

3. **Right to be Informed.** In fact, out of respect for the critical role of the consumer decision-maker whose responsibility it is to make decisions that are both meaningful to him and serve to give guidance and direction to the economy, he should be entitled as a right to all of the significant facts needed to make an informed choice efficiently.

Examples include: Posting at the pump octane rating of gasoline, proposed 40 years ago and still stubbornly opposed by the American Petroleum Institute on grounds, among others, that such facts would confuse the consumer; Truth in Packaging requiring weight disclosure; Truth in Lending requiring disclosure of the cost of credit in dollars and percentages; Truth in Savings requiring disclosure of earnings and savings contract terms (an idea I have sponsored and which now has support in the Senate, House and White House); Truth in Insurance: nutrition labeling; textile fiber identification, etc.

I have invoked this right of the consumer to be informed in taking public positions on textured vegetable protein in meat and vegetable protein in dairy products.

My motto is: "If it can't be told, the product shouldn't be sold." Perhaps the standard for courtroom evidence might be applicable in the market so the consumer would know "the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

4. **The Right to Choice.** The products from which the consumer chooses should be real ones and not merely designed to appear different. And they should be in sufficient number and variety, and at freely competitive prices so that he has a real choice.

Examples of abuse in this area are so numerous the norm of healthy competition is almost an exception.

To illustrate the way in which conglomerates have "muscled their way to the dinner table," James Hightower presented a Christmas dinner menu, listing:

Appetizer: Sauteed Mushrooms by Clorox wrapped in Bacon by ITT.

Salad: Tossed Salad of Dow Chemical Lettuce and Gulf & Western tomatoes.

Entrees: Turkey by Greyhound and Ham by Ling-Temco-Vought.

Vegetables: Carrots by Tenneco, Artichokes by Purex and Apple Sauce by American Brands.

Beverages: Wine by Heublein, Beer by Phillip Morris, Tea by Unilever and Orange Juice by Coca-Cola.

Desserts: Chocolate Cream Pie by ITT, Pudding by R. J. Reynolds, Ice Cream by Unilever and Almonds by Tenneco.

To illustrate the prevalent attitudes toward product differentiation, that is, to make equal products appear different so the consumer is lead to believe there is greater choice. I quote from a paper I wrote on "The Need for Consumer Grades":

Major objectives to grading are not at the technical and obvious level, but reflect basic differences in viewpoint. They strike at the role of the market process in regulating the economy, and particularly the role of the price mechanism - to reflect to consumers the costs of providing alternative goods and services, and to guide producers as to what consumers will buy. I quote first from Dr. DeGraff of the American Meat Institute:

"Government grading generally is regarded as a contribution to what is called marketing efficiency. That is, it provides carcass and primal cut identification that is standard throughout the meat trade and in terms of which products can be described and price quoted. The rise of government grades has changed the structure of the packing industry and the number of competing meat packers, by providing everyone with the same "house brand." But, conversely, government grades have destroyed some private brands in the industry and have weakened others and thus have tended to make graded carcasses and cuts "mere cordwood commodities." This in turn has reduced competition between packers to little more than price competition."

Dr. Brunk, Professor of Marketing at Cornell University, speaking to the American Meat Institute last fall admonished them along a similar vein:

"You lag behind because your industry has been engaged in a gigantic battle of cost competition. When everyone in the industry produces a common product that cannot be distinguished in the market place . . . when everyone performs essentially the same services . . . price becomes your only effective weapon."

He urged the industry to develop marketing services by which its products can be differentiated and profits generated.

5. **Right to be Heard.** If the consumer has no choice, either because of monopoly or because of the nature of the service, so that the market cannot render the benefits of full and free competition, then the consumer must turn to government regulations. And then the consumer should have the right to be heard before those government agencies which regulate and control the market conditions. This should be true whether it be inspection of meat for safety and health of the person, or control of credit transactions affecting the health and safety of his pocketbook.

The thought of consumer representation before regulatory bodies or agencies is

considered almost revolutionary because it is new. It is happening, however, in several sectors, most noteworthy in the field of health. The U.S. Senate has adopted a bill which would require financial regulatory agencies to include a consumer component. And the Consumer Protection Agency Bill (S. 707) would provide surveillance at the Federal level of consumer interests in the action of government agencies. The details of our own intervention in Kansas of consumer interest in meat regulations has been assembled in a volume of 61 documents. Through this experience I learned to appreciate the potential clout of one persistent advocate of the consumer interest. She was a young student who had both a consumer and beef producer interest. I recommend this account to you for study of effective and intelligent consumer action in regard to meat marketing and processing.

