

profile...

Forty years of teaching, research, and administration back decisions of the Provost of the University of California's Davis campus

IN 1914, when Stanley Freeborn was about to graduate from Massachusetts Agricultural College, the school got a letter from the University of California announcing openings for three entomologists at Berkeley. The opportunity looked good, the letter added, because entomology seemed about to go places in California. It looked good to Freeborn, too, and he turned down another job to join UC.

Since then California has indeed gone places, not only in entomology but in agriculture as a whole. Standing 15th among the states in harvested acreage of principal crops, it has led them all in annual gross income from farming in 21 of the 26 years up to and including 1955.

This leadership in agriculture owes much to the achievements of the University of California's college of agriculture and agricultural experiment station, with both of which Freeborn has served for more than 40 years as teacher, researcher, and administrator. He has filled policy-making jobs since 1937, serving since 1952, as provost of the Davis campus with its college of agriculture, college of letters and science, and school of veterinary medicine.

Close as Freeborn has been to education and research, however, he believes that they, combined with good soils and climate, are still not the entire answer to his state's agricultural prominence. Many of us used to fight the term "industrial agriculture," he says, preferring instead to think of farms as sociological units—"family farms." But that day is going fast, and Freeborn thinks California's position in agriculture is due in large part to its leadership in farm industrialization.

A Growing Demand

Advanced technology and industrialization have created a continuing and growing demand for trained people, not only in agriculture itself but in such pursuits as agricultural economics, sales, and finance. While the Davis curriculum has taught students the economics of farm operation in the past, it has never attempted to train them specifically for what might

be called "agricultural business." More and more, however, the staff at Davis has been pointing out to students the opportunities in that field, and a curriculum is presently in the making which will teach business administration with an agricultural flavor; a curriculum which Freeborn hopes will find a place in the 1957 budget.

Industrial support for Davis has been "terrific," he says, and it's growing all the time. About one third of the students are now getting some kind of financial help from scholarships, research grants, and the like. Nevertheless, some have criticized the school on the ground that its graduates are orientated too much toward research, are not close enough to the soil. Freeborn contests this criticism both philosophically and statistically.

Philosophically, he says, we believe students should be taught basic principles—"know why," not "know how." College years are too valuable, and too expensive for many, he argues, to be spent teaching anything but what the colleges are equipped uniquely to teach. There's no time, for instance, to teach repetitive skills like driving tractors and currying cows. Such things can be learned soon enough on the job, Freeborn points out.

Statistically, he refutes the "research orientation" criticism with a survey made recently of all presently employed people who earned the B.S. at Davis from 1923 to 1955. Of 1348 graduates who replied (59% of those queried), 80% are still in agriculture or related work and only 8% of these are in research. Production farming, on the other hand, claims 24%, and 22% are in "agricultural business."

Despite these arguments, the school has made one concession to the practical approach in the shape of a program started in 1948 under an endowment from the late Fred H. Bixby, a California rancher, farmer, and oil man. Under this plan, students work voluntarily (no academic credit) on 80 acres near Davis, learning to operate and repair farm machinery, build irrigation ditches, and similar skills. Also, the school places these students in the summer with successful, preferably diversified farms, where they are



Stanley B. Freeborn

Provost, Davis campus, University of California. Born Hudson, Mass., Dec. 11, 1891; Massachusetts Agricultural College, B.S., 1914, Ph.D., 1924, hon Sc.D., 1949; Instructor, entomology, University of California, 1914-18; Sanitary Corps, U. S. Army, 1917-19; Asst. Prof., entomology, UC, 1918-25; Assoc. Prof. (also in the Experiment Station), 1925-32; Chrmn., Division of Entomology, Davis campus, 1924-34; Prof. 1932-; Asst. to the Dean, College of Agriculture, 1935-37; Asst. Dean, Statewide College of Agriculture and Asst. Director, Agricultural Experiment Station, 1937-52; Director of Operations for Malaria Control in War Areas (USPH), 1942-45; member: Entomological Society of America, American Association of Economic Entomologists, American Society of Parasitologists, Pacific Slope Entomological Society, AAAS, Sigma Xi.

visited periodically for consultation by one of two men who work full time on the program.

Freeborn has taught entomology at the University of California continuously since 1914, excepting one sabbatical year and five years active duty with the Army and U. S. Public Health Service during the two World Wars. Today, he restricts himself to giving half of the beginning lectures in entomology at Davis, taking care, he says, to pick those parts of the course that haven't changed too much in the past few years.

In research, Freeborn worked for a number of years on veterinary parasites and developed a treatment for roundworms in chickens that was standard for some time. His major work, however, has been in mosquito taxonomy and control. As Director of Operations for Malaria Control in War Areas (USPH) during World War II, he had the pleasure of directing the program which, thanks to DDT, effectively eradicated that disease from this country and reduced it drastically in other parts of the world.