

CONNECTICUT
AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
New Haven, Conn.

BULLETIN OF IMMEDIATE INFORMATION

No. 12

December 1920

W I L D F I R E O F T O B A C C O

The tobacco survey last summer, in which this Station, the Hartford County Farm Bureau and the Extension Service of the Agricultural College cooperated, revealed the presence of the bacterial disease called "Wild-Fire" on at least twenty tobacco farms in the State, and it was no doubt present on other farms. It probably caused more loss to growers than any other single trouble. Unidentified specimens of this disease were collected by this Station at East Windsor Hill in July 1919, and without doubt it has been in the State for a longer period, escaping critical attention.

To those growers whose crop suffered from this disease -- so far as we knew them -- we immediately sent Bulletin 263 of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture, which gives a full description of the disease and suggestions for protection against it.

We are now sending to tobacco growers in the State, so far as we have their addresses, Circular 82 of the Massachusetts Extension Service, which repeats the information contained in the North Carolina bulletin, with added information.

A bulletin (No. 62) from the Extension Division of the Virginia Agricultural College lays particular importance on care of the seed-bed as a means of control, and likewise urges (1) disease-free seed, (2) clean seed-bed covers, and (3) use of a new plant bed. The authors advise soaking suspected seed for fifteen minutes in a solution of one ounce of formaldehyde in one pint of water, then washing it thoroughly with water, and drying immediately.

Such precaution seems unnecessary where the seed stock was gathered in years before the disease appeared and has since yielded only sound plants, but we strongly urge growers not to set plants from farms where wild-fire has appeared and to thoroughly sterilize their seed-beds.

On farms where the disease has appeared new seed-beds should be made, or, if the old beds must be used, they should be very thoroughly sterilized and treated as recommended in the Massachusetts circular.

Remember that the disease may be carried by contact with affected plants on the hands, clothing or tools, and that while the unfavorable weather conditions during the growing season of 1920 favored its spread it is likely to appear in 1921, and if weather conditions are similar the disease may spread further and do untold damage.

E. H. JENKINS,
Director