

Spread Of Gypsy Moth Big Worry For Ag Department's Henry Nixon

Lately Henry F. Nixon, the usually busy director of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Plant Industry, has been about as cheerful as a moon-bound astronaut who's discovered his space ship is out of fuel.

The reason for his gloom is the gypsy moth infestation discovered this summer near Leesport, Centre County, which is just about the exact center of the state.

To make matters worse, male gypsy moths have been found in sex-baited traps in Mifflin, Perry, Snyder and Union counties. This marks the first time the moth has been found in these counties.

"We don't have enough manpower or a big enough budget to fight the gypsy moth on two fronts," the dejected state official frets.

The first front, of course, is eastern Pennsylvania (Berks, Bucks, Carbon, Monroe, Pike,

Schuylkill and Wayne) where the State Agriculture Department, assisted by the federal government, has been slugging it out with the moth for 37 years.

Nixon's perplexed as to how the gypsy moth, a feeble flyer at best, got as far west as Centre County. He speculates the moth was blown in on a strong wind storm or hitchhiked as an egg mass on stones, timber — maybe on a camper-trailer.

The moth didn't spread into central Pennsylvania because the State Agriculture Department was a docile opponent. The Department has thrown left jabs, uppercuts and right crosses at the gypsy moth.

At one stage of the game



THE MYSTERY FARM at Lancaster Farming's Lampeter Fair booth shown above is owned by Glenn Herr, Lampeter Winner in the contest was Merle E. Groft, Lancaster R4. See story Page 1. L. F. Photo

when the Department was using DDT, the moth appeared to be exterminated. None of the insects was seen in the state from 1959 to 1962.

The storm of criticism which followed publication of Rachel Carson's book, "Silent Spring," was a factor in the Department's decision to stop using DDT and to begin using short-lived, less effective sprays.

"The trouble with the sprays we are now using is that rain washes them off leaves or they lose their effectiveness before

the moths' caterpillars hatch out," Nixon explains.

In addition to using short-lived sprays, the Department is mass rearing and releasing parasites which attack eggs and pupae. Sterile male moths are another of the methods used in the Department's total warfare against the insect which was brought to the U.S. a century ago by a French scientist who attempted to cross the gypsy moth with a silk moth.

Lampeter Swine Sale

The champion pen of two market hogs at the Lampeter Fair commanded the top price per pound last Friday night in the annual FFA sale held at the fair grounds.

Shown by Paul Eckman, the hogs sold to the First National Bank of Strasburg for 92.5 cents per pound. Their total weight was 355 pounds.

The champion pen of four shown by Bob Weaver sold to E. W. Martin Co., for 49 cents per pound, and the individual champion shown by Glen Livengood went to Kunzler and Co., for 70 cents per pound.

The total receipts of the sale was \$21,592.20 on 31 head and the combined weights totaled 6,505 pounds. Howard Shaub was the auctioneer.

Other buyers included John Hoebel and John J. Hess, Inc.

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