

# Nonpersistent Chemicals 'Lethal to Bees,' Speaker Says

That violinist's virtuosic masterpiece, "The Flight of the Bumblebee," might well become a symbolic funeral dirge for the Maryland bee industry—thanks to the inequities of manmade laws—especially if a threatened Gypsy Moth invasion from the north materializes.

Persistent chemicals, which formerly were used with great effectiveness in controlling the tree-damaging moths without harming bees, have now been placed on the restricted list as a result of the Maryland Pesticide Applicators Law which took effect January 1.

But nonpersistent chemicals which must now be substituted are extremely lethal to bees, even though they are relatively nontoxic for warm-blooded animals like man.

So says Dr. Dewey M. Caron, University of Maryland Extension apiculture specialist.

Dr. Caron explained in a recent interview that application of an acceptable commercial pesticide, at the time of economic levels of Gypsy Moth population is also the most probable time when tuliptree—or yellow poplar—and other nectar-producing late spring tree blooms would be in full season for honeybees.

Thus, the death loss rates for bee colonies would be catastrophic. And the state could be left without enough bees for pollination purposes, let alone honey production.

Establishment of pesticide-free "bee sanctuaries," as has been done in some western states, would not be feasible in Maryland because of population pressures and space limitations, Dr. Caron commented.

It's true that the 1970 Farm Bill, passed by Congress, contains provision for federal indemnification payments to

beekeepers who suffer losses from pesticide application. But guidelines for documenting such losses are still being formulated. And economic effects of bee losses are difficult to document, even with guidelines, Dr. Caron noted.

What now? Should we accede to demands of some beekeepers and outlaw the use of all pesticides on the crop production scene?

Dr. Caron responds to that question with an emphatic "No." Speaking at the Eastern Beekeepers Pollination Association meeting April 3 in Winchester, Va., the Maryland Extension specialist asserted that, without the use of pesticides, there would be little need for pollinating insects like bees, particularly for some agricultural crops.

He pointed out, for example, that pest insects would destroy or render most apple crops unappealing without the use of pesticides.

As a compromise for enabling both beekeepers and agricultural producers to maintain economic survival, Dr. Caron suggested a set of six management procedures.

The first of "Caron's Commandments" is aimed at agricultural producers. It says, "Thou shalt spray no crops that are in bloom unless specific steps have been taken to protect honeybees and then only if absolutely necessary."

Addressing himself to beekeepers, the list continues:

"Move colonies when the or-

chard blossom season is finished, lest thy bees be tempted by dandelion and mustard blossoms on the ground which become contaminated from after-blossom spray applications to the trees. Covering (or confining) the bee colonies is a less acceptable alternative to moving."

Moving back to producers: "Use less toxic materials when a choice exists."

"Insist on economic population levels of pest insects before spraying."

"Apply spray materials in late afternoon or evening, if possible, when bee activity is not so heavy."

## Honor Society Inducts Two Local Ag Students

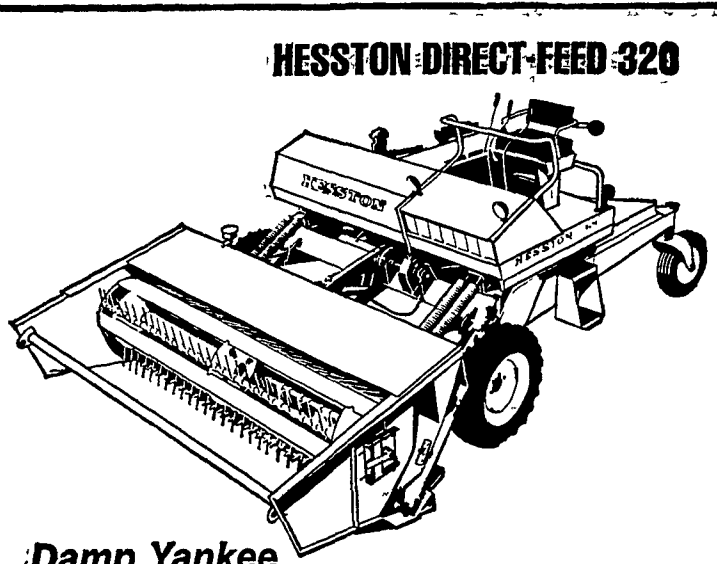
Two Lancaster County undergraduate students attending the Pennsylvania State University, College of Agriculture, have been initiated into Gamma Sigma Delta, the national honor society of agriculture.

They are Arthur Leaman, Leola, and J. Richard Thomas, Millersville RD1.

The two students were among a group of 21 undergraduates and 21 graduates taken into membership.

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And finally, speaking to both spray schedules and colony producers and beekeepers, Dr. Caron admonished: "Coordinate and cooperate on mankind."



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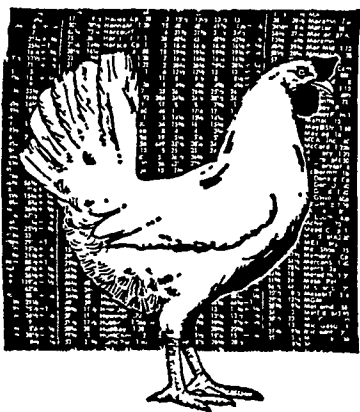
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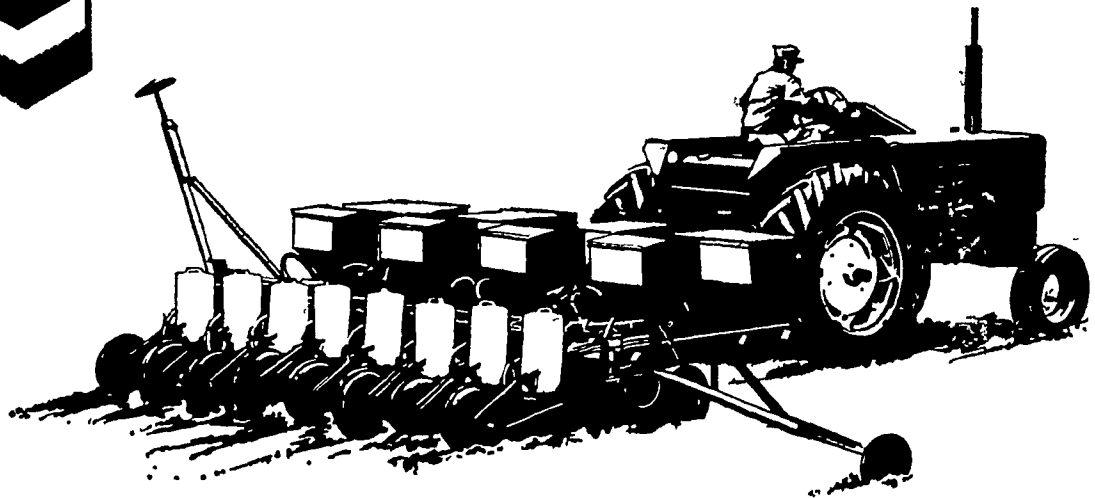
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