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President of Dixie Guano is also top executive of many other businesses that serve farmers

NAME ANY PRODUCT or service that is useful in farming, and the odds are very high that farmers in North Carolina can obtain it from a company headed by Edwin Pate. For Pate is not only president of a widely known fertilizer company, Dixie Guano, but is a top executive in more than a score of other widely diversified business enterprises, all of which serve agriculture in some way.

Pate's affiliations include, in addition to Dixie Guano, several other companies which manufacture or sell fertilizer, several banks, an insurance company, a railroad, a plywood concern, a cotton gin, a telephone company, a broadcasting company, some farming operations, and a general merchandising business.

It was in the latter that Pate began his unusual career. Upon graduation from North Carolina State College in 1921 with a B.S. in agriculture, Pate went to work as a clerk for Z. V. Pate, Inc., a corporation established by his father and engaged in both merchandising and farming. With department stores in several North Carolina communities, the company handled—as it still does—a broad line of general merchandise and farm supplies. About the only function the stores haven't served, says Pate, is that of the florist's shop.

Pate became manager of one of the company's stores and of its farming operations in 1923. In 1926, he was appointed assistant secretary of the firm, and was later treasurer (1931) and vice president (1937). On the death of his father in 1941, he assumed the presidency of the company.

The year 1941 also marked his more intense entry into the fertilizer business. Fertilizers had been part of the stock in trade at Z. V. Pate, Inc., but in 1941 Edwin Pate was also elected president and treasurer of Dixie Guano to succeed his late father. The D-G plant at Laurinburg, N. C., manufactures superphosphate, and mixes fertilizers for distribution.

At the same time he assumed his duties with D-G, Pate became president of Robeson Mfg. Co. at Lumberton and Liberty Mfg. Co. at Red Springs, both in North Carolina.

Robeson is engaged primarily in fertilizer mixing and cotton ginning. Liberty emphasizes fertilizer mixing and cotton ginning as principal activities, but also handles pesticides, and is a grower and processor of seeds for cotton, hay, and cereal crops. In 1946, Pate was named president of Wilmington Fertilizer Co., a fertilizer mixer at Wilmington, N. C.

Likes New Technology Put into Practice Rapidly

In his companies, each of which has its own general manager, Pate likes to see new technology adopted as rapidly as possible. His aggressiveness in this regard often finds him wanting to move ahead faster than economics will permit.

For the most part, farmers in Pate's area handle their own application of solid materials. His companies do offer application service at several plant locations, however, extending the service to the spreading of limestone as well as fertilizers. The service is requested chiefly for the establishment of permanent pasture, a practice that is increasing rapidly in North Carolina, according to Pate.

The Pate companies also offer a soil sampling service to help farmers determine their soil nutrient needs. The service does not include the actual soil analysis; the company collects—or helps collect—representative samples of a farmer's soil, but the laboratory analysis is conducted by the state department of agriculture.

In 1949, Dixie Guano became the first company in North Carolina to offer anhydrous ammonia for direct application. Pate is convinced the future will bring increasing use of liquid forms of nitrogen on crops with high nitrogen demand, and his companies now provide 11 distribution points for nitrogen solutions. He also expects increasing use of liquid complete fertilizers, which are now just getting a good foothold in his home state.

For a man who claims to "know nothing about fertilizers," Edwin Pate has an impressive knowledge of trends in fertilizer production and use. His



Edwin Pate

Born April 16, 1898, at Laurel Hill, N. C. B.S. in agriculture, N. C. State College, 1921. With Z. V. Pate, Inc. since 1921. Clerk, 1921-23; store mgr., 1923-26; ass't sec'y, 1926-31; treas., 1931-37; VP, 1937-41; pres. 1941—. Pres. and treas., Dixie Guano Co., 1941—. Pres. Liberty Mfg. Co., Robeson Mfg. Co., 1941—. Pres. Wilmington Fertilizer Co., 1956—. Pres., VP, director, or board chmn. of over 20 other enterprises, including banks, an insurance company, a railroad, a plywood company, a telephone company, and a broadcasting company. Member of N. C. State Senate for alternate terms, 1942-1955. Chmn., Board of Directors, National Plant Food Institute, 1956-57.

companies keep in close touch with the state experiment stations and extension services, to be sure that their knowledge and practices are up-to-date. His optimism for the industry's long-term outlook is based on the knowledge that no investment the farmer can make will give him as great a return as his investment in fertilizers.

Pate's interest in the fertilizer industry has been demonstrated by his active participation in its affairs. He served as one of the directors of the American Plant Food Council, which recently united with the National Fertilizer Association to form the National Plant Food Institute. He was active in the APFC from the time it was organized, and in June of this year was elected chairman of the board of the newly formed Institute.

Pate has also developed an active interest in civic and political affairs. In 1941 he was elected to the state senate from the four-county 18th district in which he lives. He was elected again in 1945, in 1949, and in 1953—each time the rotation system shifted the Senate seat into his home county. He has worked on a number of state committees, and has served as chairman of the State Ports Authority.