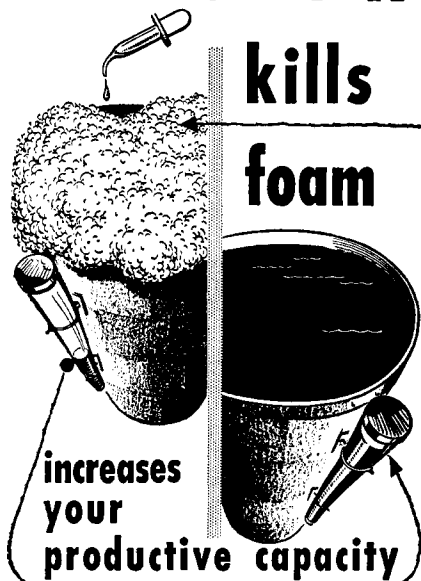


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LETTERS

More on Anhydrous NH₃ And Soil Microflora

DEAR SIR:

We manufacture a fertilizer product, an enzymatic hydrolysate of tuna viscera, which was discussed by R. W. Simmons at the Pacific Northwest Industrial Waste conference and reported in the *JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD CHEMISTRY* (April 29, page 206). A letter from Vincent Sauchelli was published in your June 10 issue, page 424, taking issue with the statement that California citrus growers are using this fertilizer "to help restore the soil microflora killed off in recent years by too enthusiastic injection of anhydrous ammonia."

I would like to emphasize that at no time have we ever carried out experiments on the affect of anhydrous ammonia on the microorganisms of the soil. However, we do have evidence that strongly suggests that the use of one of our liquid fish fertilizers in conjunction with anhydrous or liquid ammonia may give crop yields in excess of that expected of the combination of these materials.

The liquid fish fertilizers that we have developed appear to produce their beneficial effects chiefly through increasing the activity of soil microorganisms. This is strikingly demonstrated by their acceleration of the composting process in excess of those effects produced by equal applications of equivalent N-P-K solutions.

The effects of these fertilizers consist chiefly in better aeration and water permeability (tilth) and increased availability of macro- and micro-nutrients. Either as a result of the above or as a result of the elaboration of specific substances, we usually observe a much better developed root system in growing plants.

Specific reactions to these liquid fish fertilizers vary greatly with soil types, climate, and nature of the crop.

The idea that the constant and indiscriminate use of inorganic plant foods gradually upsets the microbiological population of the soil finds little support by university and government laboratories. However, the majority of the many hundreds of practical farmers and growers we have personally contacted during the past five years blamed the gradual decline in the fertility of their soil to their own excessive use of inorganic nitrogen salts, particularly during the war years. What the truth of the matter is, we do not know. We do know that it is a highly complex situation and that whatever the cause, the intelligent use of plant residues in conjunction with our liquid fish fertilizers plus appropriate amounts of inorganic fertilizers can in

many cases bring about increased fertility and improved crop quality.

H. N. BROCKLESBY
Consulting Chemist
Terminal Island, Calif.

DEAR SIR:

Without further supporting evidence on the anhydrous ammonia argument, I shall retire my case until I have additional quantitative data. I do believe that the great variation among soils must be taken into consideration.

R. W. SIMMONS, President
Tidewater Laboratories, Inc.

Ike Likes Peas

DEAR SIR:

The May 27 *AG AND FOOD* Newsletter contains reference to the USDA luncheon prepared for the President at Beltsville on May 26, the menu of which included many new and improved foods. One item mentioned in the Newsletter was "dehydrated frozen peas." The item in question was actually "dehydro-frozen" peas—peas which had first been partially dried until they weighed only half of their original weight and then frozen [*Food Tech.*, 4, 286 (1950); 6, 438 (1952)].

HAROLD S. OLCOTT
Head, Vegetable Processing Division
Western Regional Research Lab.

ED. NOTE: Incidentally, Ike liked them.

No Hawk-Eye?

DEAR SIR:

Ordinarily I am no "hawk-eye" but the following appears in *C&EN*, May 4, page 1862:

"Newer and greater markets for liquid fish fertilizers are also in the offing. With only three years of commercial exploitation behind them, these fertilizers have risen from a few thousand gallons per year production to several hundred thousand."

I also call your attention to page 206 of the April 29 issue of *AG AND FOOD*, which comments as follows on liquid fish fertilizers:

"With only three years of commercial development, production has risen from a few thousand tons to several hundred thousand tons."

I can't make dollars and sense out of gallons and tons.

F. A. BALDAUSKI
Technical Director
Sheffield Chemical Co., Inc.

ED. NOTE: We did get our gallons and tons mixed up. *C&EN* was right; *AG AND FOOD* in error.