

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.