

SELECTIVE HERBICIDES IN CANADA

Prospects for the U.K. Exporter

(The Chemical Trade Journal, 16 Novembro 56, pág. 1162)

A Detailed report on the Canadian market for herbicides, prepared by the U.K. Trade Commissioner Service in Canada, has been issued by the Export Services Branch of the Board of Trade. Its main conclusions are:

The market is at present dominated by Canadian and U.S. (principally U.S.) manufacturers. Recent developments suggest increased opportunities for U.K. industry, but these cannot yet be evaluated with certainty.

Trend to Specialised Products

The greatest present demand is for products containing 2:4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D), though many other types are in use. The trend is towards specialised products designed to cope with specific weeds; in particular, for the control of brush and woody growth. A herbicide fully effective against wild-oats would also meet a wide-spread need.

U.K. manufacturers have been significantly successful with 4-chloro-2-methylphenoxyacetic acid (MCPA) and the present prospects for this product seem favourable.

Successful marketing involves not only satisfying Government standards and co-operating closely with Canadian agricultural scientists and research workers, but also advertising (in the case of a branded product) and meeting the exacting delivery and stocks standards maintained by N. American manufacturers. Generally speaking, U.K. manufacturers do not yet hold any striking advantages which would offset those (e.g. large-scale production and proximity) enjoyed by their N. American competitors.

In the body of the report it is stated that the U.S. not only has the lion's share of imports but controls the major portion of Canadian production. Of the material most commonly in use, namely, 2:4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D) there is only one Canadian manufacturer, the Naugatuck Chemical Co. (a division of the Dominion Rubber Co. Ltd.). Of the 76 firms who have registered herbicidal formulations with the Canadian Department of Agriculture in 1956 twenty are U.S. firms and three U.K. firms.

Recent Import Figures

Imports of herbicides have been declining slightly since 1953, totals over the last four years from all sources being: 1952, \$1.53m.; 1953, \$3.01 m.; 1954, \$2.63m.; and 1955, \$2.45m. Imports from the U.S. were \$2.54 m. in 1954 and \$2.39m. in 1955, while the U.K. took second place with \$85,000 in 1954 and \$46,000 in 1955. Imports from the U.K. are largely of basic acid ingredients as opposed to registered formulations.

The principal users are farmers (who absorb about 95 p.c. of the herbicides sold), railways, public utilities (power) and highway authorities. The greatest demand is for preparations which include 2,4-D. In 1954, such preparations accounted for \$3.7m. out of total sales of \$4.7m.

Products for Brush Control

The chemical control of brush and woody growth has greatly increased

during recent years. During the year to March 31, 1954, for example, the Manitoba Power Commission carried out a co-operative programme of chemical brush control in conjunction with 32 municipalities, and in addition, brush along 1,700 miles of transmission line was treated by the Commission's own equipment. At present, the chemicals most used in brush control are esters of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T.

Wild oats provide the most serious weed problem for the Western farmer, the chief difficulty being the persistence of seeds in the soil for many years. Attempts at chemical control have not yet proved entirely satisfactory. Trichloroacetic acid has been found generally ineffective but is still under trial. Recent studies have centred on the use of chemicals of a temporary soil sterilant nature. Some encouraging results, although inconsistent and at times conflicting, have been noted from such chemicals as Prophan and isopropyl m-chlorophenylcarbamate.

Opportunities for MCPA Imports

One feature worthy of the attention of U.K. manufacturers is the use of MCPA formulations as an alternative in certain cases to 2,4-D, for use among the more sensitive crops such as oats, flax, legumes (including field peas) and alfalfa, and for early treatment in wheat and barley. It has been estimated that in 1954 about 60,000 lb. of MCPA was used. This increased to 120,000 lb. in 1955, and there was some shortage of supplies. Following the recommendation of the Western Weed Control Conference in Regina in Nov. 1955, it is believed that the demand for MCPA will greatly increase. This should offer opportunities for the United Kingdom, which enjoys a competitive advantage in the production of MCPA.

The full report which includes particulars of Government regulations and standards, customs duties, the detailed available statistics, etc., is published by the Export Services Branch of the Board of Trade (Lacon House, Theobalds Road, London, W.C.1) in its Special Register Information Service (Ref. COM/12644, Nov. 9, 1956).