

stopped fertilizing corn the way they used to," Hamilton notes. This lowered the protein content, he thinks, yet feed formulation handbooks, geared to the least-cost use of cereals, did not take account of the change. Animals are less susceptible to mycotoxins when well fed. So normal *moniliforme* problems may have been magnified as corn growers and chicken raisers tried to cut margins too closely. The poultry industry is more efficient, more mechanized, and more sensitive to change than others. It noticed the problem first, but Hamilton says hog farmers in his state are also having mycotoxin problems.

Second, Hamilton thinks corn growers have cut back on the use of dryers because energy costs so much. It is a well-known fact, often ignored, that wet corn encourages mold. Corn purchase agreements generally specify a maximum moisture content. However, farmers apparently find it profitable to try to meet or beat the limit, because the corn weighs more when wet. Hamilton's crowning example of the ignorance that prevails on this subject is an article that appeared in the magazine *Successful Farming* a year ago. Entitled "Pumping the Value Back In," it recommends that farmers wet their corn to the limit, since

granaries do this in any case. It provides detailed tables for going about the task, set off by a vivid photograph of a hose pouring water onto a truckload of corn.

Hamilton is one of many who believe it is time to focus on some of the less known mycotoxins, to try to understand how and why they are created and learn what may be done to discourage their formation. He says a USDA official told him that because of worries about international grain prices, the big campaign to clean up *Fusarium* problems would have to wait until next year. "Well," Hamilton says, he has waited, and "This is next year."—ELIOT MARSHALL

## CEQ Staggering Under Latest Budget Cut

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has fallen on sorry times since the days when its halls were thronging with experts, its reports were abundant and much-heralded, and its chairmen had the ear of Presidents.

Now it is one council member short, its staff is down to 13, and it has been dealt a nasty budgetary blow. Congress recently voted to give the council \$700,000 for fiscal year 1984—even less than the Administration's request of \$913,000 and quite a tumble from the old high-water mark of \$3.2 million.

The House Appropriations Committee is particularly unhappy about CEQ. In its report it says that "not a single scientist or technical expert is on the permanent staff," which "renders the Council unqualified to offer substantive contributions or policy advice." The report portrays CEQ's accomplishments under this Administration as "modest at best" and observes that the "Council's major function seems to be acting as a spokesperson for the Administration's environmental agenda."

People from the House committee have lately been rummaging through the files at CEQ in the course of an investigation that includes looking at what the council does with its consolidated working fund, the money it gets from other agencies to do studies. This has prompted recurrence of rumors that certain Democrats are looking for a reason to "zero out" the budget, a prospect viewed with alarm by environmentalists since, once the office is dismantled, it will be extremely difficult to bring it back together when the political climate improves.

The CEQ is regarded as having performed an extremely valuable function in the past, issuing reports, monitoring the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), performing policy analysis, acting as a direct line to the President on environmental issues, and putting out an annual report that contained extensive independent analyses of environmental progress and problems.

Now, as far as many observers can see, all that CEQ does is put out tardy annual reports that are little more than justifications of government policies.

To be fair to the council, it does not have much to work with. After Reagan came in the staff was slashed from 42 to 13. Council member W. Ernst Minor has just left for the

Environmental Protection Agency, to be executive assistant to William D. Ruckelshaus. The only staff scientist has returned to California. Remaining with council chairman A. Alan Hill is Nancy A. Maloley, a former EPA employee who was brought over last year from the White House Office of Policy Development.

Hill admits to being "kind of upset" about the latest budget reduction, which means four or five more employees will have to go. Nonetheless, he feels CEQ has at least one major feat to its credit, namely fending off repeated attempts from within the Administration at emasculating NEPA. He also says that, contrary to the House report's criticisms, CEQ has been influential in arbitrating disputes (such as over the Dickey-Lincoln dam) and getting the environment considered in high-level decisions (the MX). "We're doing a lot more than is obvious," he says.

One of CEQ's activities has been housing the Interagency Task Force on Acid Precipitation, which came out with a report last month. Another will be a conference, arranged with EPA, on the country's long-term environmental research needs.

But Hill's main preoccupation has been the government's role in global resources policies and projections. He initiated the creation of the Global Issues Work Group which advises the Cabinet Council on Natural Resources and Environment. The effort was basically designed to pursue issues raised by the *Global 2000* report on the government's role in data gathering and global foresight. A scientist is at CEQ on detail from the Army Corps of Engineers to staff the effort. The eventual report will include results of a contract to the World Wildlife Fund which has been assigned to find out about data needs in the private sector. Hill is evidently proud of this effort: "We've moved from 'gut the goddamn *Global 2000*' to 'how do we fix the system,'" he says.

Nonetheless, alumni of the old CEQ and others find little to applaud. Washington consultant Dan Tunstall notes that CEQ is a much-admired model abroad—"there's not a country that I go to that doesn't want a CEQ." But, says one environmentalist, ours has been "downgraded, stepped on, kicked, and turned from a wonderful watchdog to a cringing little mutt."—CONSTANCE HOLDEN