

Monsanto

FROM (NAME & LOCATION)

General Offices - St. Louis

DATE

February 26, 1969

CC:

Mr. H. L. Minckler

Mr. E. S. Robson

Mr. J. E. McKee

Mr. T. C. Ford

SUBJECT

ARACLORS STORY

REFERENCE

IN THE CHRONICLE

TO

Mr. R. L. Brandenburger
Santa Clara

Not only didn't you have any "information from St. Louis" on the Chronicle's "expose" on Araclors, but -- as the story says -- the newspaper didn't hear from St. Louis, either. So you're all in the same boat.

It has been Tom Ford's notion all along -- since he received a phoned inquiry from the Chronicle early last week -- that this delicate, complicated and sensitive problem wouldn't simply blow away. Yet, much as he'd try, he could obtain no "party line response" in time to meet the editor's Friday deadline.

The reporter phoned three times -- even saying "call me at home if anything can be stated in Monsanto's defense."

I should add Tom is trying to get a few appropriate business groups together to see if something like the attached -- or, hopefully, maybe even something better -- can be mounted as a "party line" response. And once our response is agreed to, you can be sure Tom will tissue you in.

I'm not sure going to the owners of the paper is the smart thing to do -- short-range or long-range. This, normally, is the fastest way to alienate the men who actually write stories about Monsanto. And alienated reporters are seldom in a friendly mood when they sit down to their typewriters.

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The place to win (and occasionally lose) in press relations is with the working press. Few publishers or owners ever send down a "be gentle with Monsanto" edict.

Like all big companies, we occasionally take our lumps -- sometimes deservedly, sometimes undeservedly.

And in this instance, the owner or publisher would, of course, get the "reporter's side" of the argument.

Intercession at the owner level is something we seldom need, Roy.

Our big need is generally to have Monsanto hop -- and hop fast -- when a potentially controversial or negative story is in the wind. "Why the big rush, Dan?" is a question I often get, particularly when we need authority to quote a Monsanto man or attribute information to him in a scientifically-complicated and potentially negative story. And I think you'll agree this unhappy "case history" provides ample answer to "why the big rush?"

Dan J. Forrestal

DJF/jn

Attach: Unapproved answers to questions

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