

In the epidemic year of 1935, stem rust caused a 60-percent loss to the wheat crop in Minnesota and some of the neighboring States, and the loss to the country as a whole was almost a quarter of the crop. Stem rust is a continuing threat to world food production.

Hog cholera was first noted in this country in the 1880's, but it spread rapidly. The virus causing the disease may be picked up from polluted water, polluted soil, or polluted feed. Over the years, the ravages of this disease have caused losses of hundreds of millions of dollars to hog farmers.

Mr. Chairman, these few examples will indicate that agriculture and forestry are indeed severely hurt by environmental pollution. It is an important part of the mission of the USDA to help in meeting these problems.

WASTES FROM AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY (AIR POLLUTION)

Although most air pollution arises from industrial and metropolitan areas, forest fires and the burning of field residues make a contribution.

We must face the fact that forest fires are a major concern in the United States. During a typical year, there are about 150,000 forest fires in this country, which ravage 5 to 7 million acres. In addition to heavy monetary losses from destruction of timber resources, wild forest fires in the average year produce an estimated 160 cubic miles of smoke in the convection column. Such fires generate about 34 million tons of particulate matter each year, largely as carbon and ash; and about 338,000 tons of hydrocarbons are vaporized and condensed.

Mr. Chairman, our Forest Service is doing everything possible to find ways to cut down on air pollution from wild forest fires.

In some of our Western States the burning of residues in rice fields, wheat fields, and grass-seed lands may produce local air pollution problems.

Thirty million tons of natural dusts are emitted into the atmosphere each year. Although agricultural lands are not the sole contributor of these dusts, windblown soil is a major factor. Although much progress has been made in getting needed conservation practices on the land to prevent the tremendous clouds common during the Dust Bowl days of the thirties, our conservation task is a long way from completely tying down soils susceptible to wind erosion.

SEDIMENTATION

Committee Print No. 9 of the Senate Select Committee on National Water Resource states that:

Rough estimates of the suspended solids loadings reaching the Nation's streams from surface runoff shows these to be at least 700 times the loadings caused by sewage discharge.

Curbing sediment delivery to our streams and lakes by aiding farmers and ranchers to minimize soil erosion has long been a key objective of the Department of Agriculture. In the thirties sediment delivery on the Piedmont Plateau of the Atlantic Coastal Plain and the Black Belt of Alabama was enormous. One sees far less erosion on the soils of these regions now due to the establishment of sound systems of conser-