Webster's Unabridged Dictionary defines a fieldman as, "One who works in the field; a traveling representative of a business organization (as a man who negotiates with farmers for the raising of crops under contract for a food processing company); An investigator or advisor who works outdoors or away from the center of administration or activity (as a man who conducts educational programs for milk producers in an assigned territory)."

The last part of Webster's definition spells out an important responsibility for the dairy plant fieldman who works with procurement and quality improvement.

The five areas of a fieldman's responsibility that involve milk quality control and procurement may be indicated as follows:

1. His responsibility for the milk supply needs of the plant or organization he represents.
2. His responsibility for the quality control of milk as it is delivered from producers.
3. His responsibility to the Grade A enforcement agency.
4. His responsibility in developing and maintaining good public relations for the organization he represents as well as with the industry as a whole.
5. His responsibility in educational work cooperating and coordinating programs with other educational agencies.

The Fieldman and the Milk Supply

In many areas, maintaining an ample milk supply requires all of a fieldman's time. When any organization must obtain a large volume of milk in a minimum of time, procurement is of the utmost importance. So fieldmen, and perhaps other workers for the organization, become full-time procurement personnel.

But when a fieldman spends all his time procuring, the quality of milk obtained from newly acquired producers may be lower than desirable. If a fieldman works on the theory that volume is needed regardless of quality, the plant may well end up being degraded from Grade A marketing.

We often hear it said that, "A quality control fieldman cannot do both quality and procurement work." On the other hand, neither can a procurement fieldman maintain milk quality if he is not informed about quality requirements.

This brings us directly to the kind of people hired to do field work. Some fieldmen are capable of doing both quality and procurement work, although most find it difficult to do both jobs well. For this reason many of the larger organizations employ two types of men — one best suited for quality work and the other best suited for procurement. Smaller organizations must often rely on the quality control fieldmen to do both jobs in the field, regardless of the disadvantages.

In many medium or large-sized plants, organization is on a departmental basis. This makes the field service personnel responsible for volume and quality. In many cases, one person is appointed supervisor. When a dairy needs more volume, the field service supervisor can select persons qualified through past experience to carry out the procurement assignment.

When any organization finds it necessary to hire one man to do both procurement and quality control work, it should pay utmost attention to the man's qualifications.

The Fieldman and Quality

Many of the early fieldmen worked almost 100 per cent of their time on procurement, and in these cases sanitarians employed by regulatory organizations did most of the quality control field work. As the Grade A program grew, however, it was impossible for the sanitarians to carry out complete quality programs, so fieldmen were hired by dairies to help handle quality.

Remnants of this type of program — where the sanitarian is doing field work — are still in evidence in some areas of the United States. But the program has largely disappeared, mainly because the regulatory agencies could not support the cost of keeping sanitarians in the field.

The dairy industry itself has had to take on these follow-through field services using competent fieldmen. Mutual trust between regulatory agencies and industry requires that fieldmen have the same quality goals and enforcement standards for their organization that the sanitarians do. In areas where this type of cooperative program has been carried out, quality control work with producers has been very
successful. The quality control follow-through work with milk producers is now being done primarily by fieldmen. Fieldmen become the link between industry and milk producers and also between producers and the sanitarians.

A fieldman should seek all the services at his disposal to help him in his quality work. Milk haulers, especially those hauling bulk tank milk, have been brought into the quality control program with a great deal of success. This is a group that fieldmen can work with directly on a day-to-day basis.

THE FIELDMAN AND THE SANITARIAN

In order for fieldmen to carry out good quality control programs, it is necessary that they and sanitarians cooperate fully. Where this cooperation is lacking, distrust arises between regulatory agencies and industry — and confusion arises among producers.

Any differences between fieldmen and sanitarians must be settled in a conference or with an arbitrator before a successful quality control program can be carried to milk producers. If this is not done, producers become irate and Grade A programs lose prestige with both producers and the public.

Where serious differences exist, the fieldman and his sanitarian should consult an arbitrator, such as the state survey officer. In order to have harmony in interpretations of regulations, the fieldman should accompany the sanitarian and state survey officer when surveys are made on producer farms. This also helps the fieldman see weaknesses in his program.

It is the responsibility of the fieldman to make certain that producers coming onto the market are ready for inspection before he asks the sanitarian to grade the farms. Any time it is necessary for the sanitarian to make more than one visit to a farm, grading becomes a costly process. Penalties have been set up in some areas for farms that fail to pass on first grade inspection. For instance, a farm may not be reconsidered for at least a month. Where a fieldman is conscientiously doing his job, penalties are unnecessary.

Whenever a dairyman produces poor quality milk, the sanitarian should notify the fieldman, who should follow through with the producer until the situation is corrected.

THE FIELDMAN AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

With the keen competition that exists today between dairy plants and marketing organizations, public relations can mean success or failure for procurement and sanitation programs.

The dairy fieldman is responsible for developing and maintaining good public relations for the organization he represents. Most of his public relations work is directly with producers. The attitude of producers toward Grade A programs and the attitude of the community toward the dairy organization reflects the fieldman’s success as a public relations man.

