

Across the Editor's Desk

The following appeared in the July issue of Broiler Industry magazine:

The poultry industry must streamline its methods of dealing with government and Congress. Most pressing: a restructuring of its lobbying apparatus, and the need for a broader, more powerful program of research and promotion — funded by across-the-board contributions, voluntary or compulsory, from industry members. These needs are shaping up as really critical as the result of industry intelligence reports from the power centers here.

Messages on political teletypes boil down to this: consumerism as a political force is here to stay. The advent of consumer concern has made the business of dealing with government a whole new ball game. Old rules are out the window.

Here are some pertinent points: the old days, when industry representatives could meet informally with government officials and quietly resolve their problems, are gone. Respect, awe, fear—call it what you will—for the political power of

consumerism has made federal regulators tougher to deal with on sensitive issues.

Closer surveillance by a more sophisticated press also has demolished this old style of doing things. Once the public press paid scant attention to poultry issues, because it cared little and understood less. But the emergence of consumerism has spawned a whole new crop of writers, reasonably well versed in the more technical aspects of industry issues, eager to expose any development which has a hint of intrigue. Bureaucrats have learned this a lot faster than some industry leaders. There are increasing instances of a government official getting himself out of a sticky situation by a deliberate "leak" to the press. Another important point: Ralph Nader. His flair for dramatizing consumer issues is one of the main reasons why industry-government dealings now pulsate with new political sensitivity. Everyone in government and Congress is Nader-conscious.

The straight-from-the-shoulder advice to poultry industry lead-

ers from their friends in government is simply this: you had better be Nader-conscious, too!

To dismiss Nader as a publicity-hungry zealot is not only bad tactics, it is erroneous. Report government technicians Nader is not only right some of the time—he is on target often. This is the word from Washington pros who have been around the food regulatory field for a long time.

Specifically, what does all this mean to the poultry industry?

Based on advice from industry friends in government and in Congress, who specialize in telling it like it is, this is the recommended course of action: first, the poultry industry must re-group its scattered forces. There are too many uncoordinated lobbying efforts, some of them actually working at cross-purposes. The answer is to reorganize its political action apparatus into a single unit which can be used to concentrate industry's political firepower in Congress. This is a "must" if industry is to meet this new challenge.

Secondly, don't go before any

of the regulatory agencies with a request unless you have the facts and figures to back it up. Self-serving arguments are out! The agencies want documentation. Because so many of these decisions must stand the test of public debate as never before, everybody in government is scared to death of making a miscalculation. This means stepped up industry efforts in the research field.

The fact that an industry proposal is valid, and will benefit the customer, is not enough. It will have to be backed up by a briefcase full of data. Even the scientific community will have to stand up and be counted. No longer will the scientist be able to fire his shot, and then duck for cover to his ivory tower. He is going to have to remain on the scene and slug it out.

Thirdly, in instances where critics—whether in Congress or government—obviously are on the wrong track, industry will have to call them on it. This means getting the eye and ear of the public through accelerated public information campaigns.

It all comes down to this: consumerism, as a social and political force, is like a speeding freight train. The savvy industries are hopping aboard, and are trying to help steer it. The myopic industry leaders are trying to stop it by holding up their

hands; they are being flattened. The poultry industry must soon choose its course.

Insects vs Chemicals

The following item about Congressman George Goodling, a York County orchardist and a member of the Committee on Agriculture in the US House of Representatives, appeared recently in Northeast Agriculture magazine.

Congressman George Goodling of Pennsylvania is much less concerned about the so-called hazards connected with agricultural chemicals than he is about the worms, insects and diseases that would take over without the use of chemicals.

Goodling is one of the few farmers in Congress. He owns and operates a 40-acre apple and peach farm in the 19th district of Pennsylvania. He has used DDT since it first came on the market.

"I've been soaked with the stuff," he says, "and I never once suffered any ill effects from it." He says he can get along without using DDT now because there are substitutes, but he thinks the whole issue of agricultural chemicals is being carried far beyond the realm of common sense.

The Congressman says he isn't getting much support from his colleagues in Congress. Too many of them are riding the wave of emotion and are going along with the agitators who want to outlaw all chemicals.

Goodling cites the spread of the Gypsy Moth in the Northeast as an example of the problem. The USDA has issued a warning that the Gypsy Moth is becoming a serious threat to the hardwood forests of the Northeast. DDT, says Goodling, is the only pesticide that has been proved effective in the war against the Gypsy Moth. No substitute, he says, has yet been found for this particular bug.

Another proposal which concerns the Pennsylvania Congressman is a reorganization plan which would assign responsibility for agricultural chemicals to an Environmental Protection Agency. Under the proposal, restrictions of chemicals would be taken from the jurisdiction of the USDA and placed in the hands of the new agency.

In the first place, says Goodling, we don't need another agency. We've got too many already.

In the second place, he envisions the new agency as being stacked with people unfamiliar with agriculture and borne along on the wave of emotion.

Make Travel Deductible

The Furrow, a John Deere publication, suggests in its July-August edition that farmers combine business and pleasure when they take vacations—and make the travel expenses tax deductible.

Expenses which can be deducted include meals and lodging, parking and tolls, tips, telephone and ten cents per mile for auto use.

The article suggests the farmer understand what makes the trip deductible by consulting with his tax man or IRS agent before going.

To be deductible, the travel has to be of a business nature, enabling the farmer to learn more about his business. This can involve visiting other farms or research facilities along the way.

The deductions won't pay for a trip, but maybe they'll help make one possible.

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