

When the DDT restrictions were imposed, there were those who questioned whether or not the restrictions were premature. They felt that the chemical's insect controlling properties, which enabled farmers to produce more food per acre, had been an enormous benefit to mankind. An editorial in the Los Angeles Times pointed out that, according to Dr. Robert White Stevens, Professor of Environmental Sciences at Rutgers, "DDT is probably one of the most useful and contributory chemicals to man that has ever been invented. It has led the way to relief in a world where two-thirds continually dwell on the brink of starvation."

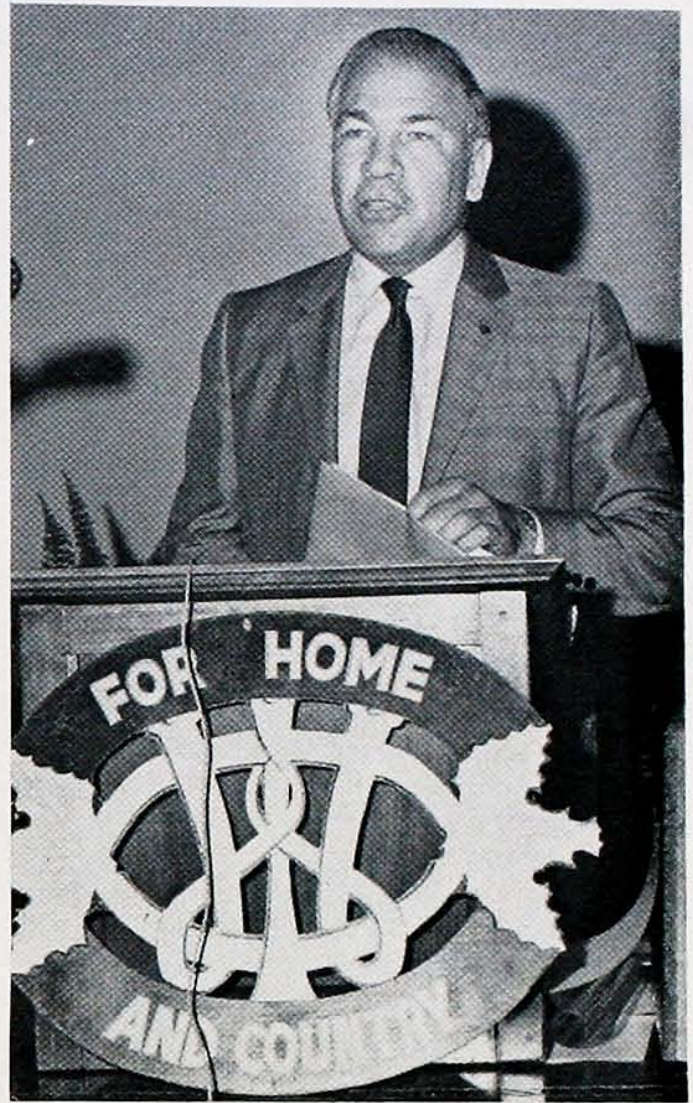
On the other hand, the dangers of DDT, could have had far-reaching results. Recently, it has been reported that Canadian researchers have found DDT in Arctic seals. It is thought that northern rivers have washed the insecticide into the Arctic Ocean where it is being passed on to the seals through the food cycle.

Studies on the effects of DDT, as well as other chemicals such as mercury, are continuing at the Ontario Veterinary College at the University of Guelph. Recently, both the Federal and Provincial governments have demanded that certain industries cease dumping waste products with a high mercury content into the water systems.

Pesticides, one of the products of our twentieth century technology, have become a very important and necessary part of our life style. The use of pesticides ranges far beyond the control of insect and disease in pasture regions, forests and home gardens. We use them to produce, store and process our food; to protect man and his animals against disease-carrying insects; and to treat imported food and fiber to destroy undesirable species of foreign pests. Pesticides are also present in some moth-proofing agents, paints, and swimming pool chemicals.

The misuse of pest and weed control chemicals has a detrimental effect on more than the soil. They can also cause air pollution, damage to neighboring crops and other desirable vegetation. In some cases crops, such as tomatoes, cannot be grown because of the drift of herbicide vapors during treatment of neighboring crops for weed control.

The use of nitrogen fertilizer, in excessive quantities, has been included in the list of things contributing to the pollution of ponds, small lakes and streams. Back in 1942, when nitrogen fertilizer was first used extensively, it was never considered a pollutant. At that time, farmers in the United States used less than 500,000 tons. But, this quantity has increased, until by 1967, they were applying more than 6 million tons of U.S. soil.



Mr. Everett Biggs, Deputy Minister, Ontario Department of Agriculture and Food.

The excessive use of nitrogen fertilizer — and I want to stress the word "excessive" which means amounts exceeding crop needs — can lead to the presence of nitrate in a number of things ranging from drinking water to baby food. The presence of nitrate in baby food is serious because the baby's system readily converts it to nitrite, which hampers the passage of oxygen in the blood and results in labored breathing.

Thanks to the constant testing of products on today's market, we are able to locate and eliminate any substances considered dangerous to a person's health.

The Ontario Department of Agriculture and Food's concern about the improper use of insecticides, herbicides and chemical fertilizers, initiated a full-scale program to check Ontario's milk and other food supplies for pesticide residues. All testing is done at the Provincial Pesticide Residue Laboratory in Guelph.

In addition to this program, the Department has established a pesticide committee. This scientific advisory committee deals with all matters relating to the use of pesticides for the Department, as well as working for the Inter-departmental Sub-Committee on Pesticides, Herbicides and Fertilizers.