Agricultural Workers Control the Wind

Those gentle Florida breezes that play such an important part in giving Florida an ideal year round climate can be hazardous to agricultural investigations, namely, in the applications of fertilizers to small experimental plots. Small quantities of fertilizer materials which drift from one plot to another, particularly those containing minor elements, are likely to give growth responses which will falsify experimental results. Because of this, it is desirable to spread materials during windless periods. However, this is not always possible.

Unlike most people who complain about the weather but do nothing about it, Florida Experiment Station workers have arranged for at least temporary control of the wind. Their unique wind-breaking arrangement which effectually controlled fertilizer drift and contamination of adjacent experimental plots, shown in Fig. 1, was used in fertilizing a minor element experiment at the West Florida Experiment Station at Jay, Fla. The equipment consisted of a war surplus camouflage net and a few stakes commonly used in the area for stacking peanuts. The net was set up on the windward side of each tier of plots before treatment. This allowed fertilizer materials to be spread up to 25 feet to the leeward side of the net. The windbreak provided excellent protection, eliminated winddrift, and prevented contamination of the adjacent plots.

—William G. Blue, Assistant Biochemist, and N. Gammon, Soils Chemist, Department of Soils, Agricultural Experiment Station, Gainesville, Fla.

Fig. 1.—In the photograph Dr. N. Gammon at the extreme left pulls the net into a new position while Dr. R. A. Carrigan and H. W. Lundy who engineered the equipment prepare to attach it to the stakes. Dr. W. G. Blue took time out to snap the photograph.