

'Pesticide attacks irrational'

by LINDA ULRICH
Nebraskan Staff Writer

Current attacks on pesticides are irrational outcries, caused primarily by ecologists who are "grasping at straws," according to John D. Furrer, NU professor of agronomy.

Furrer contends that both sides of the pesticide story are not being told. "The informa-

about the dangerous effect of pesticides is completely out of proportion to the established facts."

Ecologists deplore the slow breakdown of DDT and other pesticides and the resulting long period of time they remain in the environment, "but so far no one has definitely proved that the DDT presently found in

our bodies or in our environment is harmful in any way," he said.

"The attack on pesticides is comparable to people who believe that since fluoride is poisonous in large amounts, any amount of fluoride in the drinking water is dangerous," Furrer stated.

As an example, Furrer said

that studies conducted at the Communicable Disease Center in Atlanta, Ga., show that persons whose bodies contained more than 400 times the amount of DDT found in the average person still suffered no ill effects of any kind.

Ecologists are ignoring the beneficial effects of pesticides, such as their usefulness in lice and fly-control, he stated.

In 1953, there were 75 million cases of malaria in India and nine years later after extensive use of DDT in mosquito control, the number of malaria cases had dropped to 100,000.

Ecologist and environmentalists concerned with the decline of wildlife such as the bald eagle, and the falcon, have blamed DDT for the population decline since DDT has been present in the bodies of some of these dead birds.

"Ecologists are ignoring the fact, however, that while in some areas these birds are indeed declining in numbers, in other areas such as Alaska and Northern Canada, the population of these birds is holding steady, with both groups of birds containing the same amount of DDT.

However, he continued, Audubon Bird Society bird

counts conducted in 1941 when DDT was first used compared to bird counts taken in 1960 when DDT was at the height of its use show tremendous population increases in birds such as the robin which live with man.

"For example, blackbirds experienced a 39-fold increase in total population and robins experienced a 12-fold increase," he pointed out.

This would lead us to believe that birds such as the eagle can't tolerate the encroachment of man on their environment and this factor, rather than the use of pesticides, has caused the wildlife population decline, Furrer said.

"If we had to depend on nature alone for our world food supply, we couldn't even support one-tenth of the world's population," he said.

Home Ec gets research grant

A \$29,000 three-year research grant has been presented to the School of Home Economics to conduct a study on a family-oriented rehabilitation program for physically disabled homemakers.

The grant was given to the School of Home Economics by the Research Foundation of the National Easter Seal Society.

Virginia Trotter, home economics school dean, is project director, Lois Schwab, professor in family economics and management, is project

leader and Marolyn Merchant, family economics instructor, is research associate for the project.

The project will investigate the differences in change of attitudes in self-perception between two matched groups of families, each having a father, a physically disabled mother and at least one teen-ager.

One experimental group will receive homemaker rehabilitation and family counseling services and a matched control group will not. Each group will consist of 15 to 20 families.

"We are interested in helping the physically disabled homemaker in her work involving her home, her family

and herself," Mrs. Schwab said.

Since rehabilitation is a very slow process, the study will be conducted over a period of 18 months to two years, she added.

The home economics school officials hope to demonstrate a feasible rehabilitation service which will benefit families across the United States, as well as in Nebraska.

"There is a definite movement across the country to help disabled persons in their immediate environments but the School of Home Economics is in a unique position to deal with the family members and their role in rehabilitation," Mrs. Schwab said.

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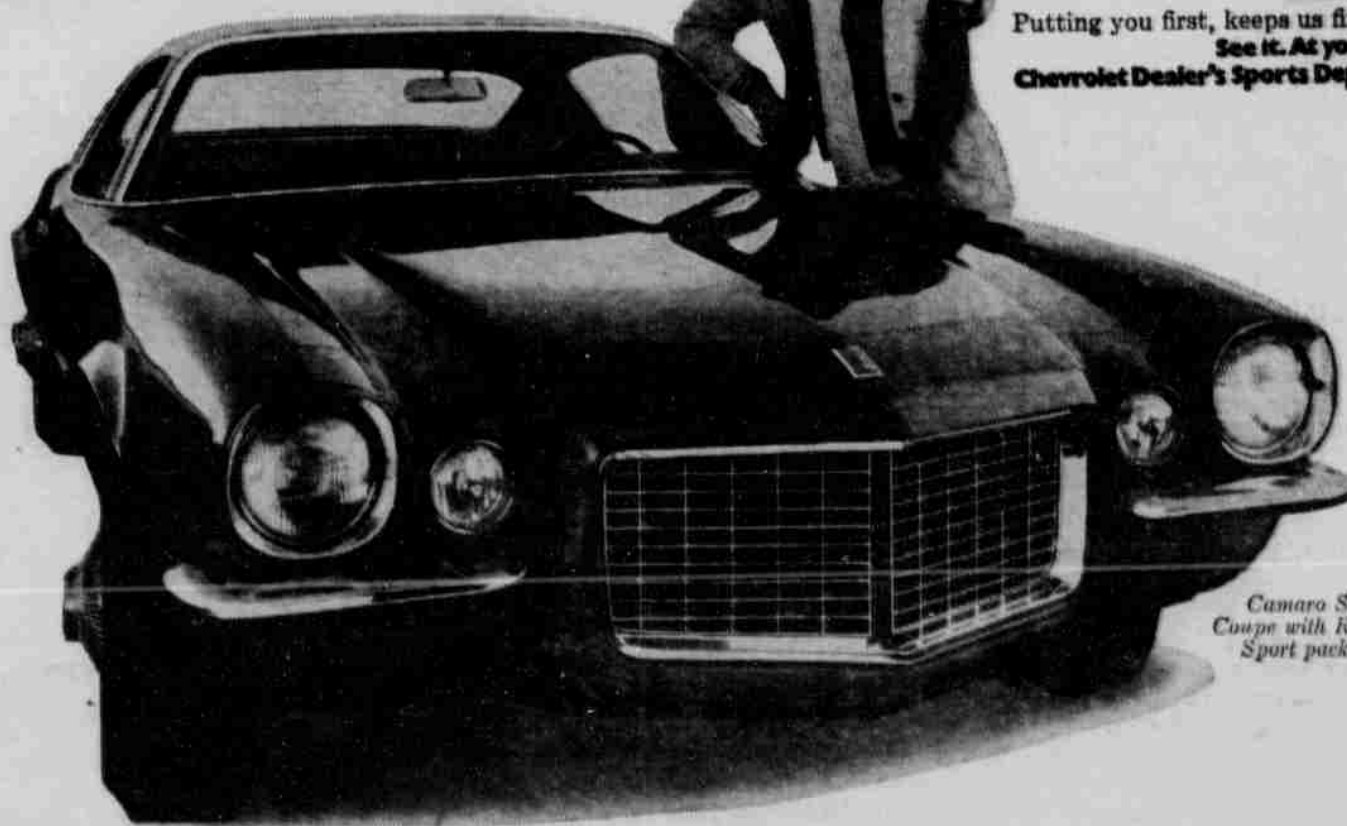
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