

# IT'S YOUR MONEY

The authors are Albert W. Marsh, Extension Irrigation and Soils Specialist, Riverside, and Milton Fireman, formerly Extension Soils and Water Specialist, University of California.

## NEW PRODUCTS

### Some Good, Some Questionable

Do you have money to waste? There are many easy ways to spend it. New products for agricultural use appear on the market in a steady stream. Some of these products have real merit – they do a job for you and help you make a profit. A few have contributed to important advances in agriculture.

Other products may be of questionable value. They may be grossly overpriced – or of little use – or both. Such items waste your money. Often these products are sold by enthusiastic persons who use scientific-sounding sales talks, promising great benefits heretofore not available. These salesmen promise benefits based on “knowledge,” which is usually pure fancy.

### Hopes

Almost everyone would like to get something for little or nothing, and it is human to hope that science will provide an easier and/or cheaper way of solving today's farming problems. Promoters capitalize on these hopes. They want you to think that some new “truth” – not yet fully appreciated – is just being made use of, and maybe you can “get in on the ground floor.”

### Cost

Products of doubtful value are seldom entirely worthless, but they are often worth very little in

relation to their cost. Questionable products usually carry an enormous markup on their price to pay for the extensive sales campaign. Rarely do these commodities prove to be a profitable investment and, occasionally, they produce detrimental effects.

## IDENTIFICATION

How do you determine which products you should be wary of buying? What clues should you look for?

The promotional patterns for products of questionable value have common, identifiable characteristics. Such sales campaigns may include one or several of the following statements or claims.

- The product contains a secret or unknown ingredient that is very potent – almost magical in its benefits.
- The commodity produces such remarkable results because it operates on a “newly discovered, secret principle.” Or it involves an entirely “new approach” to soil chemistry, the physical condition of the soil, or soil fertility. Or it operates by action of mysterious forces, such as magnetism, catalytic action, nutrient release, micro-organism or enzyme activation, etc.

This is all described in “scientific” language that is persuasive, perhaps, to potential buyers, but is meaningless to reputable scientists.

## ONE – SHEET ANSWERS

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- The discovery is so new that most scientists haven't heard about it yet. Or it is claimed that scientists with universities and the United States Department of Agriculture are backward and refuse to conduct research on the product.
- Tests under controlled conditions in the laboratory or field are usually played down, stating that they don't show the benefits obtained in "practical" agriculture.
- Using the product gives numerous, beneficial side effects – extra dividends. These are all highly desirable, but are not easily identified or measured.
- The benefits claimed are supported by large numbers of testimonials – "unsolicited," of course.

Such claims are mostly personal opinions. Data from properly conducted trials or research are seldom shown.

- Instructions accompanying the product often recommend using it in combination with good management practices which, by themselves, may produce all the benefits that can be seen or measured.

In other words, the advice you get on the label may be worth more than the contents of the package!

- The active ingredient may be the same as that in a well-known, reputable product, but the recommended quantity is less because of its "new formulation" or "magical properties."

In such cases, the price per unit of active ingredient is much higher than for the well-known product.

### IT'S YOUR DECISION

You may be tempted to buy or use a product having some of the promotional features listed. However, you can save yourself time, money, and disappointment if you first do the following.

- Don't decide in a hurry. Consult a responsible, experienced person before you commit your dollars.
- If you decide to try the product, buy just enough to treat a small portion of your land (1 acre or less). Compare the results with an adjacent plot of equal size on which you did not use the product, but where all other operations and conditions were identical. Then compare yield records or other measurable results.
- Carefully evaluate all new products. Demand adequate proof of their value for your soil conditions and management practices.

Investigate before you invest!

AFTER ALL....IT'S YOUR MONEY.

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