

Borates Seem No Problem For Effluent Irrigation

Despite the increasing use of borates in laundry detergents, it is unlikely that the eastern United States will run into crop damage from boron in sewage effluent used for irrigation, it was announced recently during meetings of the American Society of Agronomy in Detroit, Mich.

Where rainfall exceeds evaporation, there should be no problem from irrigating crops with sewage waste water containing present levels of borates, declared James D. Jardine, research assistant in agronomy at The

Pennsylvania State University. Five years of experiments at Penn State showed that boron did not accumulate in the soil enough to endanger plants.

Jardine said electrostatic charges in iron oxides and clays hold boron to the surface of soils in a "tying up" process. His studies indicated that the iron oxide content of soils was important in "tying up" boron.

Rainfall in the humid east is helpful in leaching out some boron from the root zone of plants, he pointed out. Boron is normally carried in solution until fixed in soils or taken up by plants. It can be a crop hazard if allowed to accumulate due to evaporation where rainfall is limited as in California.

Analysis of soils treated with sewage effluent showed higher concentrations of boron than in soils not treated with effluent. However, the concentrations were not hazardous — even to sensitive crops.

As part of these Penn State Experiment Station studies, plants sensitive to boron were exposed to much higher applications of plant poisoning occurred more easily in soils lacking the ability to "tie up" boron.

More Males On Farms

It comes as no great surprise to hear that America's farming population is growing older.

Recent statistics disclose that 23 percent of the nation's farm people are 55 years old and older.

And it used to be that a high proportion of the farm population was made up of children under 14 years old. During the past ten years the proportion of young children living on farms has dropped from 33 to 23 percent.

One of the reasons for the increase in age of those men and women composing today's farm population has been the continued migration of young adults from farms to towns and cities.

The attractions of town and city life — new adventures, higher pay, 40-hour work week, varied job opportunities, easier ways of making a living — have induced entire families to abandon farming and take a fling at making a livelihood in ways other than from the soil.

However, in several sections of the country, it isn't true that rural areas are peopled by older folks.

In the southern coal field areas in the tobacco and cotton coastal plain section of the Carolinas and in the Mississippi Delta area, the average rural age is under 23 according to the Agricultural Economic Research Service of the USDA.

Despite heavy migrations from

Car Owners Reminded Of Inspection Time

Passenger car, truck and motorcycle owners whose vehicles are subject to inspection during the current semi-annual inspection period were reminded today that the half-way mark has now been reached in the November-January checkup.

Both passenger and commercial vehicles carrying a Number 2 inspection sticker are due for their semi-annual check in the campaign which will continue

through January 31 and will receive a Number 4 sticker signifying inspection requirements have been met.

Harry H. Brainerd, Commissioner of Traffic Safety, said that aside from noting the numeral on the sticker, it is a simple matter to determine when any vehicle is due for inspection.

"The owner has only to look at the inspection sticker on the windshield," Brainerd explained. "Each sticker bears the beginning and expiration dates for the next inspection campaign."

Pennsylvania vehicles are now about equally divided for inspection purposes through use of the last digit of the manufacturer's serial number to determine which fall into the odd and which into the even periods for inspection as designated by the numeral on the sticker.

"The plan was designed to ease the workload at official inspection stations during any three-month inspection campaign," Brainerd said. "Vehicle owners can help avoid the last-minute rush at inspection stations by having the checkup made without further delay."

Vehicles bearing a Number 3 sticker are not due for a semi-annual checkup until the inspection campaign getting underway on February 1.

these rural areas to urban centers, the average age remains young because of higher birth rates.

Speaking of ages, the average age for a Pennsylvania farm operator is 50.9 years while the U.S. average is 51.3. On Alaska, where the weather rigors are great, the average age is 36.6.

It used to be that almost everyone lived on a farm. As late as 1890 the majority of Pennsylvanians lived on farms. Today an estimated 309,000 — less than three percent of the population — live on farms.

But there's one farm aspect that hasn't changed: the farm population is still predominately male.

On-the-farm sex ratio is 108 males to every 100 farm females.



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