

upper rooms in a new house in R. S. Puram, Coimbatore, were found infested by swarms of a mite crawling along the floor, the walls and even the bedsteads and clothings in them. It was during the night time that these were found more numerous and very active. At night they were even noted crawling over the bodies of sleeping persons and causing very great annoyance. Curiously enough these creatures were not noted to cause anything more than mere mechanical annoyance by crawling over the bodies of persons; they did not prick the skin or cause any irritation or itchings like parasitic mites. Although they were not such, yet the annoyance was sufficient enough to drive the inmates from those rooms.

Attempts to find out what they feed on were not successful. The mites increased to such numbers in the house that the inmates had to vacate the whole wing of these infested rooms for a week and sleep elsewhere. The rooms were fit for occupation only after they were thoroughly washed with crude oil emulsion or phenyle. After an interval of a few months the pest again appeared in the same house though not on such a serious scale as on the first instance. The creatures are very tiny specks of life like very small spiders a greenish brown colour and the adults measure less than a fourth of an inch. It appears as though it was an abnormal migration of the creature from some natural habitat, but attempts to find out the place from where these first came into the house have not so far been successful. The idea of this paper is simply to record such an occurrence not previously known in S. India. As far as the writer can make out the mite appears to belong to the family Tetranychidae in which are included most of the plant feeding forms known as "red spiders" brown mites etc.

The occasional invasion of dwellings by the clover mite (*Bryobia pratensis* G.) has been recorded from the U. S. A., by Miller and in Canada by Gibson and Twinn, but a comparison of the description of the clover mite with the subject of this paper shows that the two do not belong to the same species. It will be interesting to quote Miller's remarks on the peculiar house infesting habit of the clover mite as :

"A habit peculiar to the species is that of entering buildings during the fall. The exact prompting of this migration is still to be determined although heat probably plays a major role. Nymphs and adults will swarm into houses, spend the entire winter there and in the spring pass to the outside. I have observed this on several occasions. There was no food supply in the form of green plants available yet thousands of the mites remained alive throughout the winter of 1923 in a cold basement room."

The exact identity and systematic position of the mite is being studied and it is hoped to record these facts in a future contribution.

- Ref. (1) Miller A. E. "An introductory study of the Acarina or mites of Ohio."
(2) A. Gibson. "Household insects and their control" and C. R. Twinn, Book No. 112 new series, pp. 73, Dept. Agr. Ottawa.

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ABSTRACTS

An Improved Cotton Picker. A much improved, more efficient cotton picker has been recently invented by Rust and Rust in America. It is reported to be capable of doing the work of a hundred pickers.

The new machine strips cotton even from the unopened bolls of the cotton plant. It has also a 'Mechanical gleaner' on it which salvages any dropped cotton. It is more compact so that it can get between narrow rows of cotton plants. (*Science Supplement*, Vol. 84 No. 2186).

V. R.

Prevents Plant Growth on Masonry. According to a Swiss inventor, H. Zimmerli, the growth of plants on walls of masonry can be controlled by adding to the mortar—for example, in case of water reservoirs, beach walls, and the like—substances that prevent the germination and growth of plants. In particular good results are obtained with the addition of three parts of sodium chlorate and two parts of iron sulphate to 100 parts of quartz, sand and mortar. It is especially recommended that some sodium fluoride or colloidal silver also be added. Finally, the hardened plaster is sprayed with a dilute emulsion consisting of boiled linseed oil, wood grease, ground fluorspar, ammonia, and 2 per cent. copper sulphate. This treatment is claimed to be very effective.—(Scientific American, April 1936). (*The Indian Forester*, Vol. LXII, No. 10). K. M. T.

Milk production costs at the Agricultural Research Institute of Northern Ireland by Hale. (*The Journal of Ministry of Agriculture*, Vol. 43, pp. 768).

The prime costs are not comparable with other costing results frequently presented. No value is put on new born calves and no attempt is made to debit various departments of the farm with proportions of overhead costs and rent. Hence the costs will have to be used with caution if they are to be compared with returns. The information contained in the table gives the reasonably accurate direct costs of milk production under practical farming conditions and gives us an idea of the variations the item may be subject to under vicissitudes of farming.

Average prime costs per gallon of milk produced in pence.

	1928-29	29-30	30-31	31-32	32-33	33-34	34-35	35-36
	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.
Depreciation of cows	2.92	0.82	1.60	1.70	1.43	1.46	2.02	1.25
Depreciation and keep of bulls	0.97	0.49	0.34	0.31	0.38	1.41	0.58	0.43
Wages and horse labour	2.91	2.51	2.26	2.00	1.92	1.87	1.98	1.81
Concentrate	4.04	4.58	3.64	3.51	1.94	1.96	2.20	2.20
Coarse fodder	2.54	2.10	1.79	2.27	2.07	2.79	2.24	1.83
Grazing	0.20	0.13	0.91	0.19	0.27	0.28	0.33	0.23
Tuberculin tests	0.70	0.26	0.27	0.27	0.31	0.27	0.30	0.04
Sundries	0.85	0.88	1.21	0.67	0.77	0.65	0.71	0.71
Dairy costs	2.60	1.77	2.15	1.79	2.05	1.85	1.76	1.55
	17.73	13.54	13.45	12.71	11.14	11.54	12.12	10.05
Average No. of gallons of milk per cow	798	798	814	764	624	655	703	729
Lb. of concentrate fed per gallon of milk	3.36	4.27	4.11	4.66	2.74	3.02	3.17	3.33
Average price of concentrates per cwt. £	0-11-2	0-10-0	0-8-3	0-7-0	0-6-7	0-6-1	0-6-6	0-6-2

N. B.—Prime costs do not include rent and overhead charges.

R. B.

Agricultural Fottings

BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, MADRAS

Agricultural Marketing. The marketing section has been engaged in the survey of many agricultural commodities of importance. Marketing survey reports of the following commodities have been completed and forwarded to the Agricultural Marketing Adviser to the Government of India:

Rice	Coffee	Eggs
Wheat	Tobacco	Hides and skins
Groundnut	Cattle	Plantains
Linseed	Milk	Grapes
		Pineapples.