

Truth or Fiction

"Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." John 8:32

But what IS the truth? In environmental issues we should present the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Almost no one deliberately tries to deceive the public, but often information is only **partial** truth—not established by carefully conducted research.

Our goal is a productive and sustainable agriculture—one that protects the environment and provides a safe and adequate food supply. Over the years, our colleges and official research agencies have developed the information that makes this possible. **They strive to give the world the whole truth.**

But it seems that some interest groups and some news media, in their zeal to spread the alarm about "life-threatening" chemicals—or about the wonders of "natural" products—succumb to partial truths that lead to unfounded beliefs.

A nationwide survey indicated that (a) most Americans believe pesticides are a more serious concern than cholesterol; (b) well over half of the public say they prefer organic fruits and vegetables; (c) 44 percent would pay a higher price to get them. What's behind such beliefs? The old story: "The fewer the facts, the stronger the opinions."

So scientists are faced with an added responsibility: to give both the public and the media all FACTS developed through years of painstaking research. If they don't, the current and widespread dissemination of partial truths could jeopardize the future world food supply.

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