

● Nutrition

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million tons on January 1, 1968— in sharp contrast to only 7.6 million tons 4 years earlier.

Further expansion of the nitrogenous fertilizer industry will depend largely on how the market reacts to increased supplies in the coming 2 or 3 years. Meanwhile, a goal of industry research is to fix atmospheric nitrogen at even lower unit cost.

Phosphorus is found in all rocks, but concentration usually is too low for economic recovery of the material. Workable reserves have been found in only a few parts of the world. By far the largest known deposits are in North Africa, followed by those in the U.S. and the USSR.

About 80 percent of U.S. phosphate ore is mined in Florida. Around 40 percent of total U.S. phosphate rock production is exported. Imports are small.

Development of North Carolina phosphate rock fields, along with operations in Florida and the Western States assures an ample domestic supply of phosphate rock for some time.

However, supplies of sulfur—widely used as sulfuric acid with phosphate rock in fertilizer manufacture—are limited. Though new domestic deposits are being sought, they are slow to come into production.

Sulfur supplies are now extremely tight. Domestic consumption has been outpacing production since 1962, and prices have been rising. With the rising prices, some manufacturers may shift to another ingredient. Nitric phosphates, made with nitric acid, have been turned out successfully in Europe for many years. And U. S. processors of fertilizer ingredients may find it necessary to follow suit.

Potassium occurs in over 50 chemical compounds—in rocks and in water solutions (brines).

Developed world reserves are large. Except for Chilean potassium nitrate deposits, they are practically all in the Northern Hemisphere.

New, deep Canadian potash mines in Saskatchewan are believed the richest in the world—an estimated 70 to 100 times bigger than U.S. reserves which are mainly in the Carlsbad, New Mexico, area.

The U.S. has been, and continues to be, a large importer of potash from Europe—and more recently from Canada. These imports will increase in volume, especially from our neighbor to the north.

Looking ahead at fertilizer prospects in general, the following trends are indicated:

—A continued rise in quality as well as demand.

—More ways of including carriers of micro and secondary nutrients along with the primary elements.

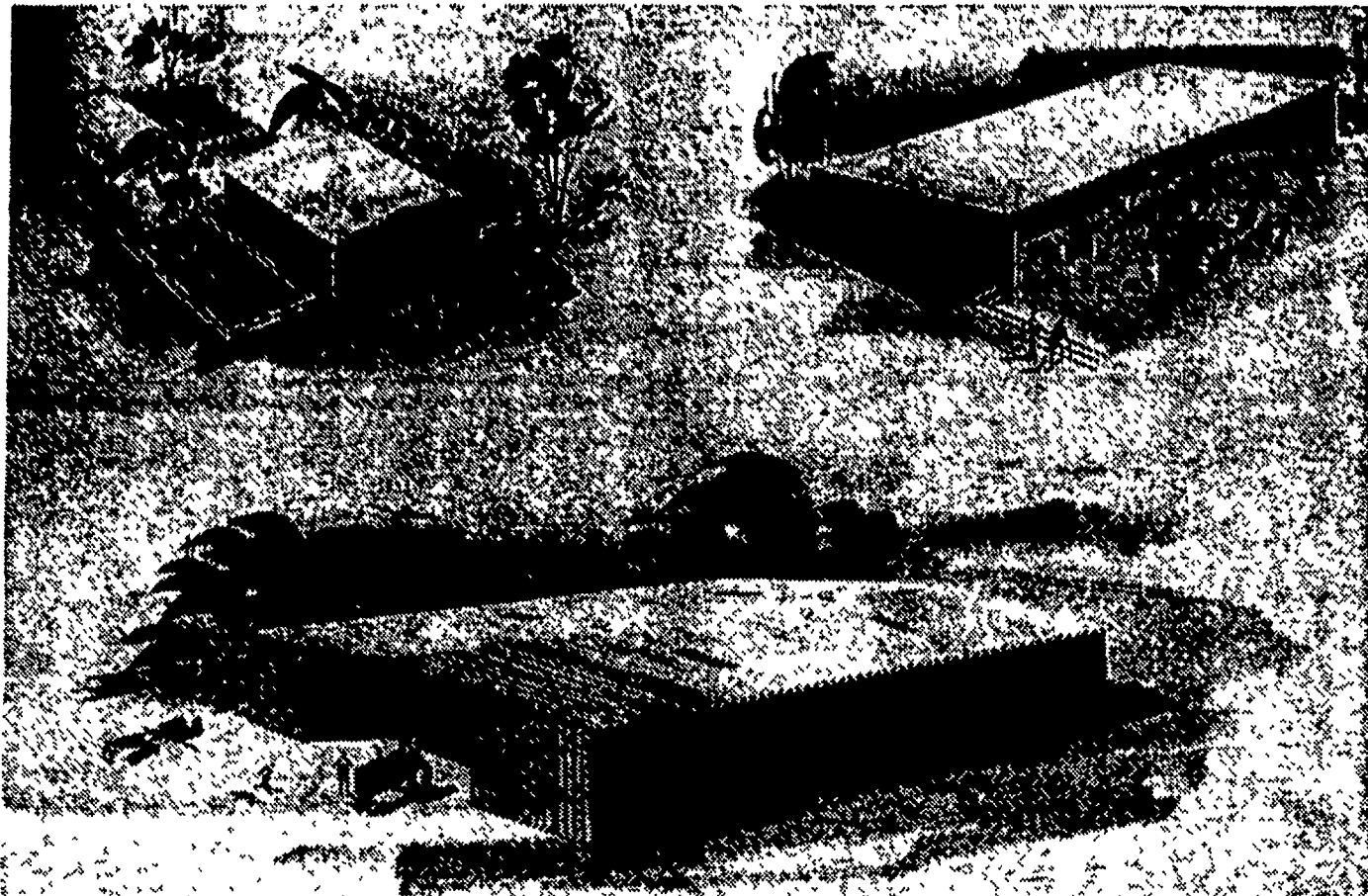
—Increasing use of bulk-blended and liquid fertilizers.

—Stepped up granulation of solid fertilizers to around the 90 percent level in about 5 years.

—More competitive emphasis on product condition, prices, and services (because the products of different manufacturers are close substitutes within most class and grade categories of plant nutrients).

—Shortening of distribution channels, as some basic producers will tend to deal directly with users through company-owned outlets.

And what about prices? In contrast to most of a farmer's other inputs from industrial sources, fertilizer prices have been relatively low to date. And as new technology continues to stimulate a sharp expansion in output, the fertilizer industry is likely to maintain its moderate pricing policy.



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