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## Minimizing Ecological Impact of Pesticides

Is there a way to minimize the ecological impact of pesticides?

University of Texas physics Prof R L Collins compared the known techniques for applying pesticides recently at a Weed Science Society of America national meeting held in Atlanta

Dr Collins reported that conventional usage suffers from several problems

"The concentration decreases with time, demanding multiple applications," he said, adding that "a greater-than-desired concentration is usually applied so that, later, an adequate concentration is present"

"To avoid multiple applications, more persistent materials are often needed," he said. "Either way, conventional applications can cause pollution problems"

The UT Austin professor said that "by contrast, an ideal dose-rate application would establish the needed level of concentration and sustain it at that level for the period chosen and then quickly dissipate."

He told the WSSA representatives that "controlled-release methodologies promise increased efficiency and lowered toxicity to non-target organisms, and encourage the use of non-persistent pesticides"

Theoretically discussing the performance which can be expected of each of the different controlled-release mechanisms, Dr Collins gave the following comparisons:

—Diffusion, the oldest controlled-release technology, can obtain long-term efficiency of 22 per cent for spherical granules and 30 per cent for slab-shaped granules

—Micro-encapsulation techniques can lead to 38 per cent efficiency

—Water-degradable polymers and difficultly soluble substances can have efficiencies of 50 per cent for spheres and 70 percent for slabs

—A simple combination of water-degradable slabs and conventional material can lead to 100 per cent efficiency, which is of course the ideal

In more than a year of laboratory work, Dr Collins and co-researcher Silvia Doglia, postdoctoral student from Milan, Italy, solve the diffusion equation enabling them to make the efficiency comparisons Dr Collins says their diffusion solution disproved the currently accepted diffusion equation of Takeru Higuchi and further proved that a constant efficiency can be expected from that technique

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## Sun's Infared Rays Potential Eye-Damagers

The sun, the source of life in our solar system, also beams down a number of disguised hazards to our eyes

Dr Joseph Perka, President of the Pennsylvania Optometric Association, noted that some of the sun's rays can cause permanent damage to the eye and should be avoided at all times.

"It is very important," Dr. Perka said, "that the eyes be shielded from these harmful rays" He cautioned that no one should ever look directly into the sun, "not even with the darkest glasses"

He pointed out that not only are the ultraviolet rays dangerous, but the infrared rays also are potential eye-damagers He said

other solar radiation can cause permanent eye injury and could lead to blindness

"Especially at this time of year," Dr Perka said, "when the sun hangs low on the horizon, should eyes be given every protection possible"

He said the outdoorsman, especially when there is snow on the ground to reflect light rays, should wear optically-ground sunglasses

These sunglasses, he said, should be dense enough to allow only 20 to 30 percent of the sun's visible light through and they should absorb some of the infrared and ultraviolet radiation as well

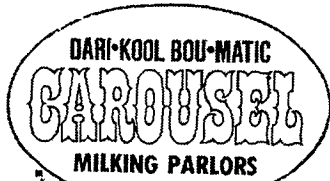
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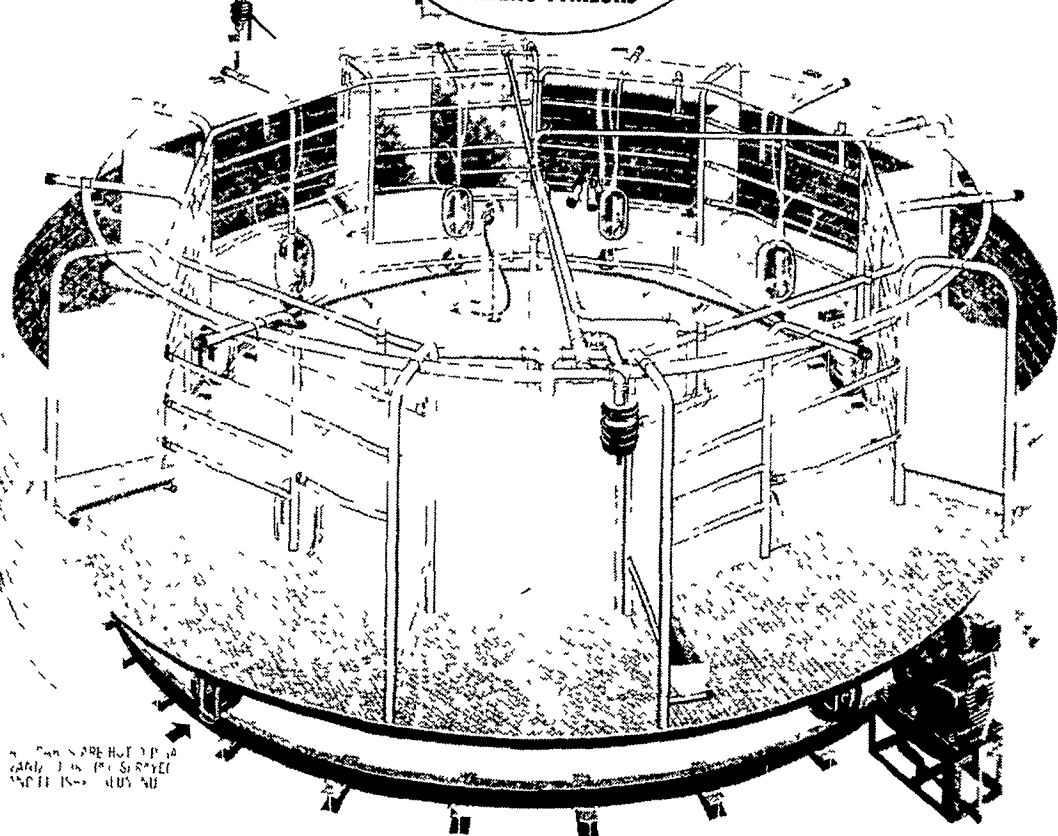
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