

Farmers Reacting to Unfair Criticism

TEDROWE Coulter was mad about what he had seen on television one morning not long ago. He had heard a liberal writer for Newsweek magazine named Jane Bryant Quinn belittle and criticize farmers.

"I'd like to debate that woman and straighten her out on the facts about farming," Coulter said. He is a Tonkawa wheat farmer and seed producer who is president of Oklahoma Wheat Growers Association.

Dale Minnick, executive director of the Oklahoma Wheat Commission, found it advisable to send out a news release a couple of weeks ago to deny claims that dry weather would cause food prices to rise. "Not true in the case of wheat products," Minnick said. "we have a four-year domestic supply of wheat in this nation right now."

Kenneth McFall, executive secretary of Oklahoma Farm Bureau, sent a copy of a recent article by George Reiger in Field and Stream magazine. Headlined "The Poisons We Eat," it asserted that DDT and PCB contamination was making it

dangerous to eat waterfowl and fish. The writer said the DDT contamination of a branch of the Tennessee river "will haunt people living there until well into the next century."

McFall also supplied a copy of a letter dated Aug. 11, addressed to Reiger by L.W. Tucker, Ph.D., president of the National Council for Environmental Balance Inc., Louisville, KY.

Tucker wrote Reiger "you have watched too much television or read too much of the trash put out by The New York Times or the Washington Post." He called the article "a mass of misinformation totally lacking in ethics or scientific objectivity."

Regarding DDT Tucker said "there is no single case on record of a single individual having sustained any significant health hazard throughout the years of its extensive use." Instead, he wrote, hundreds of millions of lives have been saved through control of the Anopheline mosquito.

J.D. Fleming, director of legislative services for Oklahoma Farmers Union, responded to an interview

with Tony Beaverson, executive director of Oklahoma Education Association, published Aug. 17 in the Tulsa World. Beaverson was quoted as saying "Groups right here, the Farm Bureau and the Farmers Union of Oklahoma want reading, writing, arithmetic and history in schools. But they don't want true history taught."

"We have no idea what prompted the comment, 'they don't want true history taught' " Fleming wrote the editor. "True history is exactly what we want taught."

Livestock organizations have been kept busy trying to put down erroneous information about the wholesomeness of meat in the diet and a campaign by "animal rights" advocates who seem to think birds and beasts should be treated as fellow human beings and not kept in confinement or used in scientific research.

A lot of individual farmers have reacted to criticism, too, by placing bumper stickers on their vehicles reading: "Don't bad mouth farmers with your mouth full."