



Notes and News

By
Wood Kerne

NEW TREATMENT FOR PARAQUAT POISONING

SCIENTISTS at ICI's Central Toxicology Laboratory have taken a step forward in the search to find a successful treatment for paraquat poisoning.

A series of experiments with rats has demonstrated that if the concentration of paraquat in the blood is drastically reduced by suitable treatment the lungs no longer accumulate enough paraquat to cause lethal damage. All the animals used in the experiments survived, even though treatment was not started until four hours after the paraquat had been given.

Another series of experiments showed that the same treatment, started ten hours after a lethal dose of paraquat had been given, saved 80% of the animals.

These experiments give good grounds for hope because human lung is known to react to paraquat in much the same way as rat lung.

Details of the suggested new treatment have been widely circulated to doctors, hospitals and poisons centres in Ireland and overseas.

This achievement marks the culmination of many years work within ICI to find a treatment—and an antidote—for paraquat poisoning, a search which began when the significance of the paraquat accidents was first appreciated. An essential first step in the search, however, was to understand the mechanism whereby paraquat enters the lung. Until that was fully understood it was difficult, if not impossible, to devise an effective treatment.

Despite the absence of a specific antidote, many victims of paraquat have been successfully treated. Even before the latest treatment, there had been a considerable advance in the methods

of treatment. The recovery rate among cases of accidental poisoning by paraquat is continually improving.

Other work currently in progress in ICI involves compounds which, it is hoped, will slow down or prevent altogether the accumulation of paraquat in the lungs.

From *Gramoxone in Perspective, Fitting facts into an Irish Picture*, published by Plant Protection Division, ICI (Ireland) Ltd.

WEALTH TAX 1975

Submission to the Minister for Lands by the Society of Irish Foresters:

The Society of Irish Foresters would like to express to the Minister the concern of its members in relation to the proposed Wealth Tax Bill 1975 and the effect it will have on Private Forestry.

Owing to its long term nature Private Forestry has always, in the past, been the subject of special consideration in every aspect of taxation—Income Tax, the former Death Duties and even in the recent Capital Gains Tax proposals, and in each case growing timber has always been distinguished from the land on which it grows.

Presumably successive Governments have considered Private Forestry to be desirable and the State since its foundation has given grants, advice and tax concessions to this end.

The Wealth Tax Bill in its present form allows no such concessions and unless some special provision is made, as in the case of the other taxes, economically damaging consequences must ensue as the effect of a 1% annual levy on the value of growing timber can only mean its systematic expropriation.

It is submitted that:

(a) Growing timber should be added to the list of exemptions in Clause 7 (1).

(b) Growing timber should be specifically excluded from Woodland defined in Clause 10 (4) but added to the list of items brought in for the purpose of defining a "Farmer" in Clause 10 (4) (a) with livestock and bloodstock.

As many of our members manage their woodlands through the medium of Discretionary Trusts, non Trading Companies, as well as Trading Companies it is the opinion of the Society that these should qualify in the same way they do in the bloodstock industry and be subject to the same advantages in terms of arriving at Taxable Wealth for tax purposes.

The Society whose principal object is the promotion of Forestry in all its aspects views with anxiety any form of legislation which might threaten this object and requests the Minister to have these proposed amendments incorporated in the Bill.

THE HOME GROWN TIMBER MERCHANTS' ASSOCIATION

The Minister for Lands Mr. T. Fitzpatrick, T.D., was Principal guest at the annual dinner of the Home Grown Timber Merchants' Association held on 15th February 1975 at the Clarence Hotel, Dublin.

Mr. Malachy Sharkey, President of the Home Grown Timber Merchants' Association, in the course of his address said that "the Home Grown Timber trade was presently going through a very critical period mainly due to shortage or indeed complete absence of markets. Many sawmills are either working on short time or with reduced staff and some have completely closed.

While the timber industry is in recession all across Europe, the weaker home grown timber trade in Ireland has been practically suffocated by the imported timber mountain which has built up over the past 18 months.

The traditionally weak image of Irish timber has seriously aggravated its present day marketing position and prospects. While Irish grown timber, the produce of modern scientifically planned and managed forests, is generally as good as, and sometimes better than the varied grades of imported timber, the Irish product has not yet outlived its war-time reputation. Irish timber is too often wrongly regarded as an old fashioned rustic product, mishandled in badly equipped and badly managed ramshackle mills, despite the very marked progress made by most mills in sawing skills and techniques, modern equipment, drying programmes and heavy stock carrying, which ensure a good supply service to the consumer.

