

# profile...

## His thorough knowledge of fertilizers speeds up oil company's diversification into agricultural field

ON Jan. 3, 1955, six men got together in a rented office in downtown Lima, Ohio. There they began putting into effect carefully laid plans for a Standard Oil (Ohio) subsidiary, to be known as Sohio Chemical.

That subsidiary, headed by Edward F. Morrill, has since come a long way. Ground was broken for its \$17-million petrochemical plant in February 1955. By November, the plant was making anhydrous ammonia; three months later, it was also producing nitric acid, ammonium nitrate, and urea. And it has been growing ever since.

Of the six men who formed the management nucleus of the new company, all but one had no experience in the agricultural field. Their experience was in the fields of petroleum processing, transportation, advertising, and sales. The man who provided the essential know-how of fertilizer manufacture and use—and the man who thoroughly understood the needs of fertilizer manufacturers—was Hubert H. Tucker, then newly appointed director of agricultural and technical services.

As one of Tucker's close company associates says: "Bert, with his wealth of practical experience in the field, was the one who really set us on the right course. At first, naturally, outsiders were pretty skeptical about a band of petroleum boys' suddenly jumping into the agricultural business. But with Bert on the team, this skepticism soon disappeared.

"Seldom have I met a man more widely liked and respected. He can talk to farmers, fertilizer manufacturers, mixers, agricultural experiment people, plant managers, and company presidents—and make sense to all of them. I'd say Bert has speeded up our growth by at least a year."

### Starting From Scratch

Before completion of the Sohio plant, Tucker and Henry J. Coleman, sales manager, traveled together throughout much of the eastern and central U. S., gaging the moods and operations of potential customers, their product needs, their seasonal

fluctuations in demand. They had to estimate markets, predict trends, learn to face increasing competition. From extensive data, they had to determine Sohio's product line and the size of required storage facilities, the number of sales people needed, and dozens of other factors.

Tucker also had the job of training the new sales force. At the same time, he worked closely with customers to help solve difficult manufacturing problems. He also set up product grades and specifications.

"We decided early in the game," he says, "that, as an absolute must, we had to provide service. We had to give the customer what he needed and wanted, regardless of our own costs and convenience."

Today, Tucker is not only in charge of Sohio Chemical's technical service but is also the company's chief public relations man to the fertilizer industry. In addition, he is the company's one-man information bureau. When Sohio people come to him for technical advice, he can usually give the answer right off. If not, he almost always knows where to find it quickly.

### Down on the Farm in Paree

Tucker's early background was in dairy farming and cattle raising, on the family farm in Paris, Ill. Throughout his public school and high school days (as a youngster, he studied in a one-room schoolhouse), he helped his father raise cattle on a 170-acre farm.

Later, at the University of Illinois, he majored in agriculture and dairy husbandry. As a sideline, he won several prizes for dairy and beef cattle judging.

After getting his B.S. from U. of I. in 1927, and an M.S. from Pennsylvania State in 1928, he joined the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station in New Brunswick as an instructor in dairy husbandry and as a creamery inspector. Three years later, he became resident director of the station's dairy research branch in Sussex, N. J., and was later promoted to professor of dairy husbandry.

In 1939, he switched to fertilizers as director of the Coke Oven Ammonia Research Bureau in Columbus,



**Hubert H. Tucker**

Born Feb. 21, 1902, at Arthur, Ill. Univ. of Ill., B.S., agriculture, 1927; Penn. State Univ., M.S., dairy production and agricultural chemistry, 1928. Instructor and dairy inspector, N. J. Agr. Experiment Station, 1928-31; resident director, dairy research branch, 1931-39. Director, Coke Oven Ammonia Research Bureau, 1939-1955. Director of agricultural and technical services, Sohio Chemical Co., 1955 to date. Member, ACS, Sigma Xi, Soil Science Society; fellow, American Society of Agronomy.

Ohio. Tucker helped organize the bureau's research program through fellowships to colleges and universities. Through talks, technical bulletins, and other means, he spearheaded the promotional efforts of the coke oven ammonia industry in the fertilizer field.

At the end of 1954, however, the bureau was discontinued. Immediately afterwards, Tucker joined Sohio.

Today, one of his most important jobs is keeping abreast of the latest fertilizer developments. This he does partly by following the technical literature and by attending local, state, and national meetings. Another way, he says, is by operating his own 435-acre farm near Columbus, Ohio. There he uses the newest techniques in raising hybrid seed corn, soybeans, sheep, and hogs. Frequently, this farm is his first testing ground for new ideas.

Agriculture, obviously, is one of Tucker's main preoccupations. Another, he emphasizes, is people. "Almost everywhere I go," he says, "there are people I know and want to see." And, as all reports indicate, there are people throughout the U. S. who know and want to see affable, knowledgeable Bert Tucker.