

Pesticides and the People-to-People Approach

WHEN EVERYTHING ELSE FAILS, try the personal approach. We believe it is time for pesticide industry professionals to sit down beside the ecologists and pollution fighters to discuss improvement of the world we live in. The least, but a most important, result would have to be the discovery that all parties were sitting on the same side of the environmental fence.

Face it . . . there is a considerable communication gap between such groups as the chemical industry and conservationists and naturalists of all degrees. And all of the scientific data hurled both ways via the airways, the printed media, and the conference rostrum occasionally as close as across town has not narrowed the gap.

The pesticide industry still wears, if not black, a shady hat in the minds of members in organizations such as the National Audubon Society.

Who is the person in your town who is anti-pesticide? How about a face-to-face chat with him—or her? We bet one conclusion will be: "He's not such a bad guy after all." And that would open the door to discussing mutual problems.

Such a person-to-person dialogue at all levels might just head off a great deal of unneeded restrictive legislation. And there will be lots of it considered this year.

"While I believe there was a need for some restrictions, I personally think DDT is perfectly safe," said an official who had been in the Food and Drug Administration, but is now a part of the Environmental Protection Agency. "But people got scared," he added, and government is obligated to do something.

And another federal administrator who's now

a part of EPA confessed that until he was invited to speak he had never heard of an organization such as the Weed Science Society of America. But he quickly added that he was ready to get acquainted. "Come in and see us; tell us your problems and your needs," he challenged.

So next to getting to know the person who appears to be against your business interests, you should make acquaintance with the "mediator" of your differences.

To continue our role of providing what hopefully is useful information, we're carrying an article in this issue (Page 16) that gives the basic organization of EPA and the direction that EPA Administrator William Ruckelshaus hopes to go. The article includes a listing of the 10 interim regional coordinators with complete addresses and telephone numbers. The rest is up to you. Isn't it worth trying a people-to-people approach to settling this environmental question—out of court?

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P.S. We apologize for being conservative in our estimate of your reaction to this magazine. We announced a special feature for March—an index to sources of information on weed control. We had no idea how many there were. One hundred sounded like a nice round number. Phew! Response from industry, government, university, and our own files turned up close to 400! And we're sure we've missed a bunch. Sorry about that; we shall try listing them next time.

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