Public relations is sometimes referred to as, “being just a good Joe and getting along well in the community.” This, of course, is only part of the story. Sometimes the fieldman must step forward with a program to improve public relations. It might be in the form of sponsoring some worthwhile community activity or perhaps making the company well known through dairy promotion programs in the community, such as June Dairy Month celebrations.

THE FIELDMAN AND EDUCATION

The last part of Webster’s definition of a fieldman stresses the importance of education. Webster described the fieldman as one who conducts education with milk producers.

The extent of carrying on an educational program varies greatly among different dairy plants and organizations. Within the larger organizations, “house organs” are published regularly and these give the fieldman an opportunity to write an educational column. Local newspapers will carry stories about producers or marketing that a fieldman can take advantage of to promote his educational program. Some dairy plants use advertisements regularly that carry articles about producers and the organization.

Meetings held by the fieldman for haulers and producers offer excellent opportunities for educational programs. In most organizations it is the responsibility of the fieldman to organize and conduct such programs. This is a profitable way to reach producers with a quality story that is carefully selected and timed.

OTHER COOPERATING AGENCIES

Many individuals and agencies can support the fieldman in his educational work. Some of these are the vocational agriculture instructor, the county extension agent, city and county health departments and local 4-H organizations.

Vocational agriculture instructors in local high schools teach courses to farm boys. In most schools these courses cover milk quality control programs. The vocational agriculture instructor is also an advisor to the local Future Farmers of America chapter, which has an activity each year called “The Dairy Products Contest.” The boys score milk for flavor and odor, grade sediment discs and head parts of milker units. Each state has a contest and the national contest is held each year at the National Dairy Cattle Congress. These contests offer excellent opportunities for cooperation between fieldmen and vocational agriculture departments in quality control education.
The county extension agent conducts educational programs for farmers and will aid the fieldman in setting up his educational programs. The agent is the local education arm of the state land grant university. The 4-H programs can also aid the fieldman, and vice-versa, in dairy education work. There are many local 4-H leaders who need help in these areas.

Ask yourself these questions:
1. Do I know the names of the vocational agriculture instructors in my area?
2. What subjects are offered by the vocational agriculture instructors which might aid my quality control work? Do their F.F.A. groups have a dairy products team each year?
3. Do I know my county extension agent?
4. What does he have in his program of work that will aid my quality control program?
5. Am I familiar with the local departments of health and other educational agencies? Do their programs concern my area?

SPECIAL FEATURE

OUR HERITAGE — 50 YEARS IN RESTROSPECT

The Third Decade 1931-1941

R. R. PALMER
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DETROIT, MICHIGAN

A name well-known to those active in the International during the forties, as well as others since that time, is that of Russell R. Palmer, two-year past-president of the Association who served as the chief executive in 1945 and 1946.

Palmer has devoted his life's work to milk quality and sanitation principally in the Detroit, Michigan area, although the effects of his work have not been confined to that area. He began his academic training at Michigan Agriculture College (now Michigan State University) where he was graduated with a B.S. in Agriculture. Following his four years of undergraduate study, he began on his Master's program which he earned in 1924.

Upon receiving his Master's degree, Russell, a Detroit native, began during the summer of 1924 working as a milk inspector with the Detroit Department of Health. In a matter of three years, he was promoted to the position he now holds, Head Health Inspector (Milk), Detroit Department of Health.

Besides having served two years as president of IAMFS, Palmer has also been president of the Michigan Sanitarians Association and is an active member in various other professional organizations. He has been a guest lecturer on milk control at Ohio State University, Wayne State University and Michigan State University.

The true international aspect of the Association, known in 1931 as the INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DAIRY AND MILK INSPECTORS, was again shown in this year with the meeting in Montreal, Canada, under the Presidency of A.R.B. Richmond of Canada.

At this time the annual question of eligibility for membership was thoroughly discussed and a decision reached to submit to the membership an amendment to the constitution to create two classes of membership; (a) active, those engaged in official inspection, experimental or control work; and (b), associate, those interested in the work but not officially engaged. This brought to a close the continual argument as to eligibility for membership, one group wanting a closed official group and others favoring expansion to include industry and other allied workers so as to utilize their experience and capabilities. The amendment, officially passed in 1932, provided the basis for the expansion of the Association during the following years.

During the early part of this decade, 1931 to 1941, the recession or depression was endured. Although a tightened dues payment policy with the dropping from the rolls of the association those in arrears resulted in losing some of the listed membership, the Association weathered this period and started its upward swing.

SUMMARY

In summary, the fieldman will continue to carry on his responsibilities in both quality and procurement. Some quality control fieldmen will be held responsible for procurement. The fieldman will continue to be held responsible for the entire field program including quality and volume. This will be one section under his control, and he will answer to management for quality in procurement.

An atmosphere of close cooperation should be characteristic of future relationships between the fieldman and the sanitarian. The fieldman will be doing more follow-up servicing to the Grade A program.

Public relations need to be interwoven into the entire program. The fieldman needs to promote an educational program for producers aimed at improving quality and keeping the producer informed. It is necessary to cooperate with other agencies in promoting a sound, beneficial program.