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R. Z. Egerton

NEW POISON FOR BOLL WEEVILS

Arsenate of Lead Proves Fatal to Cotton Pests.

BETTER THAN PARIS GREEN.

Government Experiments Show That Its Use Increases Yield Materially. From Ten to Twenty Pounds Per Acre Seems to Be the Proper Quantity to Be Applied.

Proved Methods of Fighting Boll Weevil.

INFESTED plants should be uprooted and burned early in the fall—the earlier the better.
Grazing infested fields with sheep, cattle or goats is effective when practicable.
All sprout and volunteer cotton should be destroyed to deprive the weevil of food late in the fall.
Destroy all hibernating places. Infested fields should be plowed in the fall and should be harrowed later. All refuse and trash in hedges, fence corners and turnovers should be gathered and burned. Old sorghum and corn fields should be carefully cleared.
Rotation of crops is advisable, and where possible cotton should not be planted near timber or other places that offer good hibernating quarters.
Early planting and the use of fertilizers that will insure an early crop are advantageous.
The use of the chain cultivator destroys myriads of larvae in infested squares that have fallen from the plants.
Arsenate of lead in the form of a fine powder is effective when forced into the buds and squares of growing cotton.

By W. D. HUNTER, Bureau of Entomology of the United States Department of Agriculture.

During the season of 1900 a noteworthy advance was made in the control of the boll weevil by means of a poison. The credit for this achievement belongs to Wilmon Newell of the state crop pest commission of Louisiana. In experiments with paris green for the destruction of the boll weevil carried on in previous seasons it was found that a certain number of the insects were killed. It occurred to Mr. Newell that the number reached by the poison would be increased greatly if a substance much finer than paris green could be obtained.

Arsenate of lead was the poison that was selected. Very large quantities of arsenate of lead may be applied to growing plants without any injury whatever. In the use of paris green the presence of a small amount of free arsenic causes considerable damage to cotton plants if it is applied at the rate of as little as five pounds per acre. Mr. Newell succeeded in having an entirely new form of arsenate of lead made by one of the manufacturers of insecticides.

Used as Fine Powder.
 The substance is an exceedingly fine powder that can be forced into the buds and squares into the covering of the squares (unblown buds) of the cotton plant to a far greater extent than a comparatively coarse powder like paris green. The preparation of this form of arsenate of lead consequently obviated two important difficulties that attended the use of paris green—that is, the danger of burning the plants by large applications and the difficulty in forcing the substance into the parts of the plants where it would be taken up by the insect. Thus the foundation was laid for very greatly increasing the mortality that had previously been obtained from the use of another poison.

In 1900 the state crop pest commission of Louisiana had thirteen experiments with powdered arsenate of lead located at different places, comprising over forty-six acres. The poison was applied at from one pound to fifty-one pounds per acre. In different experiments from one to ten applications were made. In all but one of these experiments an increased crop was obtained that resulted in a profit, after deducting the expense incurred, which varied from a few cents to \$23 per acre.

Too Much Poison Used.
 In one experiment which did not result in a net profit an increased yield of 121 pounds of seed cotton per acre was obtained. The very large amount of poison used in this case (fifty-one pounds per acre) involved such an expense that this increased yield was not sufficient to offset it.

In the experiments in which from ten to twenty-three pounds of the poison per acre were used in from five to seven applications the net profit ran from \$3.63 to \$22.54 per acre. The most profitable amount of the poison to be used seems thus to be indicated, although the conclusions from the preliminary work may be changed as the result of future investigations.

At most the poison merely places another means of control at the command of the planter. Everything indicates that it will be an important means

of fighting a season beginning on June 20 and extending to Nov. 4 at 12, 200, 100.

Eats Nothing but Cotton.
 The cotton boll weevil, as far as known at present, has no food plant other than cotton. When confined to cotton the weevil will perforate all stems, bolls, squares, such as apple or banana, but this is only under the stress of starvation.

The boll weevil is strictly diurnal in its habits and is not active after sundown. Unlike some related insects, it is not attracted to lights. During the summer the majority of weevils do not live longer than sixty days. During the cooler part of the year many of them live as long as six months. The longest lived weevil on record lived from Dec. 19 to the following October.

The boll weevil passes the winter in the adult stage. In the fall, when frosts occur, immature stages may be found in the squares or bolls. Provided the food supply is sufficient many of these immature stages continue their development at a very slow rate, and adults finally emerge. Ordinarily, however, the frosts that destroy the cotton generally kill practically all of the immature stages of the weevil.

With the advent of cool weather in the fall the adult boll weevils in cotton fields begin to seek protection against the winter. They fly from the fields in every direction, although their movements are governed partially by the prevailing winds. They may fly into hedges, woods, cornfields, haystacks and farm buildings.

Burning Infested Plants in the Fall.
 A number of weevils also obtain hibernating quarters without leaving the cotton fields by crawling into cracks in the ground under grass, weeds and other trash and into the burs from which cotton has been picked. Here, however, the mortality is greater than where the protection is better. The majority of weevils that hibernate successfully do not pass the winter in the cotton fields. During the winter the weevils take no food and remain practically dormant.

Foremost among the methods of controlling this expensive pest is the killing of the hordes of adult weevils that are ready to enter hibernation in the fall and the prevention of the development of millions more that would later emerge to pass through the winter. This is accomplished by burning



COTTON SQUARE. (Cut shows boll weevil in position. Natural size. Author's illustration.)

the infested plants in the fall after the weevils have become so numerous that there is no prospect of the maturity of any additional crop.

Wholesale Destruction.

There are many vital reasons why the wholesale destruction of the weevils in the fall should be practiced by every cotton planter in the infested region. Some of these are stated below:
 First.—Hordes of adult weevils, many for each plant in the field, are killed outright.

Second.—Many more weevils that are in the immature stages, possibly as many as a hundred for each plant in the field, are also killed.

Third.—The few adult weevils escaping will be weakened by starvation, and the great majority will not have sufficient strength to pass through the winter.

Fourth.—The development of the late broods, which experiments have shown furnish the vast majority of weevils that pass through the winter, is cut off immediately.

Fifth.—The removal of the infested plants with the weevils facilitates fall or early winter plowing, which is the best possible procedure in cotton raising. Moreover, this plowing assists greatly in the production of an early crop the following season.

Should Be Done Early.

No definite rule can be laid down as to the proper time for destroying the weevils upon and in the fruit of the plants in the fall. In general the proper time is whenever the weevils have reached such numbers as to infest practically all of the squares that are being set. Fall destruction as late as November will accomplish much, but several times the number of weevils can be destroyed if the work be done in October. The proper method in general is to uproot the plants by means of plows and to burn them as soon as possible.

All stumps or sprout cotton should be prevented where the plants are uprooted. Where such sprout cotton or volunteer cotton appears it should be destroyed. Trash, hedges, in fence corners, on terraces and around old buildings should also be burned, and old sorghum fields should be carefully cleared. They are for experimental advantages a place for hibernation, and cornfields are also a source of danger.

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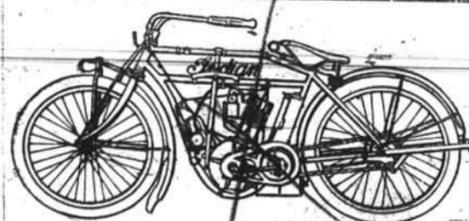
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