

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

O VAN G SCHOLTZ, Fedmis (Pty) Limited

Meneer die President, dames en here, op die agenda van ons Bestuursvergadering gister was daar 'n volledige verslag oor die aktiwiteite van die Misstofvereniging oor die afgelope 12 jaar. Hierdie gedetailleerde verslag is beskikbaar vir al ons lidmaatskappye en ek is nie van voornemens om die besonderhede hier te herhaal nie. Ek sien my plig hier meer teenoor die gaste, maw die nie-lede van die Vereniging en om vir hulle 'n algemene oorsig van die aktiwiteite van die Misstofvereniging te skets.

Although our constitution lists various objects, it basically concentrates on only one, namely "to encourage and develop the economic use of fertilizers with a view to improving the fertility of the soil, producing better crops and increasing the prosperity of agriculture generally." We have tried to achieve this object by various means. Our main efforts during the past year have been concentrated on the implementation of the newly formed research programme and on promoting co-operation with the Department of Agriculture and Organised Agriculture in the field of research and extension.

A Chief Research Officer was appointed and his first task was the co-ordination of existing research results available within the fertilizer industry. The first research report was completed by mid-September 1970 and subsequently widely distributed. Two hundred and forty copies of a more condensed version of this report were distributed to member companies, the Department of Agricultural Technical Services, the Transvaal Agricultural Union, Co-operatives and individual farmers. One hundred and thirty of these were distributed as a result of direct requests resulting from publicity obtained in the daily and agricultural press.

Twelve NPK trials were laid down on some of the most important soil series in the eastern Transvaal Highveld and north-western OFS. In addition to maize it is highly probable that the Society will extend its research also to wheat in the near future. The Research Division is being extended by the appointment of two Senior Field Officers and one Field Assistant.

The theme of the Open Day today is Fertilizers and Animal Production. Whereas the fertilization of crops has received considerable attention in the past, that of pastures has been largely neglected and will be included in the programme of trials of our Research Division.

In my Voorsittersrede verlede jaar het ek genoem dat 'n positiewe begin gemaak was met betrekking tot samewerking met die Departement van Landbou-tegniese Dienste in verband met voorligting en navorsing. Die personeel van die Misstofvereniging en verteenwoordigers van lidmaatskappye het samesprekings gevoer met verskillende streke en substreke van die Departement gedurende die afgelope twaalf maande. Dit het tot gevolg gehad die daarstelling van permanente skakelkomitees met die Departement van Landbou-tegniese Dienste en Georganiseerde Landbou in die Transvaalse Hoëveld, Oranje-Vrystaat, Natal, Winter-reënval- en Oostelike-Kaapstreke, en ons is oortuig dat daar vandag 'n baie beter gees van samewerking bestaan as ooit tevore, en dat dit sal lei tot daadwerklike voordele vir almal betrokke by die landbou.

We have used other means in our efforts to collate and distribute information to the farming community and to those concerned with agriculture which are also worthy of mention.

During the 1970 Water Year two farmers' days were held, one at Bethlehem and one at Klerksdorp based on the theme of water conservation. A further farmers' day has been held at Durbanville recently. The lectures presented at these farmers' days as well as the lectures presented by the Society's medal holders at the annual function arranged for this purpose, appear in various issues of our publication 'Plantfood News'. In addition to the Annual General Meeting and the Medal-holders' Function, where technical papers affecting agriculture are presented, we will in future also arrange special meetings where opportunity will be given to researchers within the industry to report on their specific projects.

Three issues of the FSSA Journal appeared in the past year and were distributed to extension and research officers, research institutes, to libraries, etc. They cover the Annual General Meeting proceedings and other research papers.

We continued with the submission of articles to the agricultural press and are at present in the process of preparing a series on 'Fodder Production'.

Study Groups are supported financially and with advice, and short courses and demonstrations on the use of fertilizers were given in certain Bantu areas, mainly in the Transkei and Natal.

