

Announce Dates For County Fairs

The county fair season, with its pink lemonade, harness racing, bigger and better agricultural exhibits and features that go to make the fall season one of the most enjoyable of the year, will open Aug-

ust 2, when Fowlerville Fair at Fowlerville will station ticket takers at turnstiles, which will click merrily at 50 fairs until the season is closed by the Hilldale County Fair at Hilldale during week of September 24. The Oakland County Fair will be held August 16-19 in Pontiac. List of fair dates released by the Depart-

ment of Agriculture indicates an attendance of 2,000,000 at 1938 fairs and officials are predicting that the present season will find an even larger number in attendance.

Among the other fair dates announced are: Bad Axe, August 19; Barry, Hastings, September 5-9; Branch, Coldwater, September 13-16; Calhoun, Marshall, August 22-26; Cass, Cassopolis, September 5-9; Charlevoix, East Jordan, September 5-9; Chippewa, Sault Ste. Marie, September 14; Clare, Harrison, August 29-Sept. 1; Dickinson and Menominee, Norway, September 1-4; Eaton, Charlotte, Aug. 29-September 1; Emmet, Petoskey, August 21-25; Gratiot, Ithaca, August 8-12; Ingham, Mason, August 23-26; Ionia, August 14-19; Iron, Iron River, August 16-19; Jackson, August 29-September 2; Lapeer, Inlay City, August 7-11; Lenawee, Adrian, September 18-23; Marquette, August 22-26; Northern District, Cadillac, September 11-16; Northwestern Michigan, Traverse City, August 28-September 1; Saginaw, September 10-16; Shiawassee, Corunna, August 16-19; St. Joseph, Centreville, September 18-23; Van Buren, Hartsville, September 12-15; Washtenaw, Ann Arbor, August 28-September 1.

are for accidents reported to the Michigan State Police pursuant to Act 218 P. A. 1927. In April, sixty-one fatal accidents killed seventy-two people. This is a decrease of fourteen victims from last month and of twenty-one from April 1938. So far in 1939, 321 people have been killed in motor vehicle traffic accidents as compared to 362 in 1938.

Besides the 61 fatal accidents, there were 1,513 personal injury and 5,358 property damage accidents. The 1,581 people injured this month increased the year's total to 7,142.

April was another bad month for railroad-motor vehicle accidents. Fourteen people were killed rating the total to 61 so far this year. This is but 15 less than have so far been killed as a result of collisions between motor vehicles.

Among the cities Pontiac maintained its record of no fatalities so far this year with another death free month. Bay City, in the 40,000 to 49,999 population group, and Ann Arbor and Ferndale, in the 20,000 to 39,999 group, also have no fatalities thus far this year.

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DECREASE SHOWN IN 1939 TRAFFIC FATALITIES

The Michigan Traffic Accident Summary has been extended to include the forty-eight Michigan cities with populations of 5,000 and 20,000. The totals listed

Try to Conquer West's Deserts

Three-Year Test to Be Made of Feasibility of Certain Crops.

PHOENIX—An attempt is to be made to conquer the arid deserts of the West, long a symbol of waste, by making them yield products necessary for human welfare. As a result Dr. J. J. Thorber, professor of botany at the University of Arizona, will know in three years if it is possible to bring the desert under control and make it a boon to humanity. Dr. Thorber said the university will begin next spring to cultivate desert plants with the object of developing them to a point where they can be raised in commercial quantities for their products—which include medicines, rubber and fiber.

"I feel quite sure the desert is going to be of economic value to man instead of waste," Dr. Thorber said. "It is not so bad as it has been three years before we know how successful the experiments will be."

Robber Plant Prominent. The scientist said that if it is found that plants can be grown commercially the acreage needed for the Guayule plant alone will be "tremendous." The Guayule plant produces rubber. The experimentation will be done on the university farm at Tucson, although work on the milk-weed plant, also a rubber producer, may have to be carried to Yuma, where it is not so cold in the winter. A sample box of a number of the plants was sent to Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace in Washington and the government was interested enough to send two investigators to look into the possibilities of establishing a laboratory for further experiments. The government report has not yet been made available.

First work of the experiment will consist of growing seven plants, several of which are believed to have medicinal properties. The canaigre plant, which has a high percentage of tannin, is used in the tanning of fine leather, although it is too expensive for cheaper leathers.

The yucca plant, with its fibrous leaves, may prove to be very valuable as the fiber quality stands up under the intense cultivation, Dr. Thorber said.

Try Seeds and Cuttings. The third plant to be cultivated is the guayule, which is abundant in southern Arizona.

"We intend to plant both seeds and cuttings from these plants and experiment on their cultivation," he said. "They are becoming increasingly important as a possible source of a rubber supply for this country. When first discovered, the plant contained only about 4 or 5 per cent rubber in its stalk, but now after cultivation and care, plants can be produced that contain 23 to 25 per cent rubber.

"One of our important jobs will be to determine if Indian wheat, whose seed is identical insofar as medicinal properties are concerned to psyllium, can be grown in commercial quantities. We already know how to gather it mechanically in a clean condition and we have been assured that most of the seed can be used if a steady source is found."

Another species of milkweed, Dr. Thorber said, has medicinal qualities which the Indians say can be used for making perfume.

Famous Naturalist Born in Haiti. John James Audubon was born at Aux Cayes Haiti, in 1785. His early years were spent in France, but he came to this country in 1804 to his father's estate, "Mill Grove," near this city. Here he became interested in bird life and in a cave on the banks of the Perkiomen he made the first "banding" experiment on the young of wild American birds. From 1806 to 1826 he lived in Kentucky, where the greater scope for his studies was possible. He then went to England in search of a publisher for his bird drawings. "Birds of America" was successful immediately. Audubon was made a life member of the American Philosophical society and of the Academy of Natural Sciences, New York, where some of his original work is preserved. He died in New York, January 27, 1851.

Growth of Oysters. The shape of oysters is affected by the type of bottom on which they grow. On hard bottom they grow wide in proportion to length; on soft bottom, in which they tend to sink, they become the prized, relatively long-shelled "coon" oysters. Beds producing the latter type of oysters are most likely to be under shoal water, more easily reached by wading, which is the oyster-gathering technique used by the Indians. Hence the high proportion of "coon" oyster shells in the Indian shell mounds represents an unconscious selection of the high quality, shoal-water oysters in ancient times, rather than a deterioration in the quality of the modern mollusks.

Old-Age Payments Made To More Than 40,000

More than 40,000 persons residing in Region V of the Social Security Board have now received money payments under the old-age insurance system. A summary showing the number and amount of these payments was made public this week by Walter B. Redman, manager of the Pontiac office of the Social Security Board. "In Region V, which includes the states of Michigan, Kentucky and Ohio, these payments have now risen to their all time high average of \$77.85. This was the average of these payments for March of this year," Mr. Redman said.

His report shows the number of Michigan lump-sum benefit claimants certified for payment in March, 1931. The total number of these claimants since January 1, 1937, when the old-age insurance system began to operate, is 13,873; the amount of benefits paid during March, 1939 is \$73,148; the total amount of benefits paid since the Act became effective, \$729,027; and the average amount of the Michigan benefits paid in March, 1939, \$81.19 which is the highest in Region V.

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