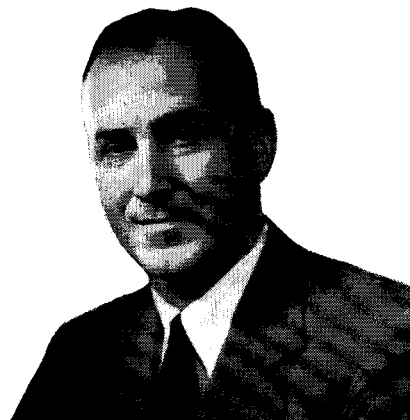


# profile...

## Unpredictables of weather and insects make ag chemicals a short-term gamble, but Pennsalt's Fred Shanaman, based on his 25 years as an industry leader, sees the long-term outlook as solid



**Fred C. Shanaman**

President, Pennsylvania Salt Mfg. Co. of Washington. Born 1901 Reading, Pa.; Dartmouth College, B.S., 1925; salesman, Great Western Electrochemical Co., 1926; salesman, Tacoma Electrochemical Co., 1930; sales manager, 1931; vice president, 1940; president, 1945; vice president and director, Pennsylvania Salt Mfg. Co.; director, Pudget Sound National Bank, American Mail Line, Wypenn Oil Co., Inc., International Canadian Corp., National Agricultural Chemicals Assoc.

PENNSYLVANIA SALT MFG. CO. of Washington and its president, Fred C. Shanaman, both "arrived" on the West Coast about the same time, and since then the progress of one has been linked closely to the career of the other. In brief, Shanaman is looked on by Pennsalters as "the man who got us in ag chemicals 20-odd years ago and has kept us there ever since."

It was in 1927 when parent company Pennsylvania Salt Mfg. Co., from its Philadelphia vantage point, eyed the Pacific Northwest pulp and paper industry, the potential there in hydro-electric power, and ready availability of "solar evaporation" salt from California, and decided the time was ripe for it to expand its caustic-chlorine production by building a plant in the region. Pennsalt accordingly selected a site at Tacoma, Wash., had its first western cells in operation by 1929. Thus began the then titled subsidiary Tacoma Electrochemical Co. (name change to Pennsylvania Salt Mfg. Co. of Washington came in 1934.) In a few years, with the advent of Fred Shanaman, this West Coast subsidiary was to lead the basic chemical company into close contact with the farmer.

Shanaman, meanwhile, finished his studies at Dartmouth in 1925, spent a short time with Lukens Iron & Steel in the East, then came west to San Francisco in 1926 as salesman for Great Western Electrochemical, shifting to Tacoma Electrochemical in 1930. It is that short interval between employment with Great Western and Tacoma Electrochemical from which Shanaman now dates his interest in agriculture.

The Kroger grocery interests were at that time establishing purchasing offices throughout agricultural centers, and Shanaman spent this 1930 interval working with a friend connected with a purchasing group in eastern Washington. During his calls on growers in that area, he got to know at first hand the potentialities of agriculture as a source of materials and, more important, as a market for industrial goods and services. Pennsalt was to begin profiting from that experience within four years.

As it happened, the parent company numbered among its processes at Natrona, Pa., the refining of natural cryolite for use by the aluminum industry. In a final grinding, a certain amount of fines remained, and as the operation was somewhat dusty, cryolite dust carried to parts of the plant where there was vegetation. Workers at Natrona empirically noted a remarkable lack of chewing insects on the foliage at the plant, and during this period had formed the habit of using these "waste" fines from the final grinding as an insecticide in their home gardens. (Cryolite apparently was first used formally as an insecticide by S. Marcovitch and W. W. Stanley of the Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station in 1929.)

### Sells Ag Chemicals to Management

Shanaman advanced to sales manager in 1931, and in casting about for ways in which Tacoma Electrochemical could expand from its rather limited line of caustic and chlorine serving mainly the pulp and paper industry, he combined his agricultural interest with his knowledge of cryolite's insecticidal properties to sell management on active entrance into ag chemicals. In 1934, the company introduced Kryocide (its cryolite brand) on a commercial scale.

In the ensuing prewar years of inorganic insecticides, cryolite became established as one of a handful of standbys, was used especially on fruit trees of the Pacific Northwest and extensively on cotton and sugar cane in the South. By war's end, Pennsalt's Kryocide sales had reached about 7000 tons a year.

Shanaman advanced to vice president of Pennsalt of Washington in 1940, then moved up to the presidency in 1945 at a time when the company was ready to take advantage of the postwar expansion by the agricultural chemicals industry into war-developed organic pesticides. Pennsalt's entrance into DDT manufacture under Shanaman's direction was a "natural." In addition to being established with Kryocide, it had purchased a calcium arsenate plant at Bryant, Tex., which firmly entrenched it in the cotton South. The then new

chlorinated hydrocarbons were to find high use in these areas; and it was a basic producer of chlorine, one of the raw materials. Accordingly, Pennsalt began manufacturing DDT at Natrona in 1945 and at Portland in 1947. A BHC plant started at Calvert City, Ky., in 1954.

Shanaman has guided Pennsalt of Washington into other "agricultural" areas beside insecticides. It introduced a magnesium chlorate defoliant in 1952 for instance, a material with less fire hazard than sodium chlorate and with what Pennsalt says are better properties because of its hygroscopicity.

Shanaman's experience, in contrast to that of postwar entrants to the ag chemicals industry, spans two distinct phases of the industry's development—from the relatively simple industry of the 1930's when a handful of basic manufacturers made a like number of products to today's complex industry with an array of products moving through complicated distribution systems. It is perhaps because of this experience that he still views the industry with the same optimism he did during his early days out among the growers. As he sees it:

"Sure, there is a very substantial element of chance in this business during any given season. We start out with the unpredictables of weather and infestations, try to sell unique chemicals to unpredictable human beings, and then complicate our work by continuing to bring out new products at a rapid pace. If you don't like to gamble or don't like change, this isn't a business for you. But agriculture is here to stay, and the long term outlook for chemicals needed by the farmer is strong. We intend to stay right with it."