

Roles for the Horticultural Scientist in National Issues

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS¹

Edwin A. Crosby

National Canners Association, Washington DC 20036

Edwin A. Crosby was born on May 18, 1924 in Greenwich, Connecticut. He grew up in the section known as Riverside on Long Island Sound, attending grammar school in that section and graduating from Greenwich High School in 1942. He received his BS degree in Horticulture with High Distinction in Pomology from the University of Connecticut in 1948; MS in Pomology in 1950 and PhD in Plant Physiology in 1954 from the University of California, Davis. He served three years in the U.S. Naval Reserve during World War II, being released from active duty with the rank of Ensign in November 1945. Dr. Crosby joined the faculty of Rutgers University as Assistant Professor in Horticulture and Assistant Research Specialist in Pomology in the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station in July 1954, positions he held until joining the National Canners Association as Assistant Director of the Raw Products Research Bureau in 1956. In 1973 he was named Director of the newly-formed Agricultural and Environmental Affairs Division and appointed Vice President of the Association in January 1975.

Dr. Crosby's early work with NCA centered on the promotion of research on fruit and vegetable variety improvement, mechanical harvesting and handling, pest control, and seed quality as related to the production and acquisition of raw products for canning.



Edwin A. Crosby
President ASHS 1976-77

During recent years, his activities have shifted to federal legislative and regulatory matters affecting the production and acquisition of fruits and vegetables and the treatment or disposition of liquid and solid wastes generated in the production and processing of canned foods. A major responsibility has been representation of industry interests in

the regulation and use of pesticides in canning crop production. He has general management responsibility for the Association's activities in international trade, occupational safety and health, energy, statistics, and economics.

Dr. Crosby has been an active participant in the affairs of a number of scientific societies, agricultural organizations and allied industry groups to promote the broad interests of the canning industry in agricultural and environmental affairs. He was an advisor to the committee which organized the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology and has been a member of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of CAST since its organization in 1972.

Dr. Crosby has served the ASHS in numerous capacities since 1959 and was named a Fellow in 1968. Among his services have been Secretary to the Long-Range Evaluating Committee 1961-63; Chairman, Handling and Processing Section 1963-64; ASHS "Fellows" Committee 1964-65; Long Range Planning Committee 1968-69; Finance Committee 1967-74; Board Member-at-Large 1972-74; Building Committee 1971-74; ASHS Evaluation Task Force 1974-76; and National Center for American Horticulture Liaison Committee 1974 to date. He served as President-elect 1975-76; President 1976-77; and will be Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee for 1977-78.

It is a special privilege and honor for me to have this opportunity today to address you as the 68th president of our Society. When I left academia in February of 1956 to join the staff of the then Raw Products Research Bureau of the National Canners Association, I had little vision of what would lie ahead in working for a major segment of the food industry of the United States. The role I played then in promoting the interests of the canning industry by encouraging research on

problems associated with production, quality, harvesting, and the handling of fruits and vegetables for canning use was far different than the role I play today. My current function lies in attempting to protect and represent the interests of an industry and agriculture by fostering a better understanding of agricultural science and its contributions to the public welfare, by involvement in the development of certain laws and the regulations to implement them, and amendment of those laws where necessary. It is from this vantage point that I wish to speak to you about "roles for the horticultural scientist in national issues."

During the summer, you received a letter signed by G. F. Warren and me encouraging you to become an individual member of the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology, better known as CAST. These mailings elicited a number of responses from our membership, both pro and con, but it is a letter I received signed by three members of our Society, who shall remain nameless, which I would like to quote in part as background for discussion. "ASHS was established in 1903 for promotion of the science of horticulture. Where has it failed and why do we need another organization to do the thing for which ASHS is

¹American Society for Horticultural Science, Salt Lake City, Utah, October 13, 1977.

established?"

The founders of our Society 74 years ago were tuned to the needs of their time when they established our Society and identified its primary objective the promotion of the science of horticulture. That objective is still valid but programs and procedures to foster the objective have changed. The nature of the country and its laws have changed and the position of horticultural science, for that matter agricultural science, has changed in the minds of the public at large. The promotion of the science of horticulture through many years of the Society's history was limited largely to promotion of the science within the science by holding meetings for horticulturists and publishing the results of our research primarily for our own edification. However, the public, the Congress, state legislatures, and the agencies of the Federal and state governments do not read our *Journal, HortScience*, or attend our meetings. They do, however, purchase the products of the horticultural industry, appropriate the money which pays our salaries and supports our research, and establish the laws and regulations which govern whether the results of our research can be utilized to produce better, more abundant, new products of horticulture for public consumption.