The uniformity of soil sampling is under study and the methods of soil analysis have been standardised within the industry and results are reported on a standard FSSA form. Regular routine checks on inter-laboratory results are maintained. The standardisation of soil analysis on a country-wide basis is in the process of being investigated and it is anticipated that a round-table discussion will be arranged with the Society in due course which may even lead to a national symposium on this subject.

In line with our budgeted programme, we now have two bursaries of R500 each per annum in operation to students in agriculture. As indicated before, this will be expanded to four per annum on a basis of one additional bursary per annum.

A colour-slide story titled 'Nutrient deficiencies in maize' has been completed, two copies of which have been presented to agricultural schools and copies are available to member companies. The slide story has also been shown to study groups.

The Society fulfills a co-ordinating function amongst member companies in regard to the control of fertilizer imports, the co-ordination of supply and demand of certain products used by the industry, the establishment and demand of certain products used by the industry, the establishment of product ranges, and it assists and comments to the Government on the registration of products.

Alhoewel die Vereniging hom nie met die handelsbedrywighede van sy lidmaatskappye bemoei nie, speel hy tog 'n rol in die koördinasie van sy lede se onderhandelings met die vasstelling van pryse deur die pryskontroleur. Die formule wat toegepas word in die vasstelling van kunsmispryse is in 1963-64 bepaal. Sekere aspekte daarvan is verouderd en dit is ook nie op dieselfde basis as wat vir ander beheerde nywerhede geld nie. Die Ekonomiese onder-komitee sal in die komende jaar 'n volledige ondersoek instel en ver-

slag doen oor prysbeheer soos toegepas in die kunsmisnywerheid.

Na twee jaar in die stoel handig ek dit na vanaand se verrigtinge oor aan my opvolger. Ek voel dat dit my plig is om, vir dié wat nog twyfel, die belangrikheid van die Misstofvereniging en die werk wat hy verrig te onderstreep. In die kort periode van ongeveer drie jaar waarin die Misstofvereniging hom toegespits het op nouere samewerking met Staatsinstansies en waarin hy 'n begin gemaak het op die gebied van navorsing is geweldige vooruitgang gemaak deur 'n bekwame span. Diegene wat die Misstofbedryf ken en in sy geskiedenis betrokke was sal onthou dat daar in die verlede 'n sekere mate van wantroue was teenoor die misstofmaatskappye en seer sekerlik sou Staatsdepartemente nie met enkele maatskappye kon saamgewerk het op die gebied van voorligting en navorsing nie. Die Vereniging het dus reggekry wat individuele maatskappye nooit sou kon doen nie. Ek is oortuig dat die samewerking wat tot dusver bereik is nie alleenlik behou moet word nie maar dat ons alles in ons vermoë moet doen om dit verder uit te bou.

It is a known fact that the fertilizer usage in this country is considerably less than it should be and less than the Department itself estimates it ought to be. If cognisance is taken of the fertilizer applied to current crops in comparison to the plantfood removed by such crops — without even taking into consideration the increased food production required by the expanding population — it is obvious that

tremendous scope still exists for our efforts towards the main object of the Society, i.e. the better use of fertilizers. This will not be achieved by advertising or promoting individual products but will be achieved only by co-operation in the promotion of and research into the use of fertilizers on an industry basis. In this way the element of personal gain for individual products is eliminated thus ensuring that results achieved on an unbiased basis and in co-operation with the Department can be accepted without shadow of suspicion.

I must stress to members that our efforts in seeking co-operation with the Department have been enthusiastically received not only on a regional level but also at ministerial level where it has been welcomed and encouraged. This can only result in tremendous advantages accruing to agriculture in general and therefore also to you as members of the Fertilizer Society.

In conclusion I would like to thank my colleagues on the Management and Executive Committees and the representatives of member companies on the various sub-committees for their valuable time and efforts in promoting the work of the Society. I would also like to thank our Director and his staff for the very valuable services they have rendered to the Society, and therefore to its members, and for the fine co-operation they have given me during my term as chairman. It has been a pleasure working with them and I wish them all success for the future.