



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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GAS WOODCHUCK BURROWS IN SPRING
WHEN FREE OF OTHER ANIMALS

Woodchucks, or groundhogs, are now a menace to crops in many parts of the Eastern and Mid-Western States where these animals were unknown a decade ago, and their control has become necessary, according to the Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture. A number of effective methods of control for these areas are described in Leaflet No. 21-L, "Woodchuck Control in the Eastern States," just published by the department.

April and May are the best months to use the gas method of attack, not only because the animals are concentrated in their dens in spring while getting ready to raise the new family, but also because at this time their burrows are free from other animals that might be destroyed needlessly.

Gassing is the surest practicable method of controlling the pest on the average farm of the Eastern States. Carbon disulphide and calcium cyanide when properly used are both effective in gassing or fumigating woodchuck burrows. At present the use of carbon disulphide is the less expensive of the two and, therefore, preferable. Gasoline and the exhaust from a gas engine or automobile are also used on small areas.

An individual farmer working without the cooperation of his neighbors is compelled to carry on almost continuous gassing operations if he is to

destroy the woodchucks that constantly move to his farm from adjacent premises. A community cooperative campaign, therefore, is highly desirable, and if carefully planned and systematically conducted it will be found the most efficient means of controlling woodchucks in farming communities. Community effort also saves the cost of repeated treatment of the infested areas, and a further saving may also be possible in buying supplies cooperatively.

Where the control of woodchucks on farming areas is necessary, county agents or other agricultural workers should take the lead in perfecting the organization required for a systematic drive. The Bureau of Biological Survey, through its leaders in rodent control, will assist in undertakings of this kind whenever possible, by demonstrating control methods and assisting in organizing and conducting campaigns.

A copy of Leaflet, No. 21-L, may be obtained by writing to the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

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