BOOK REVIEWS

RESOURCE CONSERVATION: ECONOMICS AND POLICIES


Most conservationists are uncomfortably aware that it is one thing to develop effective conservation techniques and another thing to get those techniques adopted by land users. This book deals with the latter problem. The author has carefully analyzed a series of economic and social factors that affect conservation — interest, taxation, prices, business cycles, tenancy, credit, types of markets, and property rights. His purpose is to describe how and why these factors affect individuals' decisions to adopt conservation practices. In the process, he distinguishes between the viewpoints of individual resource-users and of society as a whole, thus indicating those areas where individuals have direct interests in conservation, and those areas where society may have to take a hand if conservation goals are to be attained.

An important part of the analysis deals with the ways in which economic factors can be manipulated so as to promote a conservation program. The author makes it clear that the economic forces he describes are largely the creatures of public policy, and he carefully demonstrates how these obstacles to conservation can be neutralized or reversed as part of a deliberate public policy to promote conservation.

The author's attempt to make this book suitable for both economists and non-economists is only partially successful, as the necessary economic terminology and the nature of the problems discussed makes it difficult reading. It is an extremely competent handling of subjects that are of great practical significance, however, and conservationists are urged to read at least the abridged version published as "Dollars and Sense in Conservation", Circular 402, California Experiment Station. — C. W. Loomer.

FERTILIZER TECHNOLOGY AND RESOURCES IN THE UNITED STATES


This volume might well be called a fertilizer biography or "profile." In over 450 pages are packed a wealth of authoritative information on the history, development and current status of fertilizers, with particular emphasis on the United States, as well as a prediction of what might be expected in future utilization of fertilizers by agriculture and new technological developments in the industry.


The preface states that circumstances necessitated the omission of chapters on trace element materials and fertilizer grades and ratios.

Material contained in this volume was presented originally at a fertilizer short course held in August of 1950 at the University of Maryland sponsored by the Fertilizer Committee of the Soil Science Society of America. The short course itself developed from a need for a symposium on advances in the knowledge of fertilizers, their resources and processing technology, a need long felt by workers in agronomy, soil science and the chemical industries. In addition to the SSSA Fertilizer Committee, 36 other specialists helped review the manuscripts before publication.

The various contributors have illustrated their chapters liberally with tables and graphs, diagrams and maps, all of which add to the thoroughness in which the broad topic is covered. This, plus the fact that all subjects are presented in an exceptionally lucid style, might easily expand the reading audience of this volume well beyond the circle of those directly associated with or interested in fertilizer problems. Topics such as the effect of consumer buying habits on fertilizer usage, and the investment problems of the fertilizer industry indicate the extensive coverage which characterizes this volume.