

In My View

Students speak on industry's future

by Brian Schneider and David Fincannon



In today's business world the company that prospers and the industry that expands are the ones that utilize the most efficient equipment materials, and technology available. This is especially true for the Pest Control Industry since the pest populations that are to be controlled are constantly changing and adapting. I believe that the probability of a company's future success lies in their ability to integrate recent advancements in technology, pesticides, and application equipment into present control programs.

It was readily apparent at the Purdue Pest Control Conference that there is a strong desire among managers and technicians alike to learn and practice modern control techniques. The responsibility of teaching these progressive professionals lies with university researchers and extension agents along with company training instructors and the educational branch of the NPCA. These teachers and students know the marketable value of a practical, up-to-date understanding of pests problems and control measures.

My hands-on experience with the mechanics of pest control operations is quite limited. But, I have had considerable exposure to new ideas re-

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sulting from university and industry research. There have been developments in areas such as pesticide resistance and repellency, application equipment, and insecticide formulations that could have a direct impact on daily company operations. Remember, an important goal of these researchers is to make control programs more cost effective. So why not keep an open yet discriminating mind to ideas that could be profitable?

Top management must realize the importance of being aware of these breakthroughs and take steps to insure the education of their employees and the implementation of new strategies. It is the prerogative of each company to be the innovative Datsun or the conservative Chrysler of the Pest Control Industry.

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Universities produce intellectual employees who, nevertheless, need to be told what to do when they are hired. Unfortunately when pest control graduates get a job, they have to conform to a world of monthly accounts done by spray jockeys. Sales are emphasized and technical expertise is de-emphasized. These graduates cannot do anything about the status quo existing in the pest control industry without endangering their jobs and careers.

My parents probably would have liked me to be a part of a more honorable profession. They could not understand why I would want to be a part of an industry which cheated itself and its customers with low prices and poor service. They did not want me to

be a part of this industry because they, like most parents, wanted me to have the best life has to offer.

My father and his company gave me a lot of insight into the rights and wrongs which exist in today's pest control companies. I learned some invaluable lessons. Surprisingly, I also developed an irreversible respect for the industry. Like doctors, lawyers, and accountants, I feel the pest control industry is needed, too.

The public needs the pest control operator's professional knowledge. This knowledge, however, has rarely been packaged as a professional service. The pest control operators seem to suffer from an identity crisis. They feel they need the customers and not vice versa. Furthermore, it seems to me that most pest control operators do not think that they are significant figures in their communities. With these self-induced status problems, a professional association between bug elimination and benefit to society is hard to attain.

I perceive the truly professional pest control industry as mostly closed, family-owned corporations because many of the other types of corporations are not very quality oriented. The family corporations will include some basic objectives in their operations. First, they charge for consulting with clients. Second, they do not spray pesticides into the environment for the mere sake of collecting a monthly service fee. Lastly, they guarantee their work, because they know their service is good when combined with sanitary procedures they recommend and demand from their customers.

If things do not change, pest control graduates will no longer have any incentive to contribute their knowledge to the industry. I am lucky. When I finish my B.S. in Pest Control at Purdue University, I can incorporate my ideas into my father's company; and maybe someday I can say I am truly a professional. Hopefully I will see the day when professionalism is the mainstay of the pest control industry.

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