

ITS BEEN A LONG TIME coming, but there seems to be an awakening to the realization that all segments of agriculture must help carry the ball for public relations. More and more industries and professional organizations are accepting responsibility for helping in the struggle to not only preserve what is left of the "agricultural image," but to rescue part of the good name that has been lost in recent years. The need for such efforts has long been recognized, but too few were willing to tackle the problem.

This change in attitude is cause for rejoicing among editors, who have generally been expected to do all the horn tooting for agriculture. We knew all along that this job could not be done by a good, PR-type program alone, but it was just in recent months that an awareness of this truth began to be accepted by many of our colleagues.

The Editor's Corner

Once agricultural leaders began to think about telling the story of agriculture to non-farmers, they began to say some heretofore unheard things. Such as, "Maybe some of the things we've been doing aren't in the public interest." Or, "How can we expect these people to be interested in our problems when we aren't interested in theirs?" This kind of honest look at ourselves may be the single most important thing to come out of our "image improving" efforts. Despite all the good things we have claimed for agriculture, honesty demands that we admit to our short-comings, at least to ourselves. A skeleton in the closet can cause a lot of trouble until we face it, and then we can get on with doing what is important. Since agriculture's great contributions to the nation far outweigh its failings, we should be able to do a good selling job without having to gloss over the few weak points, or without trying to place the usual halo on the industry.

Editor's Responsibility Still Great

All of the effort by other individuals and groups doesn't let us off the hook. In fact, the editor's job may be even harder than before. We must be in the forefront of the overall campaign by the varied groups, to provide the guidance necessary to keep the program on the right track. There must be general agreement as to direction in which the undertaking should go and the major approaches to be tried. Nothing assures defeat like a lot of in-

dividual efforts in different directions, so a certain degree of unity is essential.

The professional and business people who are ready to bridge the image gap to our urban neighbors are trained in many specialties, but most don't claim expertise in communications. Thus, our help is needed to make their efforts more effective. But this in no way reflects on their ability to do the job. In their everyday, face-to-face contacts, they may be able to do a lot more than we could by a slick, Madison Avenue type approach. Once these talented people accept the challenge, we may be pleasantly surprised by the results.

St. Paul Program Provides Encouragement

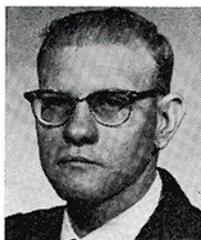
As noted elsewhere in this issue, the Gamma Sigma Delta conclave program at University of Minnesota brought together many people from varied backgrounds with some firm ideas of the image problem we face and some good ideas about how to attack it. Some of the speakers came from the very groups who misunderstand agriculture the most, so their attitudes rate careful consideration. Such misunderstandings represent our greatest obstacle to solving the image problem.

The most heartening thing about this program was the fact that these agricultural scientists and leaders, who are often accused of being interested in only a very narrow subject matter field, want to do something about the image problem. The depressing thing was the lack of interest and support by AAACE members from land grant colleges and USDA. We need to be aboard when the bandwagon gets rolling, or we could be left behind in the dust.

R.E.S.

Meet ACE Authors

J. CLAYTON HERMAN has been assistant extension editor at Iowa State since 1961, following work as reporter with *Minneapolis (Kansas) Messenger* and assistant experiment station editor at University of Arkansas. The Kansas State (B.S.) and Arkansas (M.S.) graduate is a member of Sigma Delta Chi, Gamma Sigma Delta, and Epsilon Sigma Phi.



FRANK LESSITER, editor of *National Live Stock Producer*, has had a varied career since his 1961 graduation from Michigan State. He was on the Michigan Extension editorial staff and then edited house organs for Agricultural Publishers, Inc., before assuming his present position January 1, 1969. He received the 1970 meritorius service award from Live-stock Conservation, Inc. A native of Michigan, Lessiter grew up on a livestock farm.

DONALD W. POUCHER has won numerous honors for his radio-TV work as assistant professor and radio-TV editor for Florida's Extension Service. The Florida native and University of Florida graduate (B.S. 1964, M.A. 1965) worked for commercial radio and television stations during 1962-64 before joining the Florida staff in 1965. He holds membership in professional broadcasting and journalism fraternities, as well as numerous other organizations.



LEO R. FEHLHAFFER joined the Washington State staff last year as extension radio-television specialist following similar duties at University of Minnesota during 1962-69. He also did radio-TV work at Nebraska and was with an Omaha TV station. Fehlhafer did his undergraduate study at University of Nebraska and holds the M.S. from Minnesota. He is a member of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters and Epsilon Sigma Phi, extension fraternity.

BILL PAUL carries the title of manager of agricultural publications at California. In other states the same job would be called experiment station editor. A former specialist in the production end of the business rather than the editorial, Paul has taken considerable interest in distribution of agricultural publications, both free and for sale. Results of his studies have been rewarding and amusing. Some have been reported previously in *ACE*.



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National Headquarters
Auburn University
Auburn, Alabama 36830

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