

Once seen as miracle solution, DDT was used widely

DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane) was developed as a synthetic insecticide in the 1940s. It initially was used with great effect to combat malaria, typhus and other insect-borne human diseases. However, it was quickly discovered



VIRGINIA GRAVES

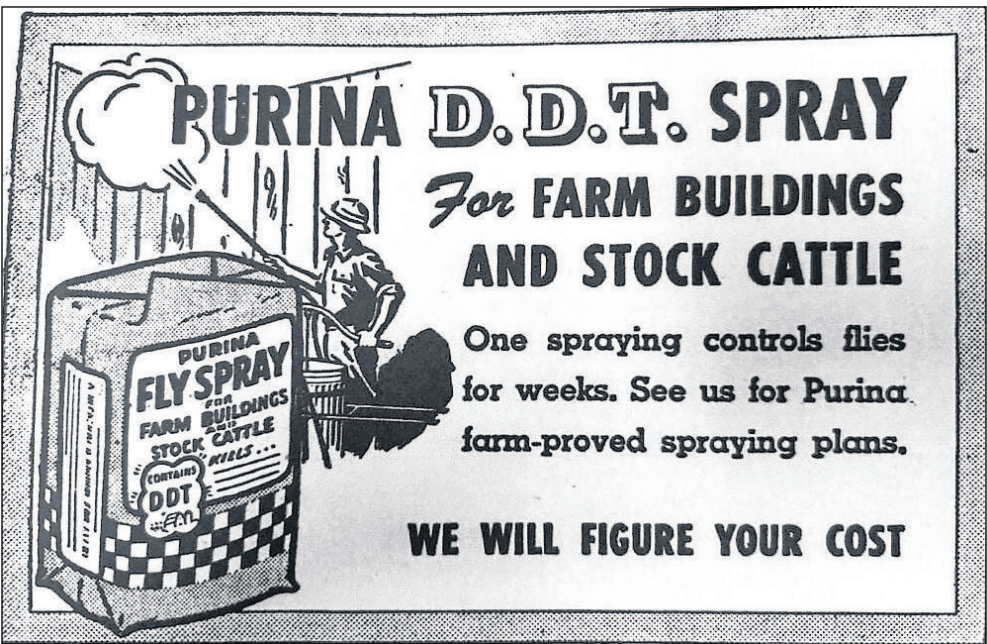
to provide insect control for crops, businesses, homes, gardens and even livestock production.

The use of DDT spread like wildfire following World War II. In September of 1945, the News-Journal announced that DDT was now available to civilians, and that consumers could expect the insecticide to be effective against a wide rate of insect pests.

And what seemed a benefit at the time ... it lasted “a long time” since it was not soluble in water.

Everyone seemed to jump onboard. Bugs were a huge nuisance, not only to people, but livestock and pets.

In the city, Campbellsville had sanitation issues during the 1940s. Outdoor, uncovered trash had become a feasting and nesting ground for flies. In the county, farmers fought a variety of insects that devoured crops and gardens. Families were encouraged to put DDT on the home windows to keep flies



Now banned in the U.S., DDT once was sold broadly and promoted in this May 6, 1948, newspaper advertisement placed by Coppock Hatchery of Campbellsville.

away from the house.

DDT was a huge success and was sold and advertised in a number of local stores. Articles were published almost weekly regarding new uses for DDT and how local farmers were using it with great success.

In December of 1945, a help wanted ad was looking for male help to supply DDT to farmers in Taylor County ... “No experience required.”

Although the use of DDT didn’t wane, every now and then, a note of caution appeared in the paper. On July 4, 1946, one article encouraged people to “read the DDT labels carefully” ... and went on to say that the insecticide was “not dangerous if handled with care.” In the same edition of the paper, it was reported

that Philip Corbin had sprayed his cattle with DDT to keep flies off of them.

Indeed, farmers were on the DDT bandwagon. In August of 1946, an article from the University of Kentucky Experiment Station reported that red spiders and mites were damaging orchards in Kentucky. They suggested covering the center and outside of their trees with DDT.