6. **Right to Justice.** Finally the consumer should be assured of swift, inexpensive and just settlement of disputes arising in the purchase of goods and services.

Examples of progress in this sector are establishment of small claims courts, abolition of holder-in-due-course contractual provisions, limitation of garnishment and abolition of cognitive notes, awarding of attorney fees if the court ruling is in favor of the consumer, class action suits, establishment of arbitration procedures.

I am most pleased with our own Student Governing Association at Kansas State University for funding a Consumer Relations Board and attorney to handle students' consumer complaints. Each of you might well investigate the possibility of initiating such a group on your campus. I assure you that it can become a most valuable learning experience for the students as well as the faculty as well as provide a tremendous service to students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I hope I have presented a way of viewing the consumer interest which supports business and government and which is responsive to the needs of the consumer citizen public. Its viability demands responsible consumer action and requires a better form of consumer education than most colleges and universities provide.

CONSUMER EDUCATION — THE M.T.S.U. APPROACH

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INTRODUCTION

While reading newspapers and listening to news commentators, we are made aware of many gaps in our society. Some of the more common ones include the generation gap, the credibility gap, the communication gap, etc. I would like to discuss another gap in our society which is becoming increasingly evident. It is

one which affects all of us as agriculturists and consumers. For lack of a better term I will call this gap a "consumer awareness gap."

The purposes of this presentation are to discuss the consumer awareness gap and its implication for agriculturists and to relate

what we at Middle Tennessee State University are doing to create this consumer awareness.

We in Agriculture have been very active talking to ourselves about the accomplishments of agriculturists and the important role that Agriculture plays in the total economy. However, we have forgotten that we are dependent on nonagricultural people for survival.

We have accused consumers of taking us for granted and they have, but we in turn have taken consumers for granted. We assume that they are aware of our problems and that they know how hard we are working to provide them with the highest standard of living in the world.

During 1973, consumers suddenly made us aware that they do not understand our problems or appreciate our past performances. Their major concern was the increasing cost of food and their confusion as to why their high standard of living was being threatened. As usual, the news media tried to explain what was happening and why. I assume their efforts were honest ones but their lack of understanding resulted in many erroneous and misleading reports.

Agriculturists must become more active in telling the story of Agriculture. We can no longer afford to let someone else do the job for us. We must get involved much more than we have in the past.

The Extension Service has done some work in this area but their efforts have been directed primarily toward agricultural people — not consumers. Certainly they are to be commended for their efforts but they cannot do the job alone.

Private agribusiness firms are beginning to direct considerable time and effort to improve the image of Agriculture. A group called the Agriculture Council of America (ACA) has been formed to coordinate these private efforts. Mr. J. S. Francis of the ACA says, "We have to stop talking to ourselves and reach the housewife who thinks she's paying too much for food."¹

We as agricultural teachers and administrators have been so concerned with our in-group that we don't even know who the ultimate consumer is. To us the consumer is a student. This is true in a narrow sense of the word — but only from a narrow point of view.

We at Middle Tennessee State University are trying to do our part in reducing this consumer awareness gap in our area. We are directing our efforts in two directions which we call the internal emphasis and the external emphasis. The internal emphasis relates toward nonagricultural students enrolled in the University. The external emphasis is concerned with efforts to reach consumers who are not and probably will not take courses at the University.

INTERNAL EMPHASIS

We at M.T.S.U. have tried for quite some time to make the story of Agriculture available to nonagricultural majors as well as agricultural majors. We have done this through specific courses and programs and for the next few minutes we would like to mention and briefly discuss some of these.

Agriculture In Our Lives

One of our earliest and most successful attempts to serve nonagricultural majors was the development of a course called Agriculture In Our Lives. The purpose of the course is to create an awareness of the role of Agriculture in today's society and it is open to nonagricultural majors only.

Agriculture In Our Lives was initially developed for elementary education majors who had little or no background in Agriculture. However, the current enrollment is much broader in scope. A recent survey of students in this course indicated that about 50 percent were elementary education majors, 15 percent social science majors, 15 percent natural science majors, and 20 percent from all other majors.

Currently, this course creates approximately 1,000 student credit hours per year. The success of this course is due primarily to the support and cooperation of advisors and faculty members of other departments. Without their support, no course of this

type would survive.

Horticulture In Our Lives

Since Agriculture In Our Lives was so successful, we decided to expand our efforts in another direction. We developed a course called Horticulture In Our Lives to educate individuals on the expanding role of horticulture in modern living. This course is also restricted to nonagricultural majors.

