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**NEWS**

IDAHO TOWN BECOMES AIR BASE FOR GRIM WAR  
AGAINST FOREST EPIDEMIC OF SPRUCE BUDWORM

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SALMON, IDAHO (Special) - This little community, lying in the shadow of the Bitterroot Range in east-central Idaho, is destined within the next few weeks to become an air base for a grim war against one of man's most destructive forest enemies--the spruce budworm.

Fly westward from here along the jagged course of the mountains and a panorama of timbered ridges sprawls in all directions beneath your wings. This is Salmon National Forest, part of the great green resource that makes Idaho possessor of the fifth largest sawtimber reserve of any state in the nation.

But this is a forest in trouble. Since 1958, an infestation of the spruce budworm, one of the great forest killers of the West, has stealthily extended swaths of death and defoliation over this cathedral-quiet domain. By 1960, over 236,000 acres were infested. By 1961, some 964,000 acres showed damage. By the fall of 1962, the epidemic had grown to 1,600,000 acres on both the Salmon and the adjacent Challis and Payette national forests.

In 1963, the U.S. Forest Service applied chemicals to a 16,500-acre test area of the Salmon to make certain that techniques for aerial application of DDT were truly safe. It also conducted spray operations on 200,000 acres of the nearby Targhee National Forest.

The really big push against the spruce budworm is planned for this summer. Control operations on 500,000 acres of the most heavily hit sections of budworm infestation on the Salmon are scheduled to get underway on or about June 25. At stake are over 600 million board feet of threatened timber, wildlife populations to whom this forest is home, valuable watersheds and bountiful recreation values.

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A survey this week of forestry authorities knowledgeable on Intermountain Region forests produced a consensus of opinion that the budworm threatens a greatly expanded area of timber destruction next year if it isn't stopped now.

Ernest Wohletz, dean of the School of Forestry at the University of Idaho, Moscow, said the outbreak poses a major threat to Idaho's forest resource.

"Chemical spraying is the only major tool of practical value which foresters presently have available for use against insect epidemics," Wohletz said. "We are working to develop biological and cultural controls, genetically superior trees, radiation treatment of insects and other methods, but these solutions are still in experimental stages."

E. M. Stoddard of Mountain Home, chairman of the conservation committee of Western Wood Products Association, a forest industry group, said use of chemical sprays on forest pests in carefully planned and coordinated programs has been proven safe and effective.

"Millions of acres have been sprayed in the West without harm to wildlife," he observed. "No other chemical has been so thoroughly tested in practical use and none approaches it in effectiveness. We are supporting this control program as necessary to protect Idaho's forest resource."

Clifford T. Solberg, Forest Service project leader for the control program, said many special precautions are being taken to protect wildlife.

Solberg said wildlife biologists from the Idaho Fish and Game Commission are cooperating closely in the project. An extensive communications network of ground-to-air and air-to-air communications is being set up, he said, to assure tight control of application.

"This is going to be one of the most carefully planned and executed spray programs ever undertaken," Solberg declared.

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Ernest L. Kolbe, chief forester for WWPA, said the budworm is one of the West's most destructive pests.

"If the Salmon forest outbreak were left to spread unchecked," he said, "it will have a substantial impact on Idaho's \$50,000,000 annual forest industry payroll."

Deputy State Forester Jack Gillette said a chemical control program such as the one on the Salmon becomes necessary as a last resort when it is clearly evident that natural controls will not do the job. Foresters on the Salmon, he said, are in much the same position as the home gardener who finally reaches for an insect sprayer when he sees his prized plants being chewed up.

"Actually, however, an acre of forest land receives less chemical spray in the lifetime of an average tree than does an average home garden in a single season," said Gillette. "Forests are rarely sprayed, and then at low dosages. Most of Idaho's forest land has never received any chemical treatment."

Gillette said the project has been studied and approved by the Federal Pest Control Review Board, a body made up of representatives from the departments of Interior, Agriculture, Defense and Health, Education and Welfare.

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