The insecticide also seemed to get a seal of approval from Taylor County’s Home Agent, Mrs. George R. Buckner (Margaret), calling DDT a “wonderful insecticide.”

By October of 1946, some farmers were curious as to why other farmers were not yet spraying their beef calves with DDT ... especially “when to do so

should add an extra ¼ pound of beef daily.” The same article stated that 4H boys and girls should spray their calves and that there was no reason for them to waited for Dad to do it. “Do it yourself” the article suggested.

In May 1947, another article from the University of Kentucky Experiment Station recommended DDT as a lamb tick control, both in the fall and spring. Two months later, Kentucky farmers were advised to treat their sweet corn crops with a 5% DDT dust.

In September of 1947, a short news article announced that the City of Bardstown had been

sprayed with DDT to help control flies and other insects. In July of 1948, the News-Journal wrote that Greensburg would soon spray all buildings in the business section with DDT. The town had been sprayed the year before and the fly health hazard had been greatly reduced. The city of Columbia also had been sprayed. It would be May of 1949 before Campbellsville got its turn.

In May of 1949, the U.S. Public Hearth Service compared the number of flies in Campbellsville, which had not been sprayed, to our nearby counties that had been sprayed, and reported that Campbellsville had 19 times more flies than Greensburg and 22 times more flies than Columbia.

In July of 1949, the News-Journal published the good news: “Campbellsville Gets Bath of DDT.” The spraying had been concentrated on fly breeding and congregating places, particularly back alleys in the downtown district where most of the garbage was uncovered. The poultry house section of the city was said to be “deplorable” and a perfect breeding place for flies. The city was elated with the news and results.

It seems that the only people who were less than enthusiastic about DDT were local and state health workers.

First of all, flies were becoming resistant to DDT.

At the same time, Taylor County’s Health Unit began encouraging the community that cleaning up the areas that attract flies was a better option that spraying chemicals. They reminded us that “the best weapon against flies is not insecticides, but sanitation.”

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, the agency responsible for regulating pesticides prior to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, began to prohibit many DDT uses because of mounting evidence of its declining benefits, plus concerns about environmental and toxicological effects. In 1971, farmers were told not to use of DDT on their tobacco crops.

In 1972, the EPA issued a cancellation order for DDT based on its adverse environmental effects on wildlife as well as its potential human health risk. Today, DDT is banned in the U.S. and classified as a probable human carcinogen.

There is considerable evidence indicating a strong link between DDT, which lingers a long time in the environment, and cancer.

Virginia Graves is coordinator of the Taylor Regional Archive Center, a non-profit organization which preserves local history and genealogy. For information, call 270-789-4343 or send an email to info@TaylorRegionalArchiveCenter.com.

EARLY DAYS

TEN YEARS AGO August 2016

Southern Gospel music artist Kevin Spencer gave a concert at South Summersville Baptist Church.

Hannah Carole Bennett, granddaughter of Carole and Russ Mobley of Campbellsville graduated from the University of Louisville School of Medicine.

TWENTY YEARS AGO August 2006

Demolition of several downtown buildings was about to begin to make way for a new jail.

Campbellville’s American Legion Post 82 baseball team captured the Kentucky state championship in Springfield at St. Catherine College. The team went undefeated and advanced to play in Louisville in the Mid-South Regional Tournament.

Todd and Chrystal Beckley of Campbellsville announced the birth of a son, Derrick Lane, at 4:56 p.m. Monday, July 17, at Taylor Regional Hospital in Campbellville.

THIRTY YEARS AGO August 1996

Bleach house operator Donnie Bland retired from Fruit of the Loom on Aug. 1 after 34 years of employment.

The Campbellsville High School co-ed cheerleaders attended the Ameri/Cheer Camp at Campbellsville University.

Twelve young women entered to compete for the title of 1997 Taylor County Junior Miss.

FORTY YEARS AGO August 1986

Boy Scouts from Taylor, Marion and Nelson counties spent the weekend at Green River Lake camping and competing in such events as water jousting and spear throwing.

