

Gypsy moths stripped 5.1 million acres in 1980

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Gypsy moths stripped an unprecedented 5.1 million acres of forest and shade trees in 1980, mostly in the northeastern states, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture officials.

The figures, compiled through state and federal surveys in infested areas, show an eight-fold increase

over 1979, according to William Helms, who is in charge of national plant protection and quarantine programs for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

"This is more than two and a half times the previous record, set in 1971," Helms said. Pennsylvania had 440,500 acres stripped.

"New York led the list with 2,449,475 acres defoliated — the most ever there," he said. "Records were also set in Maine, Rhode Island and New Jersey. Maryland, with three acres, suffered its first defoliation ever. Outside the Northeast, Michigan had five acres stripped. All affected states except Michigan had increases in damage over last year.

"We've had calls from people all over the Northeast, asking what they can

do about gypsy moths," Helms said. "We have to tell them that the time for effective action is in the spring when the pest is in the destructive caterpillar stage. The best thing to do now is plan for next year.

"Conventional pesticides are still the most effective means of control in heavily infested areas," he said. "A lot of state and federal research and development work is continuing on alternative controls, and progress has been made, but more work needs to be done before they can be generally relied on."

USDA's Forest Service conducts cooperative suppression programs with some of the infested Northeastern states to minimize defoliation and tree mortality in high-value forested areas, he said. State agencies must request

federal cost-share funds for the suppression projects, according to Helms.

Officials will be trying to predict whether defoliation will continue to spiral upward or possibly collapse, he said. Combinations of

favorable or unfavorable weather, treatment programs and parasites, diseases of the caterpillars and other natural enemies can all have an impact, making such prediction difficult.

"Isolated infestations we've discovered in Michigan, Illinois, Virginia, Washington and other areas, unless eliminated, could threaten forested areas in other parts of the country, too," Helms said.

Sheepmen declare coyote crisis

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH — The predation of sheep by coyotes and feral dogs has reached a critical level according to leaders of the National Wool Growers Association.

R. J. Rich, a Burley, Idaho, sheep rancher and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the NWGA. Rich told California wool growers at their annual meeting this week in Monterey that we can no longer tolerate the feeding of millions of dollars worth of our products to

over-populated wild species.

Rich also declared that the loss levels of sheep and lambs to predators are a crisis for the nationwide sheep flock. In additional comments, the Idaho wool grower pointed out that the problem extends from California to Maine and is no longer unique to the Western U.S.

In a letter to President Jimmy Carter, the Wool Grower chief asked for immediate emergency relief to reduce predation in areas

of historic high losses.

Rich admitted sheepmen have experienced recent good prices for their products but that the ravages of inflation, fuel, feed and interest costs required optimizing production on the nation's sheep interprice.

The Idaho rancher contended that sheepmen must have more help in slowing the pace of killings by predators and dogs. Rich urged the President give the predation crisis his immediate attention.

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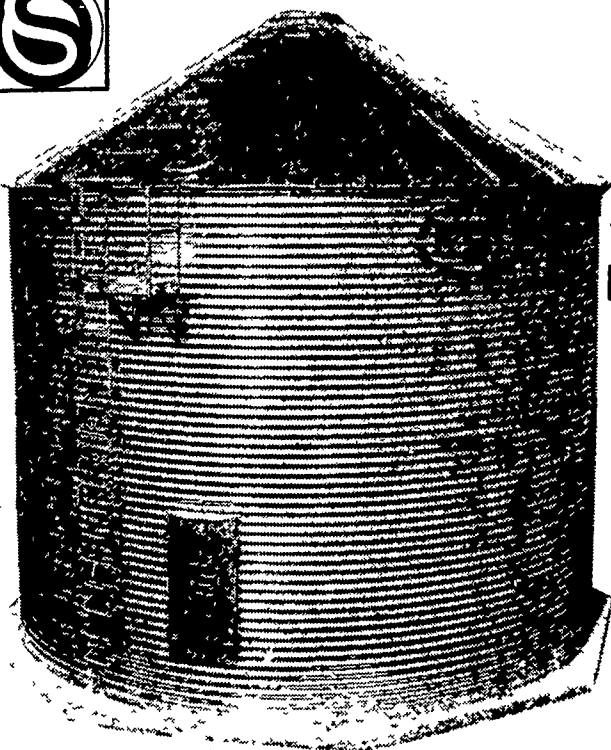
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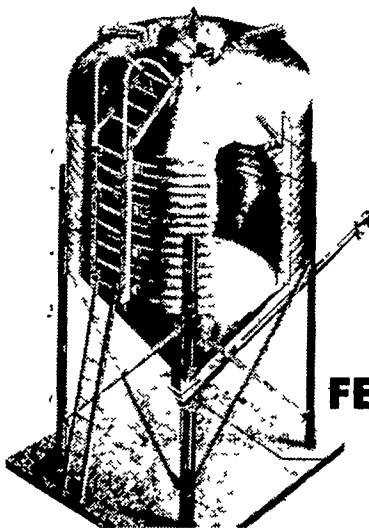
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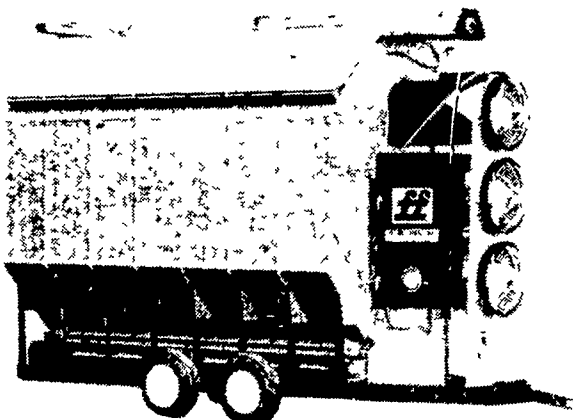


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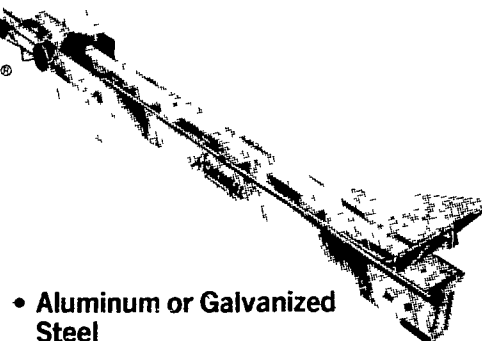
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