

Editorial

There will be an overwhelming and paralyzing increase in government regulations of all aspects of weed control, not only in the use of herbicides but in alternate methods as well, according to Dr. Boysie E. Day, professor of plant physiology, University of California at Berkeley. He spoke at the Southern Weed Science Society Meeting earlier this year in Dallas, and we share some of his thoughts here.

An increasing burden of regulatory busy work is today necessary to get a new product registered and this is a deterrent to the development of research workers . . . The national policy on pesticides is to progressively accumulate all significant decisions about pesticides into government hands . . . Greater government control over herbicides will not better the human safety factor because the hazard in weed control has always been associated almost entirely with machines, and regulatory activities are not aimed at alleviating these hazards . . . For greater effectiveness, procedures of weed control must be adapted to local and regional conditions, and this will never be done on a national scale . . . The effect of restricting herbicide use leads to switching from one chemical to another less efficient one which in the end leads to larger doses, not reduction in use of herbicides . . . \$71.5 million will be spent to support the Environmental Protection Agency pesticide program through next March, and this money would be more judiciously spent on research.

Dr. Day's summary is that in the future the regulators will join with the regulated to defend procedures they have established and gained vested interest in. By that time, the staggering costs of regulation will have pruned the industry down to a comfortable half-dozen international companies, and the academic community and other agencies will have been successfully isolated from the decision-making processes. Pesticides will then have become in effect public utilities moving with glacial slowness without a harsh word spoken. All decisions will be made with a minimum of publicity by quiet negotiations between government and corporate bureaucracies on the basis of unpublished industry research.