

Perspective



Public Information Is a Factor in Progress

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I BELIEVE there is great safety in an informed public and have confidence in the wisdom of our people when they have all the facts presented to them. Therefore, much can be accomplished through public information.

The Department of Agriculture has as its objective "the development and the dissemination of information of value to farmers." That means research and education. It would be helpful if the technical and business press could emphasize the tremendous role of basic, fundamental research.

It is research which has been in a large measure the greatest factor in the advancement of agriculture.

Hybrid corn—think of the benefits from that in contrast to the benefits from government support prices on corn. Look to the great wheat industry. It hasn't been government supports, but better cultural practices, improved seed, better fertilizer, pesticides, and other agricultural chemicals, mechanization, and many other things that have really contributed in the long run to the prosperity of the farmer. I am sure they will continue to do so in the future. So research and education in agriculture work very closely with industry in these fields. And this is where we should place our emphasis.

Legislation, while important and oftentimes immediate in its effect, is only a part and sometimes the lesser part of the problem that faces agriculture. The real problem common to all farmers concerns cutting costs, increasing efficiency, and the building of markets. The path to success and prosperity in agriculture cannot be achieved by legislation—although it can help.

I think it is important to emphasize continually some of the basic concepts of our American way of life that have made us what we are as a nation. We should encourage our people to help themselves, discourage our people from leaning on an over-paternalistic federal government, encourage the farmers to produce for free markets and not for government bounty.

To emphasize the fact that no agricultural program must ever be manipulated to serve partisan political purposes, the real test of any program should be: How will it affect the character, the morale, and well-being of our people?

(Excerpts from remarks made before the Society of Business Magazine Editors, Washington, D. C., April 22, 1954)