

## Across the Editor's Desk

**Editor's note:** The armyworm was reported an important new corn problem in some local fields by local Extension officials last week. But the problem is widespread, as this report from Maryland Extension service indicates:

The armyworm is marching on the Eastern Shore and parts of central Maryland. His expanding bivouac areas in barley fields and other small grains display ominous signs for nearby cornfields. Already the hungry hordes have maneuvered into no-tillage cornfields where fall rye was utilized as a cover crop.

To halt the invasion, the Cooperative Extension Service at the University of Maryland has recommended emergency use of the highly toxic chemicals, parathion and methyl parathion.

(Note: Locally, however, Extension officials continued to recommend the less toxic sprays and said results by local farmers using these sprays have been good.)

Under current Maryland state law the two spray materials are classified as restricted pesticides posing unusual hazards to human health, livestock and the environment. They are prohibited from home and garden use. Custom applicators must have both a license and a restricted use permit in order to apply the materials legally.

To help prevent possible dangers to humans, Extension en-

tomologists at the University of Maryland urge farmers applying parathion and methyl parathion to post warning signs which read:

**DANGER**  
This field has been treated with a highly toxic pesticide

**KEEP OUT**  
Measuring 11 x 9½ inches, the signs are available free from county Extension offices, or directly from the office of David Shriver, statewide director of the Maryland pesticide-chemicals program, Symons Hall, University of Maryland, College Park, Md 20742

Shriver recommends that the signs be placed, immediately upon spraying, along fields adjacent to populated areas, near public roadways, or even near paths used by hikers or trail riders. The danger period from such spraying usually lasts only two or three days, he said.

Shriver noted that safer alternatives to parathion and methyl parathion are available to fight the armyworm. However, he admitted that the alternative pesticides are somewhat costlier.

The following article appeared in a recent issue of Poultry Times and reflects concern in the egg industry that cutbacks in culling and increased forced molting may prolong low egg prices indefinitely.

ATLANTA — Dr. Gene C. Masters announced last week that many producer members of United Egg Producers are not following the "Phase II, Action Now" program designed to allow industry to cooperatively plan supply to meet expected demand.

Masters states that the present and future price consequences of failure to cooperate means serious losses for the industry and probable bankruptcy for many firms in the industry.

The present slaughter level is evidence of the industry's failure to cooperate, the UEP spokesman stated. The light fowl slaughter in U.S. Depart-

ment of Agriculture plants for the week ending May 12 was 11 per cent below the same week last year.

It is almost unbelievable that less culling would occur at a time when many producers are losing at least 10 cents per dozen on all eggs produced, Masters said.

The expectation of seasonal price increases is encouraging re-cycling of laying hens, the spokesman indicated.

"Unless our Producer members cooperate in supply planning, there will not be a normal price increase from now to September," Masters states.

It was further stated that UEP can do nothing about production decisions if each producer goes on his merry way and lets someone else do the adjusting.

The present situation is stated by Masters to be:

1. Seriously higher costs than a year earlier.

2. Both flock size and rate of lay above last year's level. This is resulting in serious overproduction.

3. Decreased mortality due to Marek's vaccination both during growing period and in the laying houses. This is resulting in increased rates by lay and more than expected number of layers in the flock.

Masters states that the industry cannot continue the present low slaughter and relatively high chick placement levels. If slaughter continues 11 per cent below last year's level, the flock size could reach 345 million birds by December. The flock size could exceed 330 million by September which would be over 17 million more birds than the four year average for September. The resulting prices to producers could be as low, or even lower, than present prices. The industry cannot afford to continue in this manner, the economist said.

If, however, industry slaughtered at the previous year's level for the rest of the year, the September flock size would be 10 million above the four

year average for September, the spokesman said. It was indicated that this could mean farm blend prices for all eggs of about 21 cents per dozen in September.

Masters said it is not too late for the industry to cooperatively adjust. He indicated that if only one region of UEP, such as National Egg Company, would sell 15 per cent of all laying hens over the next six week period, prices would revive. For example, the September New York large price would be projected to be 50 cents per dozen if the 15 per cent cut were made in the one region.

In summary, the spokesman says that the egg industry is not cooperating to meet reasonable production levels. It is not too

late for such cooperation to result in reasonable prices for the last half of the year. The continuation of the present slaughter and chick placement levels means disaster for the industry.

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