

speaking before the APFC, offered some comments in defense of the agreement of the House Committee on Agriculture, to extend the present 90% parity formula for basic commodities one year beyond January 1, 1955. He said that if farming is to be prosperous there must be products from the farm for sale at prices which consumers can afford to pay. Agriculture must have an income that will enable it to buy its proportionate share of our total production of consumer goods. He said that the consumer should be advised that out of each dollar

the consumer receives as his income, only 26% is used for food. Of the dollar spent, only 45 cents goes to the food farmers. He declared that if farmers gave away their wheat, the price of bread would fall less than 3 cents a loaf. He said that the widely publicized figure for farm programs, 16 billion dollars, gives a false impression of the amount of money expended for the support of farm products.

Congressman Hoeven estimated that if gains are balanced against losses for price supports on the six basic commodi-

ties, the loss for 20 years amounts to only \$109,191,773. All price support activities on basic commodities and perishables produced a loss of only \$1,320 million in 20 years, he said, which is only a bit more than the size of subsidies given to business in the single year 1952.

Congressman Hoeven warned that consumers can depend on disappearance of their jobs if farm returns for foodstuffs fall to nonprofit levels. Agriculture's purchasing power creates high employment as sure as general prosperity helps agricultural sales, he said.

Fertilizer Financing Needs Attention

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, W. VA.—Better sales development programs are needed in the fertilizer industry if it is to reach the great potential obviously available, declared Harold Dinges, Spencer Chemical Co. speaking as a member of a panel on "What Makes Fertilizer Move?" before the spring meeting of the National Fertilizer Association here last week. Mr. Dinges said that the industry should not look back in satisfied fashion on the increases in fertilizer sales during the past 10 years, but should consider actual sales as compared with recommendations by state agricultural experiment stations. In several states, those recommendations are now 100% to more than 200% above current sales. Furthermore, he said, the progress in encouraging fall application of fertilizer has been relatively small. While pasture fertilization has been getting increasing attention in some areas of the country, it still has not been put across generally on the basis of its economic value.

In considering ways to take advantages of these opportunities, Mr. Dinges brought out the often repeated point that the dealer is the weakest link in the chain of fertilizer distribution. While he ad-

mitted that this may be true, he also emphasized that he does not expect that situation to change in the near future.

Manufacturers Should Act. Sales development on the part of the fertilizer manufacturer is at least a part of the answer, declared Mr. Dinges. For example, he said, every fertilizer manufacturer who has a sales organization on the road should plan a program whereby each salesman will get at least 5 farmers a year either to use fertilizer on crops where they have used none before or to try increased rates above normal application where fertilization has been used previously.

Collective action in the fertilizer industry toward sales development is a difficult problem, said Mr. Dinges. For the most part this job has been left to the colleges and at one time it appeared that the state plant food societies would be the answer to the problem. It now appears, he said, that this thing is too big and too important to be done piecemeal. The real answer, he suggested, lies in the hands of one of the two fertilizer associations. He suggested it to NFA as a possibility.

The Banker's View. The fertilizer industry must realize and admit its own

fault in the field of finance before a solution to some of its big problems is possible, declared O. E. Anderson, secretary of the Ohio Bankers' Association. Furthermore, it must realize that no single answer will cover the entire problem.

Mr. Anderson said that he sometimes doubted whether the average fertilizer dealer is really interested in having banks or anyone but himself handle the credit needs of his customers. He criticized the loose view of cash discounts which is taken by many fertilizer manufacturers and suggested that the occasional use of guaranteed, maximum margins to the dealer is also a part of the fertilizer industry's financing problem.

There are approximately 12,000 banks in the United States with resources of less than \$10 million dollars each that can truthfully be classed as country banks. These, said Mr. Anderson, are the institutions which must handle practically all of the credit needs of the fertilizer industry at the level of retailer and farmer if anyone is to do it properly and completely. But the average country banker knows very little about the fertilizer financing problem, he said, and he must be better educated.

Mr. Anderson suggested that every fertilizer dealer outlet be encouraged frequently and consistently to contact his local banker well in advance of the sales season and give him a detailed picture of the prospective movement of fertilizer in that community, the names of farmers likely to need assistance, and a general analysis of any possible trouble spots. Banks, he said, are as willing to take over the credit obligations of a fertilizer dealer as they are that of an automobile dealer in a community.

University Point of View. George E. Smith, University of Missouri, said midwestern farmers are just beginning to appreciate that the elimination of soil fertility as a factor in crop production is the most fundamental step in lowering production costs and maintaining farm income. He indicated that farmers are now learning that organic material does not always furnish all of the nitrogen and

Members of the panel on "What Makes Fertilizer Move" included: George E. Smith, U. of Missouri (left); H. H. Tucker of the Coke Oven Ammonia Research Bureau; Harold R. Dinges, Spencer Chemical; and O. E. Anderson of the Ohio Bankers Associations



phosphorus that crops need, particularly in excessively wet or dry seasons.

