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ARS's new deputy administrator has a background of success in federal-states relations



Erwin C. Elting

Deputy Administrator, Agricultural Research Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Born Carthage, Mo., Aug. 18, 1901; U. of Missouri, B.S., 1923, M.A., 1925; hon. D.Sc., Clemson, 1952; tester, Dairy Herd Improvement Ass'n, 1923-24; instructor, dairy department, U. of Mo., 1925-29; research staff, S. C. Agr. Expt. Sta., 1929-36; animal husbandry specialist and field inspector Office of Expt. Stas., USDA, 1936-46; asst. chief OES, 1946-48, assoc. chief 1948-53; deputy ass't administrator for expt. stas., ARS, 1953-55; member Amer. Dairy Science Assoc., Amer. Soc. Animal Production, AAAS, Sigma Xi.

RESEARCH by the U. S. Department of Agriculture is big—it never has been bigger—and it is very important to the welfare of the country. The individual states, too, do a great deal in their experiment stations: There are about 500 different physical locations where Federal and/or state research is being done. The size of the country, with its variations in soil, climate, and other factors, requires that both USDA and the states develop answers to farm problems in terms of conditions existing in particular areas, yet duplication of research effort must be avoided. The importance to which federal-states relationships have grown is indicated by the fact that last year the position of primary administrative responsibility for the USDA part in coordination of those research activities has been elevated from assistant administrator of the Agricultural Research Service to deputy administrator.

The man holding that responsible job is E. C. Elting, who has almost 20 years experience with the ARS, in what until recently was its Office of Experiment Stations. Deputy Administrator since Nov. 7, 1955, his job is to represent the ARS administrator in all relations with the state experiment stations and supervise two operating units of the service, the State Experiment Stations Division and the Territorial Experiment Stations Division.

Since passage of the Hatch Act of 1887, agricultural research at state experiment stations has been encouraged and supported by federal appropriations. Four additional authorizations have been passed since that time with similar purpose. Last year Congress consolidated all of this legislation into Public Law 352. Most of the appropriations under that law are of two types: grants for federal support of work in individual state experiment stations, or grants for work on regional

problems with the cooperation of two or more state stations. The amount and proportion of federal aid for such work is now increasing, after being at an almost constant total figure for several years. Recent figures are shown below.

The job of coordination at the various levels requires not only constant attention, but variation in approach according to the situation. The several autonomous groups, state universities and their experiment stations, regional committees representing state stations, federal stations over the U. S., and the central office and research station of the Agricultural Research Service all must be in cooperation without domination by any one. By means of specialists who visit the state stations regularly, regional committees, and the Association of Land Grant Colleges, active lines of communication are constantly maintained. At all these points there is contact with industry, bringing in another factor important to the efficacy of agricultural research.

Experiment Station Experience

Dr. Elting had 11 years experience in scientific research at state experiment stations. During that period he published several papers in the field of dairy science. He joined the federal service at a time when the need for leadership in developing federal-state coordination was generally recognized, but emphasis was mostly on recording and storage of acquired information. Since that time the emphasis has shifted to acceptance of responsibility in the improvement of over-all agricultural research through planning, coordination, and establishment of more closely knit relationships. First as a specialist, and later as assistant and associate chief of the Office of Experiment Stations, USDA, Dr. Elting was one of the leaders of this development. This newer philosophy of

federal grant administration became a part of federal policy with the enactment of the Research and Marketing Act of 1946.

Among his talents, of special importance to his work, have been ability to present to Congress the importance of the experiment station to agricultural research, attraction of scientific interest to agricultural problems, and development of the team approach. His philosophy that administrators should never forget that research workers are human beings has paid well in research results.

Dr. Elting has been a consistent advocate of close cooperation in agricultural research between publicly administered research agencies and industries related to agriculture. This has shown in his part in the formation under the National Research Council of the Agricultural Research Institute, of which he is a member of the governing board.

A farm background in addition to his university and experiment station research experience has given him a practical sense of agricultural needs. He has demonstrated his realization that the farmers depend on science to find answers. This has been clear in his recognition of the importance of scientific publication and the wide dissemination of research results through popular bulletins and the farm press.

Fiscal Year	Federal grants	Non-Federal	Ratio Non-Federal to Federal
1953	\$12,265,000	\$61,971,000	5.05
1954	13,223,000	67,205,000	5.08
1955	18,525,000	72,158,000	3.90
1956	24,500,000	77,000,000 (est.)	3.1 (est.)