



by CAROL ANDERSON
Nebraska Staff Writer

The Rosemary's baby fathered by industrial rape will require a monstrous price of the American people before it will be contained.

We're speaking of course of pollution — the kind that kills century-old redwoods in the San Fernando Valley, the kind that blackens the ocean near under-water oil wells and the kind that makes the sun red in Chicago.

The accusing finger is usually pointed at the biggies, New York and Los Angeles, whose droppings are easy to spot. But Nebraska rates no shining knight label either. Nebraskans too drive cars whose internal combustion engines cause 60 per cent of the country's air pollution. And Nebraska has industries, one of the most offensive of which is agriculture.

The state has always boasted about having the biggest underground water supply, but it also has much acreage sunk in manure-laden feedlots. There is nothing to stop feedlot run-off from polluting streams and rivers or contaminated rain water filtered through manure from seeping down to the water table beneath.

DDT's harm to man cited by zoologist

"To the statement that DDT is not harmful to man I could perhaps agree provided that this excludes individuals who possess livers, skin, blood or nervous, respiratory and gastrointestinal systems."

This was how Paul A. Johnsgard, professor of zoology, and recipient of a Guggenheim fellowship, described the effect of DDT on human health.

The enormous damage that DDT has done to the natural environment, including numerous and widespread killings of birds in urban centers and the accumulation of DDT pesticide residues in animals such as polar bears and penguins, cannot be denied, he said.

According to Johnsgard the point that DDT is dangerous to human health can be supported by "recent medical literature data."

Actual human fatalities resulting directly from DDT are relatively rare but not unknown, Johnsgard said.

He cited as an example a documented case of a 10-year-old girl who was exposed to repeated aerosol sprayings of DDT in her home over a period of several months and died of DDT-induced aplastic anemia.

Johnsgard stated that the gradual buildup of DDT in the human body inevitably occurs in every American, probably beginning before birth by passage of this chemical through the placenta.

A 1969 article in the "Archives of Environmental Health" reports levels of DDT in the organs of stillborn babies and the blood of newborn children that already have reached several parts of DDT per million milligrams of fat tissue, Johnsgard said.

Babies nursed by their mothers received additional DDT through their

Another more insidious effect of agriculture is destruction of the topsoil. On the average the United States grows its food in nine inches of topsoil. One third of that has been destroyed in the last 300 years.

Man doesn't know how to replace topsoil, the product of millions of years of weather cycles. But it will take quite awhile, even with our advanced technology, to destroy the productivity of all the topsoil on earth. We have invented other ways to kill our habitat much faster.

But there is some hope. At least people are getting worried.

About 2,000 colleges, including the University of Nebraska, and more than 7,000 high schools are holding Earth Day activities this month to discuss pollution, over-population and what can be done.

Although the big industrialists, specifically the airplane and automobile manufacturers, have gotten us into this mess, it looks like it's up to the consumer to clean things up by paying through the pocketbook and possibly through the shoe leather.

Whole industries may have to be revamped and the consumer will pro-

mother's milk, he said, and women excrete into their milk a higher level of DDT than is found in cow's milk, thus causing infants to acquire a dosage of DDT which is twice the daily maximum intake recommended by the World Health Organization.

"Under current restrictions it would be illegal to sell such milk in interstate commerce, since these levels well exceed the legal limit for milk products set by the Food and Drug Administration," Johnsgard explained.

Recent research at the National Cancer Institute has confirmed the blastomogenic (tumor-causing) effects of DDT on liver, lung and lymphoid tissues of laboratory animals, he continued.

These and other laboratory test results illuminate with dreadful clarity the dangers to which we are exposing existing as well as yet-to-be-born children," Johnsgard stated, "since the estimated billion pounds of DDT already accumulated in the world is air, soil and water will require perhaps 20 or more years to deteriorate completely."

In view of these facts, Sweden, Denmark and Hungary have banned DDT and Canada and Great Britain have severely limited its use, he said.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has recommended a phase-out of all non-essential uses of DDT in this country over the next two years but it is probable that DDT will continue to be used, Johnsgard stated.

"Our legislators have properly been concerned about the effects of drug 'trips' on the bodies of younger citizens but have remained oblivious to the fact that the entire American population has been subjected to a DDT 'trip' of a far more damaging, Johnsgard concluded.

Suicide is Painless

bably pay the cost through commodity price increases.

Some observers think the automobile industry is beyond help and the only answer to air pollution may be mass transportation or the rebirth of the pedestrian.

In other words the style of life in American will have to slow down and change drastically.

"For too long the main concern of this country was progress and growth," according to Sen. Gaylord Nelson who kicked off the environmental teach-in idea last September.

"We are all to blame," Nelson says, "because it was assumed that some environmental damage was necessary for progress.

"Industries and municipalities made the assumption that the rivers and lakes were there to be dumping grounds for wastes, while the air was a good place to get rid of the smoke," he continued in a press statement.

Industry was taking the cheapest way out, saving production costs and, in turn making mass-produced products cheaper

for the mass consumer, the Wisconsin senator says. The consumer wanted cheap goods so he rationalized that "a little degradation of the environment was necessary to keep the economy successful and healthy."

Nelson says that before the end of this decade, Americans will have to learn to become accustomed to a different life style, where progress alone will not be the nation's goal and where all Americans will learn that environmental reparation and protection will be expensive and require sacrifices from everyone.

The city of London is one place where pollution has been pushed back, at least to the outlying districts. London has kicked out industries and enforced strict laws against things like burning soft coal, according to C. B. Schultz, professor of geology and state museum director.

The pollution fight has cost London money, Schultz says, because cutbacks in industry have forced lower salaries. But the environment is a bit healthier.

So, America, take heed before you become a Rosemary's.



Photo by Dan Leddy