The benefits of addition of plant nutrients in dry seasons is being more apparent, as is the importance of proper fertilization in conjunction with irrigation. Dr. Smith said that farmers are learning that crop rotation is not so

important as it once was thought to be, providing fertilization is adequate. Also with ample supply of plant nutrients, particularly nitrogen, there is an effective residual fertilization which benefits the crop following.

Dr. Smith predicted that the optimum use of fertilizers will continue to be one

of the most profitable farm practices in beating the farm price squeeze. Fertilizer manufacture and sales, he said, should be designed to give the farmer what he needs, not what the manufacturer may want to sell. Improper service and information, he declared, have retarded the use of plant foods.

Better Communications Urged For Agriculture

Plain talk needed for effective information . . .
Public relations organization proposed

HOT SPRINGS, VA.—More transmission of information and a little less advising might be effective in improving the operations of our farmers, according to Stanley Andrews of the National Project in Agricultural Communications. Research advancement is very important, he admitted, but to be effective, it must reach the farmer in such a way that he will make use of it. Mr. Andrews estimated that today the top 25% of the farmers in the country are pushing the colleges and experiment stations for more advancement. This 25% is doing well economically, he said. On the other hand, the lower 50% of the farmers are actually falling behind, and even in some cases dragging their feet. These he said, are getting into economic trouble. It was his opinion that many of the lower group could be lifted over the threshold if they were exposed to more effective transmission of sound information on agricultural advancement.

Agriculture is continuing to grow in importance, said Mr. Andrews, and this is shown by economic facts, both national and international. International developments will have a lot more to do with activities in our own country in the future than they have in the past. He noted that friends all over the world once looked to the U. S. for food. To-

day many of those same friends are afraid of a panic that will lead to dumping of our agricultural products abroad. Our own agricultural situation must be improved to remedy this fear.

Too many agricultural economists and scientific specialists are now talking above the farmer's head, he said, while there is not enough attention to putting that information into a form the farmer can readily use.

Talking to Farmers. The average farmer is little attracted to tedious technical bulletins, complicated tables or charts, and pedantic speaking, according to J. M. Eleazer, Clemson Agricultural College. The field demonstration is one of the most effective means of getting across to farmers the significance of scientific results, he said, but he emphasized that the speaker who has a knowledge of science and scientific developments and who can speak in the language of those he is addressing, is in a position to do agriculture a great service.

Organized Public Relations. The farmer has been put into the position of being a public whipping boy, declared Ed Lipscomb, National Cotton Council of America, and he needs some effective public relations. Mass media today are inclined to be edited for the consumer's point of view. This, combined

with today's tendency toward inflammatory reporting, often puts the farmer in a bad light. He suggested a comparison of the amount of space given to the burning of potatoes to the space given to the potato growers decision not to accept subsidies. There has been a failure in this country, he said, to provide public understanding of the farmer's problems, his situation, and his approach to things.

Mr. Lipscomb suggested that the members of the fertilizer industry, or other industries dealing with farmers, get their dealers to make one speech or present one advertisement, ignoring the product they are out to sell, but devoted entirely to the virtues of the farmers' efforts. Multiplication of the effect of such a single speech or advertisement by the number of companies and their dealers could give a very powerful effect. In company advertising programs an institutional ad used occasionally to pay tribute to the achievements and contributions of agriculture might pay very effective dividends through the attitude of the farmer toward the company sponsoring such a program. Such a program must be entered wholeheartedly, not merely for salving the conscience, or with a patronizing attitude.

Mr. Lipscomb suggested that a centrally operated, national public relations program for agriculture is needed. Programs today, he said, have been bits or pieces. The farmer never has had a full organized program devoted exclusively to developing his prestige.

Participants in the agricultural public relations forum were: Robert H. Reed (left), editor, *Country Gentleman*; Stanley Andrews, executive director, National Project in Agricultural Communications; J. M. Eleazer, Clemson Agricultural College; and Ed Lipscomb, National Cotton Council



Industry

Miss. River Fuel Lets Contract to Fluor for Ammonia Plant

Mississippi River Fuel Corp. has awarded the contract for building its proposed \$15 million ammonia plant at Crystal City, Mo., to Fluor Corp. William G. Marbury, president of the Mississippi firm, said the company expects to be producing 140,000 tons a year of nitrogen products by early 1956. The products, ammonium nitrate, ammonium solutions, and anhydrous ammonia, will be sold to the fertilizer industry and certain other industrial users.