Some of the specific topics for discussion include the principles of plant growth and development, growing plants in the home, floral design, home landscaping, and gardening and pest control. This is the second year for this course and enrollment is increasing each year. At the present time this course creates about 200 student credit hours per year. We expect the interest in this course to increase during the next few years.

Equitation

The Agriculture Department at M.T.S.U. has offered courses for people interested in the horse industry for the past 12 years. Since M.T.S.U. is located in the heart of the Tennessee Walking Horse Industry, it is an ideal location to teach horse science. In addition, several training and breeding stables are located near the University. Individuals and breed associations have given continued support to the horse science program since its initial development in 1962. Currently, it is one of the most rapidly expanding areas of our total program.

The horse science program was first developed as an equitation program for nonagricultural students and nonuniversity people. However, it has now expanded to include courses for agricultural majors and people in the horse science industry. Presently, eight horse science courses are offered. The University Farms carry the expense of maintaining the horses used in equitation, horse production, and management courses. Students are encouraged to participate in the program by caring for the animals and exhibiting them in various shows.

M.T.S.U. is also a host for the "Horses A to Z" program. This is a summer workshop designed to cover the highlights of all aspects of horsemanship from shoeing to proper riding techniques. Top professionals in the horse industry provide lectures and demonstrations in 26 instructional areas for both amateurs and professionals. This supplements the overall program of horse science at M.T.S.U.

Environmental Seminars

In an attempt to emphasize the importance of agriculture's role in maintaining not only an adequate supply of food to the people, but also in maintaining environmental quality, M.T.S.U. presents a series of environmental seminars each spring. An attempt is made to select topics on current problems. These seminars provide an opportunity for students, faculty, and the community to discuss and share ideas with invited authorities on recent research concerning environmental problems.

The M.T.S.U. Agriculture Department initiated the first seminar in the spring of 1971. Being encouraged by the results of the first seminar, we solicited the interest of the Departments of Biology, Chemistry-Physics, Geography-Earth Science, Home Economics, Industrial Arts and Technology, Political Science, and Sociology in programming an interdisciplinary approach. The Ideas and Issues Committee which is supported by students' activity funds sponsors and finances the programs.

Seminar topics have included world population growth and the production of food; pesticides and the environment; agriculture and today's ecology; municipal pollution; life in the soil and water; food additives; metabolism of pesticides in humans; past, present, and future energy sources; energy conservation and the environment; and energy and the consumer. During the past 4 years these topics have attracted the interest of students, faculty, press, community leaders, and the general public. This program, currently entitled "Environmental Insights," has been quite successful in communicating the role of Agriculture as it relates to environmental topics.

Environmental Agriculture

The importance of agriculture to society can also be stressed in courses which require an interdisciplinary approach. At M.T.S.U., the Department of Agriculture played an active role in the development of an interdisciplinary B.S. degree program in Environmental Science and Technology. A course in Environmental Agriculture was added to the University Curriculum as a portion of the Environmental Science and Technology program.

Agricultural students are not allowed to use this course as part of their major but they can take it as an elective. It is designed primarily for students who have an interest in technical agriculture as it relates to the environment. The role of agriculture in an environmentally-conscious world is emphasized. Topics covered in the course include disposal and management of animal waste, the role of plants in improving the environment, the soil as a medium for disposal of waste, waste management in the food processing industry, and the effects of environmentally related costs on agricultural production patterns, supply and demand, decision making, and the quality of American diets.

Courses such as this can serve as a vehicle to communicate the story of agriculture to students with science and technical backgrounds. This course will be offered for the first time during the spring semester, 1975.

Firearm Safety

One of the fastest growing areas of interest for nonagricultural people is agricultural recreation. Americans are spending considerable time and money on fishing and hunting and this area of Agriculture is expanding rapidly. This provides tremendous opportunities for agricultural people to provide badly needed services for this group.

One area in which we at M.T.S.U. hope to assist is in firearm safety. The State of Tennessee has passed a law requiring that anyone applying for a hunting license for the first time after the end of this year will be required to take a firearm safety course. In order to provide a service for hunting enthusiasts in Middle Tennessee, the Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Department, is developing such a course.

The purpose of this course will be to help hunters develop a positive attitude toward the proper use and handling of firearms. The participants will be required to demonstrate a minimum knowledge of firearm use and survival techniques. Current plans are to initiate a one-semester hour course to be offered at night and/or on Saturdays to best meet the schedules of prospective participants. Other schools throughout the State will also be offering similar courses.

