

Pressures Both Here and Abroad Are Reasons:

Unity in National Farm Industry Is Needed, Dr. McVickar Urges

A unified slogan for agriculture, such as "Better Nutrition."

That's one of many things which U. S. farmers need to do in order to survive in the changing U. S. scene, local farmers attending the annual Ortho banquet were told Monday night by Dr. Malcolm H. McVickar, national manager of agronomy of the Chevron Chemical Company.

He explained that the Beef Cattle people have a slogan of "Better Beef" and the sheep and other groups have similar slogans for their own products. But the farm community needs to unify behind a slogan which is big enough for everybody.

And "Better Nutrition" is one slogan which can encompass the slogans of all the farm groups, according to Dr. McVickar.

Dr. McVickar came to Lancaster all the way from San Francisco to be the featured speaker at the P. L. Rohrer and Brothers banquet at the Meadow Hills Dining Hall.

"I think what we do in the next few years will largely depend on how important agriculture will be or what it will do," Dr. McVickar stated. He has received many national agronomy awards and other recognitions for his role in U. S. farming.

One in Three Related

The speaker also emphasized the importance of joining farming with related jobs in industry to develop a unified approach. While the numbers of farmers continue to decline and farmers now only total about 2.9 million persons and this figure will drop to an estimated 900,000

by the year 2000, some three out of every 10 jobs in the U.S. are "closely tied to agriculture."

Therefore, instead of each farmer thinking of himself as one in 20 and trying to convince 19 other persons, he needs to work closely with the related industrial occupations so that he is only about one in three and only needs to convince about two other persons.

Among those jobs closely aligned with agriculture, he noted, are truckers, grocers, butchers and many others. He also urged enlisting support of women of the family in telling the farm story.

A hand written letter to officials "simply expressing yourself" will help, he stated.

One issue he particularly singled out as needing attention by farmers, is the environmental issue. "Unless we watch ourselves, agriculture is going to become the whipping board of the environmental issue."

But he emphasized that farmers already are leaders in the environmental issue and that there are irresponsible proposals that would hamper the farmer. The proposal to reduce nitrogen levels in the soil in Illinois alone could cause a food price increase nationally of three to five percent, he estimated. Such an anti-nitrogen program nationally could increase food prices many times that much, he said.

The fallacy of the efforts to curb application of nitrogen on the land is that "85 per cent of the nitrogen drained off each year is from decomposition of organic material," he noted.



Among those participating in the annual Ortho banquet Monday night at Meadow Hills are: left to right, Willis Rohrer, of P. L. Rohrer and Brothers, Inc., Smoketown; Dr. Malcolm McVickar, national manager of agronomy of the Chevron Chemical Company, and Dr. Richard M. Thorup, regional agronomist of Chevron Chemical

Company. Dr. McVickar punctuated his talk with demonstrations which included pushing a limber straw through a potato. McVickar spoke on the world farm situation and the need for U. S. farm unity, while Thorup explained the need for high fertilizer levels for top alfalfa yields.

Dr. McVickar stated, "We're living in an era of communications when people can be swayed by things which seem to be spectacular whether they're true or not."

Dr. McVickar began his talk with a description of "the world situation and how that situation affects agriculture" by

describing the growing world food crisis.

"When you look at the world today you see people and more people with no stop in sight. At the time of the birth of Christ, there were 250 million people and it took 1,500 years for that population to double. By 1900 the figure had increased to 1.5 billion

and in the two-thirds century since then the population has doubled again to three billion.

"In India, which is one-fourth the size of U. S., there's two and one-half times the number of people. This means India is 10 times as densely populated as the U.S."

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