

Society Doesn't Appreciate Agriculture

How does the North American public view agriculture? What do people want from it?

Inexpensive food. They **get it** but don't realize it. A yard man charged \$1.00 to mow my lawn in the 1930s. Now it costs \$40. At that rate of increase, the dozen eggs I paid 30 cents for would cost me \$12 today.

Safe food. Unsafe food results from mishandling **after** it leaves the farm.

Environmental purity. Good farmers are kinder to the environment today than at any other time in history.

Farmers supply quality food at low prices, and are responsible stewards of soil and water resources. Yet, society doesn't understand farming and is sometimes critical of today's marvelous, high-tech agriculture.

The public will pay the price for items it considers essential. Consider the costs residents face for waste disposal in a major city, for example:

\$125 to landfill one ton of garbage
\$400 to landfill one ton of sewage sludge
\$900 to landfill one ton of incinerated sewage

And what does a farmer get for his corn—about \$110 per ton!

Are people more concerned about garbage than corn? Is corn too cheap? Do farmers get the income their skill and risks deserve? Does agriculture do a poor job of keeping the public informed?

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