EXTERNAL EMPHASIS

Sociologists tell us that people join various groups during their lifetime and while they are in these groups they tend to ignore those who are not members. We in Agriculture have our "in-group" and we tend to relate to ourselves and ignore outsiders. There was a time when this caused no major problem. However, modern agriculture requires that we expand our frame of reference. We can no longer confine our expertise to our "in-group." We cannot assume that nonagriculturists are aware of our contribution and problems. We must relate to consumers in whatever context we can make a contribution. We must get involved in explaining the story of Agriculture.

The remainder of this presentation will discuss several efforts that we at M.T.S.U. are making in an attempt to tell the Agriculture story beyond the limits of the University, with a major emphasis on nonagricultural people.

Radio Programs

Five years ago a horticulturist in the Department of Agriculture initiated a five-minute program to be broadcast weekly by a private radio station as part of a public service program. He discusses all aspects of horticulture that relate to Middle Tennessee. Special topics include landscaping techniques and materials, flower arranging, lawn materials and preparation, home garden-

ing, and many others. This is a good illustration of how the mass media can be used by agriculturists to reach the consumer.

In addition to this program with a private station, we now have one being broadcast on a public station. During 1973, the Chairman of the Department of Agriculture initiated a 15-minute radio program entitled, *Agriculture - The New Challenge*. This program is broadcast by the M.T.S.U. radio station three times weekly in the Middle Tennessee area. It reaches numerous consumers as well as students.

The purpose of this program is to provide the latest information in the agricultural field. Specific topics include new techniques of production, consumer buying and pricing trends, future projections, the world food situation, and the role of agriculture in the environment. This program was developed primarily for the consumer. The Department Chairman is host for the program while other faculty members and students often serve as guests.

MTSU Speaks

The Public Relations Department of M.T.S.U. has developed a Speakers Bureau which sponsors a public speaking program entitled MTSU Speaks. This is an attempt to make available to the public the reservoirs of talent, experience, expertise, and knowledge of various individuals in the campus community. All faculty members are encouraged but not required to participate in the program. A brochure is published each year listing all individuals participating and their special topic area. A majority of the agricultural faculty have volunteered each year to speak on agricultural topics. Expenses are paid by the University but no extra pay is given. However, this type program provides excellent opportunities for agriculturists to tell our side of the agricultural story.

Visiting Scientist Program

In trying to educate the consumer on the role of Agriculture, we must not forget the youth of our society. Many programs are available if we want to take advantage of them. One such program is the Visiting Scientist Program. This program in Tennessee is sponsored by the Tennessee Academy of Science and is designed to encourage scientists of all types to visit secondary schools and make personal contacts with students and teachers. These visits stimulate student interest in science and at the same time offer support and professional advice to teachers.

The M.T.S.U. Agricultural Faculty is represented in this program under the topics of Ecology and General Science. The Ecology topics include The Soil in Man's Environment; Man, Garbage and Science; Man and Floods; Sharing the Land with Wildlife; and Soils in Urban Planning. The General Science topics include Pests and Pesticides; Are Food Shortages Realistic?; Chemicals and Food; Uses of Solid Waste; and Man, Food, and Science. This program provides another means by which the agriculturist can communicate to the public.

Sanitary Landfill School

One of the major problems of our society today is how to dispose of the enormous amount of solid waste. The most common approach used today in trying to solve this problem is the sanitary landfill. Since this approach deals with the soil and land reclamation, it provides a unique opportunity for agriculturists, especially plant and soil scientists, to get involved.

The M.T.S.U. Agriculture Department has been active in working with the Tennessee Department of Public Health to train personnel in solid waste management. During the fall of 1972, the first sanitary landfill school for operators was held at Middle Tennessee State University. Presently, three schools, one each for sanitary landfill personnel in East, Middle and West Tennessee, are conducted annually.

The purpose of the school is to provide all operators of registered sanitary landfills with increased knowledge of maintaining proper operating procedures of a sanitary landfill. The program attempts to instill in the managers and operators their importance to society and to make them more knowledgeable about

their job.

The school, which is limited to 30 participants, includes discussions on the legal, geological, soil, mechanical, safety, and reclamation aspects of sanitary landfill operations. The M.T.S.U. personnel are responsible for the portion of the school dealing with soils and the reclamation of the landfill area. This is another example of how agricultural expertise can be of value to the community.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In summary, we have a problem which we can and must do something about. We can no longer afford to confine our expertise to agricultural students and co-workers. We must broaden our frame of reference to include the consumer. We as teachers and administrators, must get involved in telling the story of Agriculture from our point of view. The Extension Service and private Agribusiness people are making a significant contribution in this area, but they need our help and support. They cannot do the job alone.