Irish sawn timber must on merit demand a firm standing in the market place. Imported timber is costing approximately £25,000,000 per annum while at the same time increased supplies of good quality sawn timber coming from our own forests cannot be sold. It is obvious that a major promotional and marketing job must be urgently pursued to redress the ridiculous position where vast quantities of timber are brought from the ends of the earth while our own good quality home-grown spruce is practically ignored.

While most Irish grown timber is inherently as high in general quality as imported timber the approach to processing and presentation must be standardised. This particularly applies to the moisture content of home grown timber. Neither will the poor image of the home product be changed until *all* sawmills conform to international standards. In this respect one must visualise a system of timber grading and branding in the future with classification of sawmills related to their production performance—somewhat along the lines of the grading of hotels. Sawmills producing building timber, whether on a local or national scale, would require official certification to be associated with quality branding of the finished sawn product. In this way product confidence would be established amongst architects and builders and Irish timber could compete on equal terms with imported timber—even to the extent of carrying a certifying brand on the end of the timber—preferably in red—so important to Irish architects.

The alternative is an ever increasing deficit bill for imported timber while the produce of our own valuable forests stagnates on our hillsides. We can ill afford such waste of one of our principal native resources.”

SINCEREST FLATTERY

We are pleased to observe that the Timber Growers' Association is taking a leaf out of our book, and is sponsoring open days “down in the woods” this summer, in privately owned woodlands. The T.G.O. has 1,700 members with 200,000 ha of woodland in England and Wales.

BIBLICAL FORESTS

The Forest and Wildlife Service, in its display at the Royal Dublin Society Spring Show, had the following biblical quotation: “For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine” (Ps. 50:10, 11). Clearly the F.W.S. believes in adopting from the outset a strong negotiating position, a habit acquired doubtless in its dealings with staff associations.

We were stimulated into a search for further forestry references in the Bible. For example:

I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the

fir tree and the pine, and the box tree together (Is. 41:19).

The voice thereof shall go like a serpent; for they shall march with an army, and come against her with axes, as hewers of wood. They shall cut down her forest, saith the Lord, though it cannot be searched; because they are more than the grasshoppers, and are innumerable (Je. 46:22, 23).

As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die; he shall flee into one of those cities, and live (Deut. 19:5).

The exercise is so fascinating that we may return to it in our next issue. Order your copy now!

WORLD INCREASE IN FOREST FIRES

FAO, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation has reported that forest fires have increased at a serious rate in recent years in both developing and developed regions of the world. The increase in developing countries is probably due to population increases and the need for arable land; the increase in the Mediterranean region and in California is ascribed to increased use of the forest by local residents and tourists. Some areas are burned deliberately to decrease temporarily their tourist value in the hope of gaining permission for buildings or other facilities.

These increases have prompted FAO and the UN Environment Programme to initiate a programme aimed at increased research, education and cooperation in the prediction, detection and control of forest fires.

QUERY

Do kangaroos have hoppus feet?

MURPHY'S LAWS

1. In any field of scientific endeavour, anything that can go wrong will go wrong.
2. Left to themselves, things always go from bad to worse.
3. If it is possible for several things to go wrong, the one that will do most damage is the one that will go wrong first.
4. Nature always sides with the hidden flaw.

5. Mother Nature is a bitch.

6. If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously over-looked something.

(Collected from American academics by Diarmuid McAree)

COOLE AGAIN

We will not be allowed to forget either our past misdeeds or our present responsibilities with regard to Coole Park, now part of Gort State Forest, Co. Galway. Following the comment quoted in our last issue (p. 178) the magazine *Books and Bookmen* (March 1975) begins a review with the following sentence: "The Coole Edition of Lady Gregory's writings pursues its monumental course, no doubt with some sense of reparation for the regrettable destruction of her home, and perhaps also some shame for the now indecipherable state of her famous autograph tree."

TREE SEED WORKERS

A computerised World Directory of Tree Seed Workers is being compiled on behalf of the International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO) Working Party S2.01.06 (Seed Problems). The Directory will include all aspects of seed ontogeny, origin, technology and health. In addition to being a source of addresses and a mailing list for meetings it will serve as a general manpower source and a register of expertise to advise on or investigate specific tree seed problems.

The Directory will list all tree seed workers, whether they are involved on a research level or industrial-operational level, in all nations of the world.

Individuals who wish to be listed but who have not received a questionnaire should contact Dr. D. G. W. Edwards, Canadian Forestry Service, 506 West Burnside Road, Victoria, B.C. V8Z 1M5, Canada.