still concern fertilizer dealers



Agrico, Baltimore, holds up samples of screened fertilizer h demonstrate how segregation may cause problems.

In a second batch of 31-10-10 that was sampled as it was discharged from the conveyor belt, the Agriculture Department came up with an analysis of 31.39, 10.79, and 7.80. Huber pegged his laboratory figures at 32.14, 11.04, and

The next test involved the same fertilizer, (second batch of 31-10-10) but this time it had been loaded on a hopper that had moved back and forth during the loading process to insure a more uniform distribution of the product. This time the PDA came up with 30.46, 9.47 and 10.21 figures with its analysis, compared to Huber's 31.08, 9.69, and 9.79.

The importance of proper sampling procedures - a point which was strongly emphasized at the workshop - is illustrated by results of the next test. The sample had merely been scooped out of the spreader by hand. It involved the very same fertilizer that had been used in the previous two procedures. The analysis: 27.93, 6.78, 15.68.

The split sample presented to Agrico tested 27.44, 7.00,

Next on the agenda was

the formulation of an 8-24-8 blended fertilizer that was to be bagged. With workshop participants looking on as the ingredients were scooped up, weighed, mixed, bagged, and finally sampled, the chemist's verdict came up 7.60, 23.97, 7.12. Agrico reported 7.63, 23.42, 6.85 on that sample.

The fertilizer people find it significant that of the 18 supervised samples taken at the Mill Hall workshop, eight were found deficient. Yet, according to calculated weights, and analyses of individual ingredients, all of the fertilizers were in compliance with minimum standards. Many exceeded those standards. Nevertheless, in one example, the deficiency found in a 4-ton blend would have meant a fine of \$457.60, which amounts to 66 per cent of the value of the product, claimed PennAg spokesman Donald Parke.

Tests conducted as a result of the workshop revealed chemical composition of the products as well as other properties such as particle size. The latter is considered to be very important in assuring uniform quality in dry bulk blended fertilizers.

Variations in particle size are a notorious cause of product separation and may lead to a possible shortage of an ingredient in qualitative analyses.

The procedures demonstrated at Mill Hall were designed to impress and educate fertilizer dealers of the importance of quality control as well as product and company integrity. A number of presentations were given. The sampling results serve as the final chapter of that workshop.

Looking at those test results, some fertilizer spokesmen say the results that specifications can't be easily met even under closely supervised procedures. There's a different point of view at the Agriculture Department, however. The claim there is that if 'x' number of fertilizer blenders can comply with quality standards, then all should be able to.

Spokesmen for the industry say that variations are bound to occur due to differences in handling equipment, differences in particle sizes, and a lack of uniform standards for the

Donald Parke, executive secretary of PennAg Industries Association, says that the results of the sampling done at the Mill Hall, Pa. workshop substantiates earlier industry claims.

He says: "There were people witnessing the fact that the ingredients were there in the mix and the results of the samples analyzed by two laboratories indicate that one-third of the samples analyzed were deficient enough to incur a penalty. Our very subjective and personal opinion is that neither the equipment commonly in use nor the raw materals which are purchased, nor the inspection equipment and methods used nor the laboratory techniques employed are sophisticated enough to support an inspection system with such tight standards. The question comes down to economics. Just how important is establishing tolerances to the one-one-hundredth of a per cent just to meet an inspection standard?" he asks. "Experts agree," Parke continues, "that this

(Turn to Page 38)

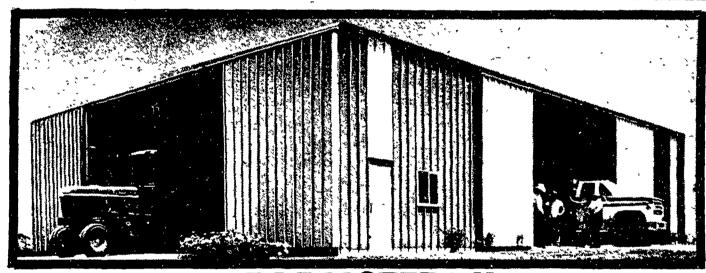
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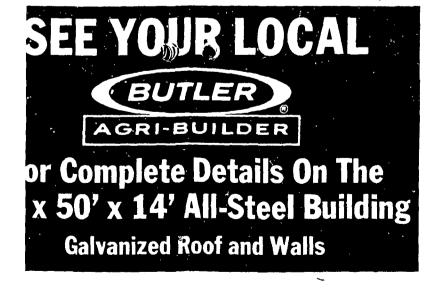
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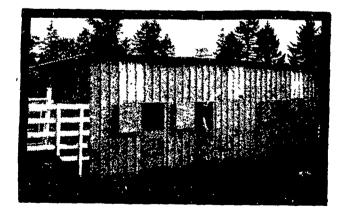
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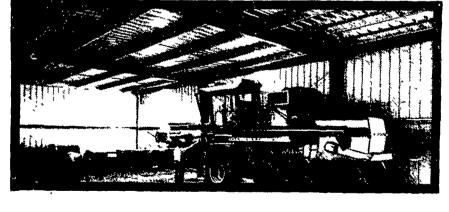
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