Pfc. Mark Dicken, 21, of Greensburg was home on leave from the U.S. Army.

Local youngsters in the Taylor County Library’s Summer Reading Program read 5,711 books this year.

FIFTY YEARS AGO August 1976

Sharon Kay Hubbard, daughter of Mr. and Mrs.

James Walker Hubbard of Campbellsville, was awarded the United Methodist scholarship from the Board of Higher Education and ministry of the United Methodist Church.

Paul Stanley returned home following an extended vacation with his aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bryd of Huntsville, Tennessee. While on vacation, he visited Sea Island in Savannah, Georgia, and Coral Gables, Florida.

SEVENTY YEARS AGO August 1956

Mr. and Mrs. Lester O. Martin celebrated their wedding anniversary Sunday, Aug. 26, with an open house at their home on East First Street.

A new queen was crowned for 1956. Linda Newcomb, 16-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Newcomb, won out over 42 other contestants at the Taylor County Fair Beauty Contest.

Specialist Second Class James K. Goodin, son of John T. Goodin, McNary Street, Campbellsville, recently was assigned to the 379th Transportation Battalion at Fort Story, Virginia.

Marlon G. True has reported for duty at the Campbellsville office of the Division of Forestry.

EIGHTY YEARS AGO August 1946

Albert Caulk and Dick Caulk were visitors in Louisville for the showing of the Kaiser-Fraser cars.

Mr. and Mrs. Otis Wethington and son and Mr. And Mrs. Roy Wethington and daughter left for a vacation trip that will take them to Epphenham, Ohio, Chicago, Illinois, and Tipton, Iowa.

NINETY YEARS AGO August 1936

A new electrical welding machine was installed at the service garage here. This machine is the only one of its kind in this section and will enable the garage to give high-class service. J.M. Phipp is in charge of welding and mechanical service at this garage.

Preliminary surveys were made by the highway department so work could be

started on Spurlington Road.

Carl Gorin and Russell Morrison of Greensburg received painful cuts on their faces and bodies when the car they were riding collided with another vehicle on the Green River Hill.

Polly Parrott returned home after attending the past summer school term at Bowling Green.

Jane Sanders was named Miss Campbellsville 1936 in a contest sponsored by the Parent Teachers Association at Taylor County High School.

James Robinson and Mell Sinclair, of this city, spent a week in the Ozark Mountains hunting and fishing.

HUNDRED YEARS AGO August 1926

Another business throws open its doors in Campbellsville or just a step below Campbellsville on the Greensburg Road on Mr. J.H. Chandler’s farm. More than 300 tons of lime have been burned and crushed and is now ready for farmers of Taylor County. This is just what the farmers of Taylor County have been wanting, good lime that will go through a wheat drill at a very cheap cost. Farmers were invited to see this quarry where the lime is soaked and ready to go to soil.

Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Arvin and Mrs. George Arvin returned home from a visit with Mr. and Mrs. James Arvin at Shelbyville and Frankfort.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Payton and son, Paul Jr., and daughter, Dorothy Mae, returned to their home in Louisville, after a visit with Mrs. Payton’s sister, Mrs. Frank Jones.

Mr. and Mrs. Guy Raley and two daughters of Gary, Indiana, were visiting relatives in Spurlington.

HUNDRED TEN YEARS AGO August 1916

Mrs. John A. Marshall of Saloma was the guest of Miss Betty Robinson.

Charles Sanders returned from a visit with his granddaughter in Perryville.

Mr. and Mrs. M.M. Alexander and son, John, of Washington, D.C., returned to their home after a visit with their parents from this city.

DENNEY

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perimeter assignment. She carried that same work ethic into the classroom, graduating with a 4.0 GPA and earning valedictorian honors in 2005.

She also was named Ms. Campbellsville,

earned Academic All-America recognition twice and received Mid-South Conference Academic All-Conference honors three times.

Denney later completed a master’s degree in education and she also teaches in CU’s math department.

Her promotion continues a lifelong connection to Campbellsville and reflects her impact on one of the NAIA’s most consistently successful women’s basketball programs.