



**Y**ou're a typical North American consumer picking up groceries in the supermarket. Which bread is low-priced, yet nutritious? Do those organically grown fruits and vegetables represent the best choices for your family's health? Are there other wonder foods? Do careful selections really matter? Will any random selections be okay? Does each of those 60 or so cereals on the endless shelves represent a sameness in safety and nutrition?

Food choices are traditionally impacted by concerns for price and nourishment. Most recently, there's a growing focus on food being safe or unsafe. And because of increased awareness of environmental issues, many shoppers have thought about whether or not certain products contain ingredients produced in harmony with nature.

This issue of *Better Crops with Plant Food* addresses topics of concern to the increasingly literate and involved consumers of North America. The Potash & Phosphate Institute (PPI) has joined with The Fertilizer Institute (TFI) to offer a closer look at modern agriculture's food and fiber production. Hopefully, with your help, we'll reach a wider audience than that composed of the publication's regular readers.

The articles featured in this special issue present straightforward information to assist in explaining the topics covered to individuals or groups that may have limited awareness of fertilizers and agriculture in general. These topics should interest all who care about keeping their bodies healthy—and the environment healthy. Our challenge to readers is to use the content of this issue to help others to: **Take a Closer Look!**

Kraig R. Naasz, President of TFI, observes: "The fertilizer industry is committed to helping farmers use its products with science-based practices in the production of healthy food. We're committed to be good neighbors in our communities, good partners with our customers, and good stewards of the environment in which we all live. This **Take a Closer Look** initiative will help the consumers agriculture serves by providing them with a greater appreciation of the critical role of fertilizers in food production."

Dr. David Dibb, President of PPI, comments: "We're pleased to join with TFI in helping the public better understand how plant nutrients enable today's farmers to produce high-yielding, high-quality crops. We invite those who work in our industry and the public we serve to **Take a Closer Look** at the vital role of modern production agriculture in providing the food and fiber needed by consumers in North America and other regions of the world."

The articles on the following pages will provide insights into North American food production and the management of organic as well as inorganic nutrients in producing a food supply that is among the safest and most abundant in the world. **BC**

