

# Perspective...



## Research—A Common Cause

BYRON T. SHAW, Administrator, Agricultural Research Service, USDA

**I**T'S POSSIBLE that this decade will go down in history as the period when modern man came to recognize clearly the promise of research and what it requires of him.

During the past 15 years, science and technology have paid returns without parallel in history, in terms of new measures for human health and agricultural productivity. There have been revolutions in nearly every field of endeavor—in power and transportation and communications.

One of the spectacular advances has been in chemicals. There has been an enormous growth in chemicals for agricultural jobs. To say the number of basic products has increased from 50 in 1939 to more than 200 today gives no measure of their versatility or diversity. Today, we've observed striking developments in a line of products that have come to market in the past five years.

Along with this phenomenal growth in industry—in all of the major industries—has come competition of a unique kind. Competition not for markets—though this is certainly vigorous—but for brainpower.

The competition for scientists to develop new ideas for industry and for technically trained aides to help put these ideas into production is one of the

remarkable signs of our times. It shows up daily in the classified ads in our newspapers. It claims attention at every big scientific meeting. It's discussed in Congress. And it's the despair of every administrator who is trying to fill research jobs.

But along with this competition has come a development that's helping to offset the shortages and to make fuller use of our scientific talents. That is renewed emphasis on the sharing of knowledge and on cooperation in research.

It's become increasingly clear that a fragmented approach to technology is too slow and too costly. We lose too much in returns that would be possible if the problems were approached on a broader front.

And so, today, American industry is pouring investments into research. The money is going into great centers and into scattered locations at the colleges and private research institutes, and into cooperative endeavors with public agencies. . . .

If we're to realize the promise of research, we must keep the machinery of cooperation running smoothly. This means continued reappraisal and adjustments to meet changing needs.

*(Excerpted from a speech before the Pfizer Agricultural Research and Development Field Day, Terre Haute, Ind., May 22, 1956)*