## That Frightful Imaginary Danger



Senator Allen Ellender Louisiana

"Whether danger actually exists is sometimes beside the point." Concerning pesticide pollution, "the face is people think it does."

Sen. Allen Ellender of Louisiana made this ominous observation at the third annual meeting of the National Aerial Applicators Association. This is the problem the chemical industry must face up to and solve, he indicated.

At the same time in Washington, D.C., the noose was being yanked tight on DDT. And observed another speaker at the NAAA meeting bitterly, "The only thing DDT hasn't been blamed for is causing pregnancy."

What's additionally disturbing about the public attitude right now about pesticides, Ellender continued, is that the people who know least about the problem, or think they have no economic stake in its solution, shout the loudest.

Like all of us, they're concerned with safety and when they feel unsafe they want to do something about it. "Security is one of the foremost psychological needs of mankind," he explained. "What's important is that some danger is real and some danger is imagined. Sometimes imagined dangers can be more serious, for men are moved

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as much by myth as they are by logical reasoning."

Awareness of a problem often breeds emotionalism, he said. The public has become acutely aware of pollution (of all kinds), said Ellender, principally for two reasons: (1) development of machines capable of measuring substances considered pollutive at minimum levels previously unheard of; and (2) dramatization by news media, particularly television, of incidents in which facts were occasionally exaggerated and sometimes downright erroneous.

Ellender cited a recent example in his own state that produced calls to his office. The news report was about a huge fish kill in Terrebone Bay, presumably from pesticides. In truth, a fishing boat had run aground and to lighten its load in order to float, the crew had dumped the day's catch of fish—already dead—overboard.

But as is true in so many cases, the Senator stated, "the damage was already done."

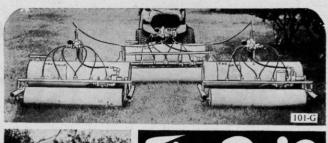
"It is the responsibility of reasonable men to keep things in perspective," said Ellender.

"Make no mistake about it," he cautioned, "I am not saying that danger from the widespread use of persistent agricultural chemicals is non-existent. What I am saying is that the worst teeth of this dragon can be pulled by training and by the use of wise methods of applications."

Ellender commended NAAA for choosing safety as its theme. He said he was particularly encouraged by the concern for additional pesticide safety on the part of industry and associations such as NAAA.

"While government can lead the way, as it must do on occasion," he added, " in the final analysis real progress depends upon the wholehearted cooperation of those who produce, develop and find use of our natural wealth and resources."









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