

MELLON INSTITUTE

4100 FIFTH AVENUE

PITTSBURGH 13, PA.

January 17, 1964

Mr. Parke C. Brinkley, President
National Agricultural Chemicals Association
Associations Building
1145 Nineteenth Street, N. W.
Washington 36, D. C.

Dear Mr. Brinkley:

Mellon Institute might be interested in undertaking an objective review of the area covered by the President's Science Advisory Committee's Panel on the Use of Pesticides. The Institute provides such services to industry on a continuing basis. However, it is willing to perform this task only if it is able to do so in a manner which will be effective and will reflect credit upon itself and its sponsor.

It would be useless for us to consider attempting to help you at the level of effort indicated in your letters of December 19, 1963. We also feel that it is unlikely that anything worthy of publication in association with the names of Mellon Institute or National Agricultural Chemicals Association can be produced in four months with the limited scientific staff proposed. A year's study would, in our opinion, be a minimum. The degree of effort required to produce a report of substantial value would necessitate many expert opinions and collaboration.

In order to be effective, the review must be comprehensive, factual, and well coordinated. It would be of little use to prepare another attack on Silent Spring which would, in turn, probably be followed by another rebuttal. The list of supporters of Silent Spring includes Loren Eisely, H. J. Muller and Marston Bates and those on the opposite side include F. J. Stare, C. G. King, and I. L. Baldwin, according to T. H. Ingalls, who criticizes both groups for unsupported allegations in an editorial entitled "No Grapes on the Vine" (AMA Archives of Environmental Health 7:714-16, Dec. 1963). Criticism of Silent Spring is to be found in many articles, such as that by T. H. Jukes entitled "People and Pesticides" (American Scientist 51:355-61, Sept. 1963), which states "Progress in American agriculture must not become . . . hamstrung by legislation resulting from inaccurate statements regarding the dangers of pesticides. The right to publish confers the obligation to tell the story without distortion, omission, misquotation, or innuendo", also pointing

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out the many benefits which have arisen out of use of modern pesticides. Such statements, which may already have impugned the honesty of Rachel Carson, have apparently not succeeded in preventing her book from being used as a reference. The availability of a comprehensive and accurate review would go much farther in preventing such reference.

Our view of handling this assignment would require about two full-time scientists plus a collaborative staff of eminent consultants, assuming they could be solicited, from the medical, toxicological, entomological, ichthyological fields, as well as analytical and biochemical support. The report must have distinctive scientific value to serve its purpose. We feel that any other approach to such a report would constitute only another rebuttal that would be considered biased and be unconvincing.

If you should wish to discuss the project along the lines suggested here, may we suggest an early meeting either here or in Washington in order that we may develop the necessary arrangements.

Sincerely yours,

G. A. Webb
Director of Administration

GAW:KJ

Three c.c. attached

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