoning prairie dogs in national forests on an extensive scale seem to have been highly successful in ridding selected areas of these small pests, and plans are now being made to carry on the work much more widely next year.

The first experiments in this line were made in New Mexico by a stockman who has since entered the forest service. In 1901, Dr. C. Hart Merriam, chief of the division of biological survey of the Department of Agriculture, made a report upon "The Prairie Dog of the Great Plains," in which the damage done by the dogs was pointed out, and various methods of poisoning them were suggested. This report of Dr. Merriam's may be said to have blazed the way for practical work in prairie dog extermination.

Prairie dogs are very obnoxious to the stockmen, for they devour much grass and undermine the surface of the ground with their burrows. Where they establish themselves the destruction of the range is only a question of time.

Range improvement in national forests is one of the chief objects of regulating the grazing. For this reason the forest service is leaving no stone unturned to prevent range deterioration. Stockmen

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Relieves coughs by cleansing the mucous membranes of the throat, chest and bronchial tubes.

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### Children Like It

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who had suffered heavily from the prairie dog pest were solicitous to have the work taken up, and gladly offered to co-operate with the service in furnishing men and horses to distribute the poison.

To ascertain what success could be had in ridding considerable areas of the pest, a selection was made of parts of the Leadville and Pike national forests which were badly infested. The region in these forests upon which the dogs were located aggregated 300 square miles or more. In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the work an area of some 60 or 75 thousand acres of actual dogtown was selected for the test. From 80 to 90 per cent of the dogs were killed with the first distribution of the poison. It will be necessary to go over the ground a second time and by "spotting" the occupied holes the remaining dogs will be easily killed with a very small amount of the poisoning material. The average cost per acre for the poisoning material was only one and one-half cents, and even then it was found that more material had been used than was necessary.

The poison is prepared by coating wheat with a preparation of strychnine, cyanide of potassium, anise oil, and molasses. When a sufficient quantity is ready, the poisoned wheat is carried to the field for operations. There the stockmen supply men and horses, the wheat is given out to the riders, and distribution begins.

Each rider carries the wheat in a tin pail supported by a gunny sack slung across his right shoulder and hanging at his left side. His left hand is free for the reins. With his right hand he uses a tablespoon to measure out the poison and drop it near the entrance of the holes. A little practice enables the men to drop the wheat while keeping their horses at a sharp trot. By crossing the town, to and fro, like a man sowing grain, they can cover a large area in a surprisingly short time.

The action of the poison is almost instantaneous. Most of the prairie dogs in a town are dead within an hour or two after the bait is dropped.

The work is considered to have demonstrated the entire feasibility of fighting the prairie dogs in this way. It was found, however, that to be successful the poison must be scattered in the spring, when the dogs first come out from their winter quarters and before the green grass is offered to appease their hungry appetites. Next spring the poisoning will be undertaken much more extensively. Stockmen and others who wish to try the dog medicine on their own account can obtain the formula for its preparation and directions for its use from the forest service.

### She Likes Good Things.

Mrs. Chas. E. Smith, of West Franklin, Maine, says: "I like good things and have adopted Dr. King's New Life Pills as our family laxative medicine, because they are good and do their work without making a fuss about it." These painless purifiers sold at J. C. Perry's drug store. 25c.

In order to draw a crowd at a church meeting in Corvallis, the minister, Rev. D. H. Leech, is referred to as the greatest hunter left in the United States since Teddy has arranged to go elsewhere.

### For Sore Feet.

"I have found Bucklen's Arnica Salve to be the proper thing to use for sore feet, as well as for healing burns, sores, cuts, and all manner of abrasions," writes Mr. W. Stone, of East Poland, Maine. It is the proper thing, too, for piles. Try it! Sold under guarantee at J. C. Perry's drug store. 25c.

"He that is void of wisdom" borrows his neighbor's paper.

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