

"ORGANIC FARMING" IN CHINA

The grower must, therefore, exercise precise and exact control over *all* the pests that plague his crops all the time. How he can be expected to do this without agricultural chemicals is, of course, a point the "organic school" answers by maintaining that if the grower only used organic manures (no "hideous" chemical fertilizers), if he allowed the birds to eat the few, very few, insects that would deign to attack "organically grown" crops, if he would throw away his pesticides and behemoth monstrous spray rigs, if he would just go back to "nature" and become "organic," he would have no troubles with his crops at all. This is, in fact, quite true of course, but only for the reason that he would have no crops at all—e.g., China, which has tried to grow crops "organically" for five thousand years and lives on the edge of starvation to this very day.

The farmer is therefore caught between the rigid rules of product grade, quality and uniformity laid down by the marketing administrations, Federal and State, on the one hand, and increasingly stringent limitations on the use of agricultural chemicals on the other, with no sensible, constructive alternative offered, to relieve the encircling pressures.

There have been a number of reviews of the problem by competent committees and authorities, both Federal and State, in recent months. All have carefully considered the pros and cons of the relative value of the use of agricultural chemicals versus the alleged dangers to public health and wildlife conservation, and without exception these qualified groups have reported that food production and the nutritional living standards of Americans could not obtain if agricultural chemicals were abolished. Each group recognizes the potential hazards involved in the widespread use of certain pesticides but concedes the standard procedures worked out by Federal and State authorities in collaboration with industry are adequate and safe when such pesticides are employed in strict accord with approved label recommendations.

THE REAL PROBLEM

Unfortunately, most of these excellent reports are read mainly by technical agriculturists who are virtually in complete unanimity with one another as to the controlled and necessary use of agricultural chemicals. The real problem lies in bringing a sense of proportion and understanding to the general public on the necessary use of agricultural chemicals in the production of foodstuffs; in re-establishing public trust and confidence in the reliability and sincerity of agricultural research workers and administrative officials in the government departments, colleges, experiment stations and industry; and in convincing the consumer that the bright array of foodstuffs offered in the retail markets of America today is the