Let's remember that the climate through time has changed and today "the public's right to know" requires, for the first time, that scientists and administrators justify and defend their research programs and activities to those outside the University or Company.

At the time the Society was founded and up until recent years, horticulturists could do their own thing confident that the public would support their endeavors and respect their achievements. In recent years, however, Congress, state legislatures, and the public at large have become increasingly concerned about the quality of agricultural research, the quality of our food supply, the use of chemicals (pesticides, fertilizers, and food additives) in the production and processing of their food. Some groups have even questioned whether agricultural research really serves the interests of consumers, suggesting instead that it serves only the interests of the agricultural industry and farmers. Some groups have gone so far as to suggest that public funds should not be used to support agricultural research since it benefits only special interests.

A great deal of environmental legislation has been passed by Congress since 1970 which has or will have a direct impact on agriculture in general and agricultural research specifically. We have not yet felt the full impact of the Federal Water Pollution Control

Act Amendments of 1972, the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act Amendments of that same year, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act passed in 1976, the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1970, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and the yet unknown energy legislation which undoubtedly will be passed by Congress before they adjourn this session. We must recognize that these laws and the regulations developed to implement them will affect us directly and the horticultural industry which your research supports. As an example, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 provide for the control of nonpoint source pollution and runoff from agricultural lands which can ultimately affect land use practices and where we produce fruits and vegetables, the use of agricultural chemicals, and the cultural and irrigation practices employed. It would take far more time than is allowed to detail the many significant impacts of the legislation mentioned above on your research programs and the ultimate application of your findings in commercial horticulture.

So what can we as a Society and as individuals do to protect the interests of horticulture as a science and industry? The answer is simply, *become involved*. The Society must extend itself into the real world that exists today and individually, with our peers in other sciences, build a better public understanding of not only horticultural research but all of agricultural research. CAST is one example of a forum for such a function. It is a collective body that offers opportunities for expression that for most matters exceed the capabilities of any one society alone. If there wasn't a CAST there would be some other body or means to accomplish the objective because the need exists and must be fulfilled.

We can support organizations which are endeavoring to speak out in the public sector on behalf of agricultural science. We can support changes in our Society to assure that it is prepared to meet your needs and those of the nation as we confront the challenges of the future.

Your Society has come of age in recognizing the need for change and developing the fortitude to make changes. The new concepts in structure which have led to the reorganization of ASHS have not come from any single individual but are the result of the collective action of concerned members unwilling to live in the past, but willing to devote their time, thoughts and energies to the future. There are ample reasons why horticulturists and the American Society for Horticultural

Science should take an active part and lead in the evolution of new concepts and programs to promote the welfare of horticulture in general and society as a whole.

Much credit should be given to past presidents John P. Mahlstedt and Alvin L. Kenworthy for their leadership and wisdom in participating in the creation of the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology which in the short span of five years has made its mark in the public sector, Congress, and those government agencies that regulate the horticultural industry and, in effect, even horticultural science.

Active participation in the affairs of organizations which promote public understanding of agricultural science is important to the welfare of everyone here, even though some may not have come to accept this fact. It is far easier to take the position that nothing can be done, we're too small to have an impact and influence, or "let George do it." If this attitude were widespread within our Society, the future destiny of our science, our profession, and the industry and public would be poorly served. Don't say you haven't got time, the interest or the ability, for there is a role for each of you to play whether it's writing your Congressman and Senators as a concerned citizen, speaking out at a reception, interdepartmental staff meeting, or service club meeting, serving on a CAST task force when asked to do so, or writing to the officers of your Society when you have something constructive to offer. All of you are experts in some field. Your expertise is a cherished gift which should not be taken lightly or used simply for self-gratification. It should be used constructively in the interest of your profession and the public you serve.

It was adequate in the past for our Society to simply serve the interests of its members; but today the Society must demonstrate that it serves the public interest or its newly acquired Internal Revenue Service classification is in jeopardy. It took the dogged determination and effort of certain members of your Society to see that we were reclassified 501 (c) (3) by IRS to take our rightful place among our sister agricultural science societies who have all been so classified for many years.

