

# profile...

## Associate manager of Monsanto's ag chemical sales sees trend toward closer relationship between farmer and farm chemical manufacturer

MUCH OF THE IMPETUS for moving farm chemicals from the laboratory or experiment station out to the farm has come from field demonstrations and direct contact work—the labor of farm chemicals salesmen.

Among the leaders of this movement and still one of the most energetic in extending the farm chemicals frontier is Charles P. ("Red") Zorsch, associate manager of agricultural chemicals sales for Monsanto Chemical Co. Zorsch has been one of the prime movers in the agricultural chemicals field since his days as a graduate student during the mid-thirties at New York State College of Agriculture, Cornell University.

At about that time, a French manufacturer discovered that a series of dinitro *o*-cresol compounds, by-products of the dye industry, exhibited herbicidal activity when applied to broad-leaf plants. Standard Agricultural Chemicals, Inc., an American company which had an interest in the French firm, brought some of the compounds to America to test as herbicides and found them to be insecticidal as well. Standard sent a representative to Cornell to recruit technical assistance for the advancement of its program, and Red Zorsch was one of several men selected.

Hired by Standard, Zorsch toured North America, visiting experiment stations and initiating programs for testing the promising new materials. These programs marked the beginning of practical chemical control of broad-leaf weeds on an annual basis. The dinitro compounds were the first to show a genuine financial return to farmers far-sighted enough to invest in their use as a form of crop insurance.

To promote farm use of chemical weed-killers, Zorsch next enlisted the cooperation of F. H. Peavey & Co., a distributor of Standard's products. With the combined backing of both companies, Zorsch built a large sprayer unit, hitched it to the rear bumper of his own car, and started touring and talking throughout the Midwest. In the next few years, Zorsch built or supervised the building of several hundred sprayer units, fabricated right on the farm or in local machine shops,

and mounted on any handy chassis. Wherever he went with his demonstration unit, Zorsch recalls, skepticism was the first reaction, but curiosity brought crowds of up to several hundred farmers to witness the contraption in operation.

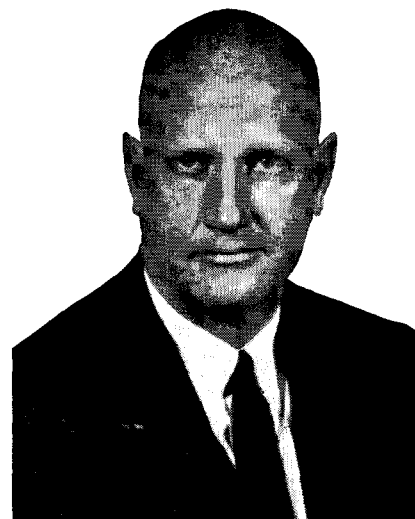
When it became apparent that one man riding a machine could in a matter of minutes eradicate mustard weed from a huge field where previously the farmer's entire family had spent many hours in back breaking manual labor, the result was almost invariably a flood of orders to "make me one!" For a time, in fact, enthusiasm seemed to be getting the better of wisdom. One of the early units built in the Dakota wheat country boasted a 130-foot boom and a 1800-gallon tank!

Most of the units were more practical, of course, and farmers rapidly became indoctrinated in chemical control. By the early 1940's, when USDA (through Boyce Thompson Institute and the Beltsville Station) began to introduce 2,4-D, farmers took quite readily to the new product—and its successors—and the newer synthetics quickly expanded the market originally established by the dinitro compounds.

In 1946, Zorsch went into business for himself as a formulator, establishing the Midwest Processing Co. The company was disbanded in 1949, when Zorsch joined Michigan Chemical as midwestern manager. In 1951, he moved to Monsanto, where he has continued his aggressive promotion of the application of chemistry and chemicals to agriculture.

Shortly after Zorsch joined the company, Monsanto made virtually every newspaper and magazine in the country with the announcement of its soil conditioner, Krilium. Zorsch was given responsibility for Krilium sales, and directed the program for more than a year until it was transferred to the newly established merchandising division.

Following this change, Zorsch until very recently concentrated on managing the sales of technical grade herbicides. Agricultural chemicals sales have risen substantially at Monsanto in recent years, but Zorsch has no



**Charles P. Zorsch**

Associate manager, agricultural chemicals sales, organic chemicals division, Monsanto Chemical Co. Born, 1910, Rochester, N. Y. University of Rochester, B.A., 1934; Cornell University, graduate study, and extension work 1934-38. Standard Agricultural Chemicals 1939-48; Midwest Processing, 1946-49; Michigan Chemical, 1949-51. Monsanto, 1951 to date.

illusions that such growth is the result of anything but team effort. ("Anyone who thinks he alone is responsible for an accomplishment in a company this big is nuts.")

Within the past few months, Monsanto has launched a major program of selling farm chemical formulations under the Monsanto label, in addition to its expanding sales of bulk materials. Zorsch has been put in charge of this new program, and now devotes some 70% of his time to shaping plans and establishing a suitable product line. Along with the line will go renewed emphasis on field demonstration and technical service. For the future, Zorsch sees an industry-wide trend toward closer relations between the farmer and the farm chemicals manufacturer. Another trend is in the direction of "specificity." In the past 10 years, says Zorsch, the ag chemicals industry has covered in a broad way many of the agricultural problems that are amenable to chemical control. The goal now, as he sees it, is to pinpoint specific problems and to provide both the farmer and the chemical producer with better returns on investment.

When Zorsch talks about the problems of the farmer, he knows by experience whereof he speaks. Since 1940, he has pursued a second career in farming and cattle raising, on a scale substantially above that of the usual week-end farmer. With his equally energetic wife, and their "four wonderful kids," Zorsch lives on a 180-acre farm in St. Louis (Mo.) County, where serious agricultural projects are the first order of business.