Mr. Francis of the American Council of Agriculture says that we should stop talking to ourselves. I disagree. We must continue to talk to ourselves but we must not stop there. We must expand our discussions to nonagricultural people, especially consumers.

COMMUNICATION IN THE CLASSROOM ABOUT CONSUMER ATTITUDES

PLANT SCIENCE DISCUSSION SESSION (LINCOLN MEETING) – BILL COLVILLE, CHAIRMAN; THURMAN T. THOMAS, SECRETARY

The group discussed the various aspects of the introductory plant science course as a medium of communication. Our primary consumer, the students enrolled in those courses were of utmost concern. We touched on the basics of what should be covered in the introductory course, and some members were concerned with the repetition of information often taught in other courses of plant science. There was a consensus of members that our consumers are changing with a greater number coming from non-agricultural background; therefore, they felt it important to offer optional material to cover concepts and information assumed to be known by the student from an agricultural background. Other methods of acquainting the non-agriculturally backgrounded student with the basics of agriculture would be *through the Audio-Tutorial Approach*. Seminars, and thru a series of Optional Materials designed specifically for use with the Urban Student.

It was suggested that wise use could be made of persons in commercial work thru Seminars and in some teaching situations. When Seminars are used they should be carried in a series, especially, when held in larger towns. The intern program can be used to expand the experiences and general knowledge of the Urban Backgrounded student; it can as well be utilized for the regular student with an agricultural background.

An approach worth utilizing would be arranging with alumni for a student to live with and observe his work over a weekend or semester break. Another idea would be utilizing The Mini-University approach where the entire family would be involved in topics of study. Also the inservice programs for teachers and lay workers could easily be held on farms. This would especially be helpful to elementary teachers.

Contact with the parents can be achieved thru the use of a letter at the end of the semester to inform them as to the type of course the student had taken, and how well he or she had performed.

We at M.T.S.U. are trying to serve four major groups: agricultural majors, nonagricultural majors, agricultural workers, and nonagricultural people. This report relates primarily to our efforts to serve nonagricultural people. However, our major efforts still relate to agricultural people but we feel that we shouldn't stop there.

Our program is not presented here as the ideal program. It is the results of our efforts to expand agricultural education to the consumer. It is designed to fill the needs in our particular area at this time. We hope to expand into additional areas as the opportunities arise.

I challenge you as agricultural educators to constantly expand your frame of reference to include the consumers. I further challenge you to develop consumer education programs which will fit the needs of consumers in your area. We are limited only by our lack of imagination.

REFERENCES

1. Henkes, Rollie, "The Selling of the Farmer," *The Furrow*, May-June, 1974.
2. "Consumers All," *The Yearbook of Agriculture*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1965.

REPORT OF ANIMAL SCIENCES DISCIPLINE OF THE DISCUSSION OF APPLICATION OF IDEAS ON "COMMUNICATION IN THE CLASSROOM ABOUT CONSUMER ATTITUDES"

Meeting was chaired by Dr. John R. Campbell, University of Missouri. We had 16 in attendance in our group.

It was revealed that some of the professors are using "current events" to capture student interest and to up-date lectures. Moderator Campbell shared several clever overhead projections for example, "paper recycle."

Several professors agreed that more of the students that take Animal Sciences will be involved in Consumption rather than Production. This makes it important that professors use realistic comparisons such as comparing the price of meat in supermarkets and the price paid for live cattle at the terminal markets. Also amount of packaged meat that one gets from a side of beef.

It was evident that many professors feel there is a great need to make courses available for Elementary and Secondary school teachers. A good example would be offering Animal Sciences and other agricultural courses in the summer term, or offering night classes or even such opportunities as use of the true university classes. It was pointed out that perhaps it would be helpful to develop such things as a syllabus to inform non-agricultural students. We need to work with counselors as they are influential in guiding or encouraging high school students into various university or college curricula. Many times they have been steered away from agriculture courses.

Some universities have never turned away students or shut down a course in Animal Science. They add needed sections. It pays off if you have something to tell and then tell it well.

Our group was in agreement that most consumers are not very well informed about nutrition. We need to create awareness. Perhaps it would be helpful to teach a general nutrition course such as, "Nutrition Appreciation."

It was agreed that perhaps we ought to try to help educate consumers about nutrient contents of various foods by writing articles for widely distributed and read magazines such as "Read-