

# profile...

## Royster Guano has grown and developed along with modern fertilizer technology, but its identity remains unchanged to thousands of loyal customers and employees

THE FAMILIAR "F.S.R." in the F. S. Royster Guano trademark was at one time widely and affectionately interpreted by farmers to mean "Fish Scrap Royster." These initials of the man who founded a fertilizer firm at Tarboro, N. C., in 1885 are still used on Royster Guano fertilizer bags.

But fish scrap, a major ingredient of fertilizer several years ago, has long since given way at Royster to modern chemicals. Old timers, though, some of whom have never used another brand, keep referring to the Royster company by the old nickname.

Royster, strictly a plant food operation, makes its own superphosphate, both ordinary and triple, and acquires the nitrogen, potash, and other ingredients for its mixed fertilizers from outside markets. It sells three lines of fertilizer—Bonanza, Vim, and Arrow—each developed for special soil needs.

Royster the man was the guiding light of Royster the firm until his death in 1928. But he got a lot of help in shaping the company's destiny from C. F. Burroughs, Sr., now a sprightly 88-year-old who as board chairman puts in a day that would do justice to a man 50 years his junior. Another Burroughs, C. F., Jr., sits at the president's desk.

Burroughs the elder joined Royster as a youth of nine in 1881, when the latter sold fertilizer and farm supplies at Tarboro. That was even before the company started making its own plant food. As Burroughs developed into a responsible member of the Royster staff, he differed occasionally with the firm's founder. But their clashes did no damage to their respect for one another, and may well have served to strengthen the young company.

Expansion plans were one point on which they differed, with Royster tend-

ing to be conservative, Burroughs aggressive. When the company's Tarboro plant became overtaxed, for example, Royster decided to set up an-



The President . . .

**C. F. Burroughs, Jr.**

**Salesmanship and Statesmanship**

other at Norfolk, Va., where transportation by both water and rail was excellent. The new plant's beginning was simple, with a rented warehouse serving as a manufacturing unit with a modest capacity of about 7000 tons a year.

But after two years of operation at Norfolk, Burroughs approached Royster with plans for a bigger Norfolk factory. Royster favored further expansion there, and decided to stake all his resources on the Virginia plant, but he did not see eye to eye with Burroughs on the proper size for the

new unit. Burroughs argued persuasively, however, and sold Royster on a much bigger plant than the latter would otherwise have approved. "From that day to this," Royster said later, "I have never been certain who was running this business, me or Burroughs."

Actually, Royster and Burroughs made an effective, well-balanced team; their Norfolk venture was a success, and their further joint efforts led ultimately to a network of modern fertilizer plants from Florida to Wisconsin. Some are completely integrated, making their own sulfuric acid for superphosphate production. Others serve as mixing and distributing units, close to the market.

Most recent plants are equipped for granulation. The company has six granulating units now, three of which started up last year. It is now completing a bagging warehouse at Marlette, Mich. Granulation has been one of the company's bigger problems; Royster officials say the process is expensive, and trained operators are hard to come by. Heavy outlays for granulating plants, they point out, don't sit too well with an industry already struggling with a narrow profit margin.

### Know the Business

Royster executives, whether in manufacturing, sales, advertising, or technology, know the fertilizer business inside out. C. F. Burroughs, Jr., who became president last year, provides an excellent example. For Burroughs did not become president by virtue of name alone. He had to learn the business thoroughly, from one end to the other.

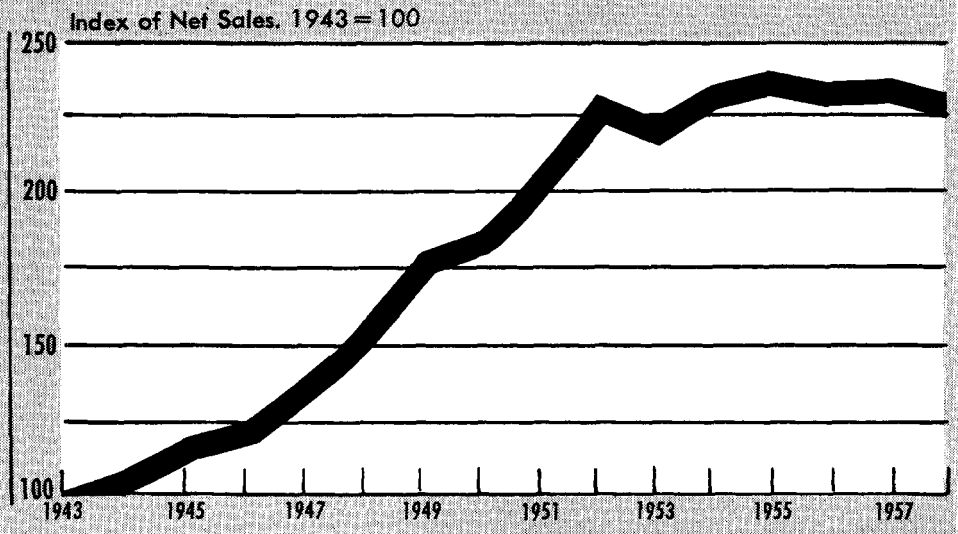
After graduation from Princeton in 1936, he went to work at the Norfolk plant, doing manual labor. Then he spent a year as a clerk in the sales office, followed by a year as clerk in the treasury department and three more as an assistant in the general sales department. Prior to assuming the presidency, he held positions as treasurer and vice president.

Burroughs predicts a rise in fertilizer use as years go on, but he scores low profits in the industry as one of its biggest troubles. Yet this and others can be solved, he feels, by both salesmanship and statesmanship. Statesmanship, Burroughs says, is the performance of services that will bring both credit to and trust in the industry.

Royster's statesmanship adequately backs up its salesmanship. Its advertising, chiefly in the form of pamphlets, booklets, brochures, direct mail letters to farmers, and farm journal ads, stresses helpful hints to farmers.

## F. S. ROYSTER GUANO CO.

This long-established firm's history parallels that of fertilizer technology—from fish scrap to modern chemicals



It does not dwell strictly on fertilizers, but gives tips designed to aid farmers in many endeavors. Present product promotion is based on the theme: "It's results that count." Moving pictures and farmer meetings are being used to urge farmers to try the right amount, the right analysis, and the right quality of fertilizer in field tests on their own farms.

Not only the customers, but also the salesmen like the statesmanly ap-

proach. It gives them the pride and confidence that come from working for an esteemed employer. Several have been with the company for many years, one since 1910. Another with long service recalls leaving Royster to work for a competitor. But like a prodigal son he returned, and likes to point out: "My friends say that if you pull my shirt off, you'll find the F.S.R. trademark on my back."

It's not uncommon to find still

others with service ranging from 30 to 45 years or so. When asked why they have remained with one company so long, they find it hard to give a definitive reply. The homey, congenial atmosphere at Royster might be part of the answer. The firm is closely held; its corporate profile has remained essentially unchanged. This has given it an identity and air of permanence that few other companies possess.

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