

Stauffer Official Foresees Basic Changes in Pesticides

While the new non-persistent, selective pesticides are boosting farm output, the search continues for more advanced chemicals and methods to attack crop pests.

What will the next generation of pesticides be like?

"The possibilities are virtually unlimited," says H. L. Straube, vice president and general manager of the Agricultural Chemical Division of Stauffer Chemical Company. "Chemicals will continue to be the key factor in combating crop pests," he said, "but other interesting methods are being explored."

Among current research trends, juvenile hormones or hormone-like materials appear to be most promising, he said. Hormones may be used as insecticides to interrupt development of specific insects without harming the life cycles of non-target species. Interruption of development makes the target insects unable to reproduce.

Extensive Programs
The Agricultural Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reports that at least two dozen companies are studying insect hormones and perhaps half of them, including Stauffer, have extensive screening programs underway. Stauffer will be among the first companies to field test promising formulations this year with state experiment stations and other co-operators.

Straube emphasized, however, that considerable toxicological investigation and field testing will be required to determine the commercial feasibility of these products.

A number of approaches to biological control are also being



Harold L. Straube
Sees Pesticide Innovations

ing screened, the USDA says. Among them: "Insect Sterility" — Massive numbers of a given species are raised, sterilized with gamma radiation and then released to compete for mates in the natural population. The resulting eggs do not hatch and the insect population dwindles.

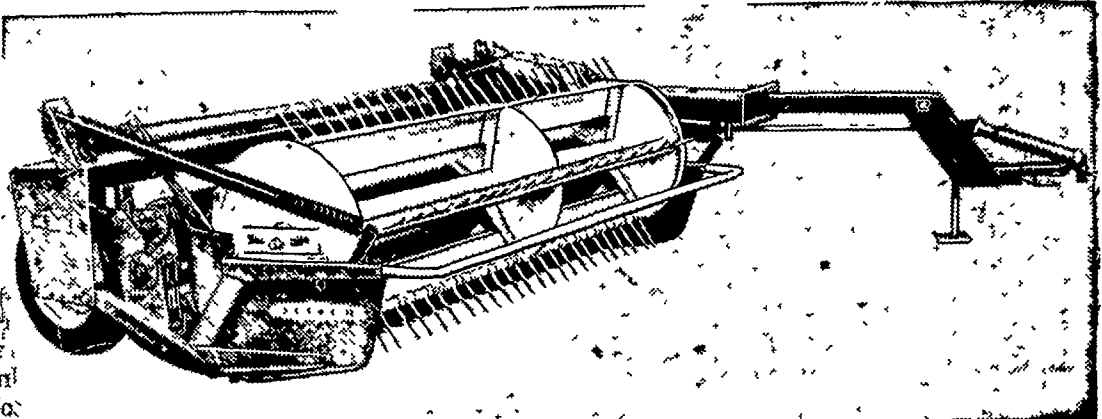
The method has been successfully used to eradicate the screwworm, a livestock pest in the Southwestern United States.

It is also being used to replace insecticide spraying to prevent entry of the Mexican

(Continued on Page 12)

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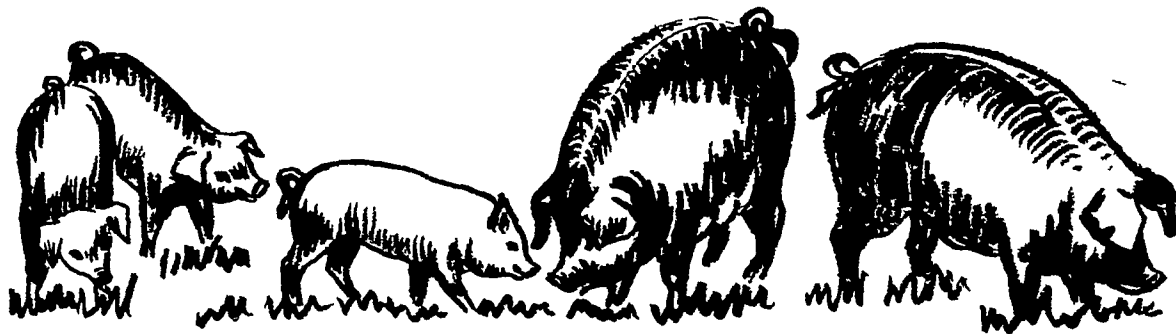
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