



Editorial

By Douglas Gillespie
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Editor's Note: Douglas Gillespie began his career at Natural Formulas in January, 1970, as a mixer in the protein department. His management skills helped quickly advance him to Production Manager. Before long, he was promoted to General Manager, then Vice President, then Executive Vice President. In July, 1979, he was appointed President of Natural Formulas. In addition to his duties as President of Natural Formulas, Douglas is Senior Vice President of Marketing, Manufacturing and Operations for the Neo-Life Company of America. The following text is taken from Douglas's speech at this year's La Cima del Monte. Although Douglas has been associated with Neo-Life for more than 10 years, this is our way of introducing this dedicated member of Neo-Life's management team to those of you who are unfamiliar with his concern for the quality of Neo-Life products.

This is my very first La Cima, and the first time I've had the opportunity and the pleasure to talk to such a large number of Distributors, so I am really excited about it. As Senior Vice President of Marketing, it's my goal and responsibility to ensure that Neo-Life produces absolutely the finest possible products for you to sell year after year. (Applause)

Last Sunday night when we arrived here at La Cima, Mr. Pickett gave us a talk. He spoke about enthusiasm. It hit home with me because I believe enthusiasm is one of our greatest assets. I have been with Neo-Life eleven years now, and I've never been more enthused about my life with Neo-Life than I am right now! Let me take a minute and tell you why.

About a year ago, I was in one of our regular product meetings with Mr. Pickett and other staff members. At these meetings, we compare Neo-Life's products to other products on the market, and analyze them from all aspects. On this particular day, the conversation turned to quality. It usually does! Mr. Pickett asked, "How do we know Neo-Life products are so good? We think we know they're good but tell me specifically why you think they're good." He wanted to hear exactly how we guaranteed that our nutritional products were the best. So, I ran down the list of things that we do to ensure our products are the best possible.

First, we buy the finest raw materials. The Purchasing Department has a list of stringent specifications for each and every item. We demand that our vendors send a protocol of assay on every lot of every material. When we receive that material, we immediately put it in our quarantine section. It stays in quarantine and is not released by Quality Control until they fully analyze it and verify that it meets all our specifications. It is then released to our Manufacturing Division. We've been look-

ing at a lot of three-letter initials this week (See *Successful Selling* in the August and September *Counselors*), and we've got some initials we use in the plant. Does anybody know what G.M.P. stands for? Good Manufacturing Practices! That's our code of ethics, or manufacturing "bible" for the employees in the plant. They're put together in a manual specifically listing every product, how we process it, what role each employee plays in processing, precautionary steps to take, how to weigh products—every aspect of their job.

Our Quality Control Department checks every step of production through to the finished product. Then come the final tests, and there are many of them in the Quality Control Laboratory before any product is released to our Distribution System for shipment to you.

Unfortunately, my answer didn't satisfy Mr. Pickett. He continued to question. "Well, do you know specifically what carriers are in each nutrient that you use? Do you know everything that's in the various materials? Are you sure the excipients used are in keeping with our philosophy? Are you really sure?" At this point, my confidence level started slipping. I wasn't used to this, because I know my business. As Mr. Mac Crossen said, I've been here a long time. I had better know by business. The meeting ended with Mr. Pickett giving us some instructions. He wanted manufacturing, operations and technical services to go back and recertify every single product that Neo-Life has in its line. He said, "Don't accept certification from our vendors. Don't accept our own Quality Control certification, but go back and recertify every single product." Well, let me tell you, that is a huge job. I don't know if you're aware of how many components make up each product, but there are a lot.

Nevertheless, we formed the Recertification Committee, made up of Dr.

Arthur Furst, Dr. Kenneth Hirsch, Steven Pickett and myself. Mr. Pickett brought something to our first meeting that would enable us to get this monumental job done. That was money! I'm not talking about a few extra thousand dollars for us to hire a team of lab technicians or commission another laboratory. He walked into that meeting and gave us a half-million-dollar capitalization budget! On top of that, he gave us extra budget to staff the expansion plans we had. Well, we used that money to build a new laboratory. Our new laboratory is the realization of a long-time personal goal of mine and everyone in the company. We always had a Quality Control Laboratory, but we were never able to test our products completely within our own facility. It's actually not one but three laboratories. It's made up of a microbiology laboratory, an analytical laboratory, and an instrument laboratory.

The parameters Mr. Pickett established for the Recertification Committee to follow were very simple and straightforward. The first thing he said to us was, "I want our products Back to Basics. It's not just a term or a slogan, but a fact I want to relate to our products. I want to know that the products are absolutely as natural, absolutely as nutritious as possible." You've already seen some examples of the Recertification Committee's success. One of them has been the new finseal Kwik-Meal wrapper to protect freshness better. We're looking at everything and anything to improve our products. Another one has been the revised Chelated Iron formula. We've got a new, better product. We have increased blackstrap molasses; we've got a different shape, which is easier to swallow, and it's a tablet now.

Secondly, we're bringing back Tox-Gard (Applause). That's Dr. Furst's favorite product, and he spent a lot of time reformulating it. It will be reintroduced within the next couple of months—watch for it!

We've talked about necessary changes in our products, we talked about the recertifying process of the Committee. These will be gradual changes that take place over the coming months and years, essential changes that ensure the products we make and you sell keep pace with our fast-paced technological advances. These changes will always be positive! They will never be just for the sake of change. (Applause) We'll never make what I call "gimmick" or superficial changes. They will always be valid, rational, nutritionally sound, good product decisions. The changes we make are going to be "What's Right." That's the basis for making these changes. We never make them just for cost consideration—that will never happen! (Applause) □