Bughunters search for alfalfa weevil parasites

LANCASTER - Alfalfa fields in 11 eastern and midwestern states will be the sites this Spring of a massive bug-hunt--a systematic search for parasites of the destructive alfalfa weevil.

This is the opening shot in a joint biological control

blitz against the pest by the US. Department of Agriculture and several states

The alfalfa weevil damages alfalfa-the nation's leading hay crop-by feeding on its tips, leaves and buds, reducing yields and nutritive value. The

The parasite survey is part of an expanded state and federal biological control effort under direction of USDA's Animal and Plant Health-Inspection Service. The hunters-state and

pest, first found in the United

States near Salt Lake City in

1904, has since spread

causes millions of dollars

damage each year.

throughout the country. It

federal plant protection experts-will make surveys ın Pennsylvanıa, West Virginia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin looking for any several species of parasites released in these states since 1957 to help control the pest Their objective is to learn if any of the

parasites have become established.

The parasites are tiny, stingless wasps that lay their eggs in various life stages of the weevil. After hatching, larvae of the wasps devour the weevil, providing natural control

The parasites are already established in several eastern states, where they save farmers an estimated \$7 million a year in pesticide and other control costs.

"We want to do more than just find the parasites," said Thomas Burger, Supervisor ot an APHIS laboratory at Niles, Mich., who is coordinating the survey "We also want to find enough of the parasites concentrated in areas of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan,

and New Jersey (not included in the detection survey) to

establish collection sites from which we can distribute them to other areas where they are not yet established "

Sites for insectaries-field nurseries established to rear the parasites and release them in quantity where needed-will be selected in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota and Wisconsin

State dealer to face sentencing

WILLIAMSPORT - A Pennsylvania meat dealer pleaded guilty on March 7 in District Court, Williamsport, to violating the Federal Meat Inspection

Eugene Nicholas, owner of Eugene Nicholas Livestock, R1 Logantown, sold and transported six uninspected calf carcasses, in March 1979, to a New York meat distributor

The Federal Meat Inspection Act, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Quality Service, requires that all meat products sold and transported across state lines be federally inspected to ensure they are wholesome, unadultered, and accurately labeled.

Sentencing will follow a pre-sentence conference



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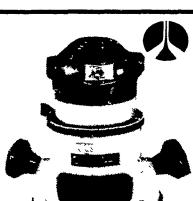
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