ASK THE SCIENTIST

If you have a question to ask the scientists, mail it to the New York Press Association, The Castle, Syracuse, 10, New York. The Science Board of the Radio Workshop at Syracuse University will answer each week in the Andover News three questions considered most interesting and timely.

Question 1. What is this "aerosol bomb" we have heard so much about during the war?

ANSWER. The "aerosol bomb" is a dispensor of insecticides. It is a small metal cylinder filled under pressure with a solution of pyrethrym, DDT, or other syntheitic insecticide, or with a mixture of these. The insecticides are dissolved in Freon, an odorless, non-toxic, organic solvent which is a gas at ordinary temperatures unless it is kept under a pressure of about 100 pounds.

When the valve on the sylinder is opened, the pressure forces the liquid solution from the nozzle. The Freon quickly evaporates to a gas, leaving the dissolved insecticides floating in the air in the form of miscroscopic droplets oor smoke particles called "areosols." One six-inch dispensor contains enough insecticide to kill the insect life in 150,000 cubic feet of space. —Dr. Aden King, chemist.

Question 2. In what form is uranium found in the earth?

ANSWER. Uranium is found in minerals which are fairly widespread in the earth, though in most places the uranium is in relatively small amounts. There are about six minerals in which the proportion of uranium is high, and these minerals form the ores of uranium when they are in large enough quantities to be economically mined.

Carnoeite has more than 50 per cent uranium oxide in it. Another important mineral containing uranium is pitchblende, which is also a source of radium. Pitchblende has the color and appearance of pitch, while carnoite is a powdery yellow to miners.—Dr. Earl T. Apfel, geologist.

Question 3. How long will the fungus which causes ringworm live off the body?

ANSWER. That depends upon where it is. If it is on carpets, clothing, or wood floors which are not often washed, it may live as long as a year. Washing with boiling water kills the organism and checks its spread. Dr. Verlus Lindeman, zoologist.

Question 4. I understand that all living things are composed of cells. Do these cells have communicating tubes? If not, how do materials get from one cell to another?

ANSWER. The cells of animals and plants are units in themselves and do not have communicating tubes. The walls of the cells are porous and the materials flow between the cells.—Dr. Reed.

Question 5. Will the lack of enough food for children make this generatoin in Europe smaller or will the children make up the lost growth later in life?

ANSWER. That is a difficult question to answer because there are so many things we do not know. In the first place, we do not know to what extent the deprivation has occurred or for how long. The extent of deprivation and the ages when it took place would modify the answer that should be given.

A dietary deficiency or lack of sufficient food for development from birth to 10 years of age probably would not be as serious as it would be between 10 and 20 years of age. This latter period is that during which most rapid development takes place.

If growth is retarded during the years of 10 to 20, certainly these individuals will go through life with a somewhat smaller stature. At the end of this period certain grandular secretions bring about changes in the bone structure which limit any further growth. On the other hand, younger children who are retarded in growth may make up some of it if they are properly fed during the rapid growing period. — Dr. Verlus Lindeman, zoologist.

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Pass the Potatoes, Please

Time was when women passed up potatoes because they believed them to be fattening. But now specialists at the College of Home Economics at Cornell say that old idea is out. Potatoes yield about the same number of calories as an apple or a banana does. And there is only about one quarter as many calories in a potato as in a small serving of apple pie. What's more, that vegetable contains plenty of vitamin C and iron that the body needs.

From now on when potatoes are served, see that they are passed to—not by—you.

Nuts in the News

It's time to think about holiday fruitcakes — and the nuts that go into their making. And here's good news. There are plenty of nuts on the market this fall and winter.

According to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, a record crop of California almonds is expected. You'll be able to get fewer filberts and walnuts than in 1944, but a bumper crop of pecans is moving to market from the south.

To add to the nuts grown in this country, more imported kinds may be on the market—Brazil nuts from South America, cashews from India, possibly almonds from Spain and Italy, and filberts from Spain, Italy and Turkey.

Inspection for Protection

Fire is attacking American homes at the rate of 1,000 a day, or one every 90 seconds. Inspect your house today, and remove all fire hazards. But even with care and protection, a fire may break out, so train members of your family on what to do in case of fire.

Use It Up

Planning to use home-canned food is just as important as the actual canning. This means you should look at the date and label on canned foods when you go to the cupboard to pick out a jar. Then the older jars won't get "lost" at the back of the shelf.

It's a good idea to use up home-canned foods within a year, say experts at the College of Home Economics at Cornell. Longer storage is not unsafe if the food was properly canned, sealed air-tight, and stored in a cool place. But food does tend to loose some food value and flavor if held too long.

Inside the Shell

When buying nuts in their shells, homemakers sometimes are uncertain as to how much "meat" they yield. Here is a guide to help elmiminate further guess work:

One pound of unshelled almonds yields about 1 cup of shelled kernels; 1 pound of filberts, about 1½ cups; 1 pound of peanuts, about 2 cups; 1 pound of pecans, almost 1½ cups; 1 pound of English walnuts, a little more than 1½ cups of halved kernels; and 1 pound of black walnuts yields about ½ cup of broken kernels.

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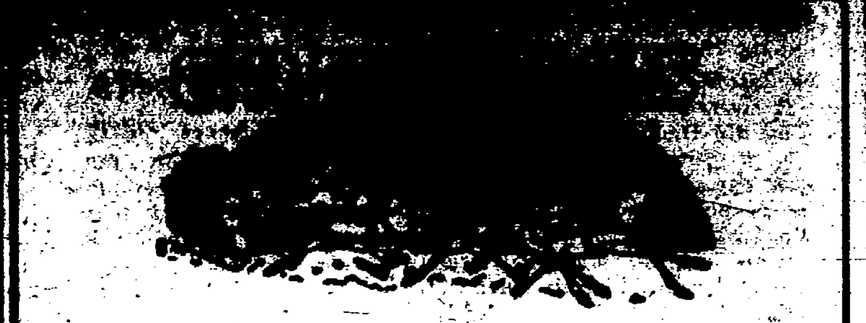

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