



JERRY LESTER  
Editor,  
*California Agriculture*

## Do we really believe in this ecology thing?

**I**F WE REALLY BELIEVE in today's ecology thing, then we must also realize that this is only the beginning of considerations that in the long run must go far beyond the present concerns about saving the Bay, the Coast, the redwoods, the Sierra, Lake Tahoe, the Delta, wildlife, or any of today's other popular "causes." We must think beyond today's feverish attempts to find quick cures for our air and water pollution problems . . . beyond today's political, social and economic philosophies . . . beyond attacking specific industries causing obvious pollution problems . . . and beyond attacking certain groups or agencies for doing too little or too much.

As individuals, we must become aware of our relationship and responsibility to our surroundings, and to our fellow man. And in becoming aware of many of these personal ecological considerations, we must be prepared to face some embarrassing and unpopular facts about our way of living.

We must understand that we millions of "individuals" making up our affluent society *are* the "ecological problem," and that the problem involves both human greed and sheer numbers of people. It is not a simple matter of "they" exploiting and destroying our environment, but involves "us" demanding bigger, better and newer things, or easier ways—usually under such worthy headings as "progress" or a "higher standard of living."

We must know that along with our increasing population (expected to double in California by the year 2000), must also come further limitations on individual freedoms affecting our environment. Some of these limitations can come voluntarily through education, but others must come through legislation. Our personal involvement in the direction of establishing these limitations is essential either way.

If we believe in land conservation, we must know that our highly productive valley lands are not replaceable, and must be saved from urban encroachment. Despite today's food surplus problems, we must realize that our entire productive

capacity will be needed in the future to help supply a critical world food shortage.

If we want quality food produced without waste in the quantity necessary for our increasing population, we must believe that some agricultural chemicals will continue to be needed. However, these materials—along with other chemicals in household use—must only be used with full consideration of the alternatives, and the risks to ourselves, our fellow man, and our environment.

If we really want clean air, we must realize that our basic air pollution problem today involves our desire for luxurious instant mobility . . . to do our own thing at our own time in a personal car that is twice as large, and many times more powerful than is needed. Despite the fact that we have one of the world's largest cities still operating without efficient public transportation we must believe that such systems are vital to our ecological future.

If we want a clean landscape and unpolluted water, we must become aware of our garbage and waste disposal problems. We must switch to bio-degradable, or re-cyclable materials. We must curtail our desire for competitive style changes, and our tolerance of built-in obsolescence. New methods for farm animal waste disposal must be found. Animal pet ownership will face severe restrictions in a more-populated world. Our boats, farms, cities, and industries must not continue to be sources of river and ocean pollution. Population demands for water will eventually require complete recycling, plus the development of all available sources.

We are, and will be involved in many research projects that will help in the preservation of a livable environment. But each of us, whether researcher, farmer, agribusinessman, or citizen, must also become involved personally, and politically in directing the changes that are to come in our way of life. And we must remember that in the last analysis, there is no purpose in saving the world's natural wealth and beauty, if we cannot also learn to save ourselves, and live in peace.