The reorganization of your Society will be fully implemented at the close of this meeting. What does it offer that is new and different from before? It provides the opportunity for any member of the Society interested in taking part in its affairs to do so. No longer will the President-elect have the responsibility and tremendous task of appointing special committees as if he was all-seeing and all-knowing of the interests and abilities of the mem-

bership. All members of the Society, whether they are engaged in research, education, extension work, or employed by industry, will have an equal opportunity to participate in its affairs and promote the broad interests of horticultural science for the benefit of us all.

This is a big step in the right direction, for as individuals we have a far greater role to play in telling the public at large our story and assuring that our future is not controlled or dictated by those less competent than we to make decisions and develop regulations governing our future and that of our industry. We can make our voice heard in Congress, state legislatures, and within our own universities to assure that the importance of horticulture to the well-being of all citizens is made known. Talking to ourselves may be fun and self-satisfying. Certainly such discussions and communications should not be discouraged, however, the important point is that we should not limit our efforts to such endeavors. In addition we must become involved in the national issues and decisions which will affect our future. The opportunity is there if we but take the time and make the effort. If you don't there will still be a few voices crying in the wilderness that is Congress and big government, but our voices will pale before those who seek a no-risk environment at any cost with little understanding of what their good intentions will mean in the world of reality.

Congress and the federal agencies are playgrounds for lawyers. The policies of most agencies are established by lawyers who interpret the laws, develop regulations, and see to their enforcement. They are to be admired for their ability but we must sometimes question their accomplishments when science is not accommodated or misinterpreted. What is frequently lacking in the scheme of government is adequate input from the scientific community to assure that what is set forth in law and regulation can be accom-

plished in practice. Many will listen if the facts are effectively presented and defended but the battle is a continuing one with the forces of science and reason frequently outnumbered. If only the concerned industry speaks, its arguments are discounted for presumed bias. We need a stronger voice from the public scientist if reason is to prevail. A number of organizations are raising that voice and beginning to be heard. But the job is a big one and greater concern and involvement of all scientists in the affairs of government is needed. There are "roles for the horticultural scientist in national issues," vital to the future of this country.

It has been a significant honor to serve as your president during the past fourteen months. I would like to believe that my election signifies a broader base of thinking about the office of President of the Society and not just recognition of Ed Crosby for some quality of accomplishment which attracted the attention of the members and led to his ultimate election. As the first president of the Society from the industrial sector, I hope it signifies a recognition by the members that scientists in industry are peers equally dedicated to uphold the honor and stature of our Society. I hope further that it sets a precedent that will be repeated in the future.

I cannot help but recall with some amusement a statement made to me by a former leader of the Society back in the early sixties that Ed Crosby was trying to turn the Society into a trade association. Dominated as the Society is and should be by professional horticultural scientists, he was giving me far more credit than I deserved and frankly misread my objectives. During the many years of my close involvement in the affairs of the Society through participation in its committees, the Board of Directors, and as an officer, I have tried to sell and promote the concept of better management, popularly elected officers, greater participation of Society members in its affairs

and a dues and fiscal policy to assure its lasting financial stability. The willingness of all of you to pay \$40 a year annual dues has led to an operating reserve in the Society which at the end of this year should total over \$266,000 and a building fund to support the construction of our new facility, which was approved by your Board of Directors at their meeting on Tuesday of this week, of over \$126,000. By joining with the American Society of Plant Physiologists, we will be able to construct a permanent headquarters facility at George Washington's River Farm in Mount Vernon, Virginia, without the need of a fund-raising program or incurring a mortgage. By joining with the ASPP in the construction and occupancy of a joint facility, many opportunities for sharing costs exist which can lead to reduced costs in conducting our Society affairs. I am extremely pleased that our building program which you approved in 1971 has come to the brink of reality. With reasonable luck and determination, we will move into our permanent headquarters facility next year in celebration of our 75th anniversary.

All of you should be justly proud of what has been accomplished and complimented for your willingness to take a chance on new ideas even though they may be unproven and untried. To hold to old ways and systems just because they are old and the way we have always done it, fearful of change and loss of identity, leads to stagnation and senescence. Although we have historically waited for other scientific societies to lead the way in hiring paid managing executives, building our own headquarters facility, and becoming involved in a broader spectrum of public service activities, in recent years we have been catching up and demonstrating the leadership which at one time lay dormant. I believe that Liberty Hyde Bailey and those who founded our society 74 years ago look down upon us today with approval and satisfaction at what has been done.