
PRESIDENT'S
MESSAGE

Food for thought

...John M. Barry, Ph.D.

As I begin this year as your President, I want to thank you for the support you have given me.

1993 is going to be a memorable year for many reasons. We have a new President of the United States, we have new members in Congress and we have many new ideals about how this great country should progress. Included within these ideals is a new hope for economic progress and a heightened expectation that the public's health and the environment will receive the attention that it truly deserves.

NEHA also is entering a year that could prove to be a turning point in its existence. It wasn't many years ago that NEHA was struggling, an organization whose yearly activity seemed to be responding to issues as they arose. As a result of good leadership, we have seen our membership base grow, our annual budget top \$1 million, our credentials increase, the establishment of a Region 10 for national affiliates, and the *Journal of Environmental Health* go from six to 10 issues annually. NEHA as an organization is certainly on the move. However, as we continue to grow, we undoubtedly will experience growing pains — pains which should be addressed as symptomatic of future maladies, and which should be treated and cured.

Global political changes, general economic and environmental conditions as well as a maturation of the concept of regionalism now force us to rethink not only our concept of the nature of NEHA's business, but our vision for the future. NEHA's market is now the professional in environmental health *and* environmental protection. No other organization has laid claim to a similar market niche involving the generalist as well as the specialist, and no other organization has integrated local concerns with national and global awareness and interaction to the extent done by NEHA and its members.

Now is the time to examine the direction in which NEHA is going and to look at

all aspects of our Association's existence — especially the situation surrounding membership, financial constraints, and the evolution of environmental health activities. We must look at our Association as a business, one which addresses the needs of the membership as its first priority. Many for-profit and non-profit organizations define themselves by their full range of activities, but never understand the essence of what they do. Without this understanding, they don't know where to go or grow.

We must identify those products which give NEHA a competitive advantage, and once those products are identified, make full use of them. We must also move into the future by recognizing and effectively responding to those internal and external factors that impact on the Association.

We have already begun this process. At the 1992 AEC in Winnipeg, among other things;

- the Executive Committee adopted a new set of Policies and Procedures;
- the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors forwarded to the membership

a recommendation for Constitution and By-Laws revisions (which were approved through the spring ballot); and

- the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors began a revision of the Strategic Plan.

Each of these actions was designed to enable NEHA to better address the needs of its membership.

The key to success for the National Environmental Health Association is *quality*. Quality for NEHA is knowing who our customers are and being sensitive to their needs, following through on all commitments, meeting and exceeding our expectations within the context of achieving the Association's mission, and measuring results in order to continually improve them.

The National Environmental Health Association is an organization that cares and is perceived as caring about the professional growth, advancement, and support of the professional in environmental health and environmental protection for the purpose of providing a healthful environment for all.

