

A NEW CHALLENGE — AGRICULTURE

Robert A. Alexander, President
National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture
Middle Tennessee State University

Modern day Agriculture is of a dynamic nature: world population continues to increase at a very rapid rate; millions of people are hungry and dying because of a food shortage in many areas of the world, yet Agriculture in the United States is facing over-production, free-market battles, import-export confrontations and currently a very depressed livestock market. These are the "New Challenges" facing the Agricultural industry. Today most people take the food we eat for granted and fail to recognize all the factors involved in production, processing, and marketing of Agricultural products. Consequently interest in the study of Agriculture at Colleges and Universities had declined tremendously in the late 50's and early 60's. This trend has taken a sudden change; thus, enrollment in Agriculture and Agricultural-Related Services has increased during the last several years. Even larger increases are expected in the future.

In the March 15th (1973) issue of *Forbes* it was stated that Agriculture production in the United States will be the difference in the balance of payment we have suffered in the past due to a trade imbalance with foreign nations. In fact, "The New Elite" in Agriculture should forget about the image reflected in Grant Wood's famous painting, *American Gothic*. Today's Agriculturist (farmer-producer) requires a well-educated, independent businessman for whom management (book-keeping) is more important than knowing how to milk a cow.

Mr. Lindley Finch, Vice-President in charge of Agricultural matters for the Continental Illinois Bank states that "Only two percent of our people are actually making their living from Agriculture." That means that the American farmers of this Nation number only a very few million people; therefore, each of us, consumer, producer, educator and laborer, must be ready to face the Challenge ahead of us.

Those of us in the field of education must look at the present condition of Agri-

culture and develop new programs to meet the needs and demands being placed on Agriculture today. We can no longer continue to teach the same type courses that we have been teaching in most University programs for the past fifty years. New programs, new courses and new students are the key factors to improvements in Higher Education. Our students are from a varied background, now with many from the cities. Also we notice a large number of women in schools of Agriculture.

The National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture must take a leading role in the development of new programs. For example NACTA has been asked to work with the Yemen Arab Republic in a feasibility study in the field of Agriculture. NACTA has grown to the stature of importance in teaching Agriculture at all levels of Post Secondary Education. We no longer are considered to be a group of Non-Land Grant Universities but are a mixture of all segments of Higher Education working together for one cause, a better teaching program for Agriculture.

I am sure each of our respective schools are facing budget reductions and/or reduced new programs. It was recently reported that the proportion of the state budget going to Higher Education will be no greater in 1980 than it is now, regardless of whether we have boom times or bad, Republicans or Democrats in office. The shift toward occupational and career training will be stressed more than a liberal education. The NACTA Institutions responding most readily to this shift in goals will continue to have increased enrollment. Also the Institution which continues to add tenured faculty may find itself facing problems if student enrollment were to drop rapidly as its programs fail to respond to new and changing needs.

We at Middle Tennessee State University have developed new programs and courses as was mentioned this morning by Dr. Omri Rawlins. We expect these programs to continue to attract students. We

must not lose sight of the idea that we are competing for students between Institutions and between Departments and Schools within the same Institution. Higher Education is a very competitive field and Agriculture must become aggressive in recruiting students. Agriculture is the most essential as well as the largest industry in the United States; therefore, why should we be satisfied to let the better qualified students be encouraged to go into Medicine, Engineering, etc., when Agriculture can offer just as much if not more than any of these fields. NACTA must be the leader in this area. Our theme for this year is "Communication Between Agricultural Classroom and the Consumer." Let me stress on you again if we fail to communicate with the consumer we may well fail in being the strong Agricultural Nation we are now. These are times when those of us in Agriculture must stand together and stand tall in the saddle. For example as the United States' biggest export industry, Agriculture will have to earn enough to help pay for the explosive growth in oil imports. If all goes well Agriculture should be earning enough by 1980 to about balance the United States' oil import bill.

Let me challenge each of you to take a hard look at your chosen profession and if it is your main interest you must let people know the importance of Agriculture. As your elected President for the year 1974-75 I will devote my energy to seeing that NACTA is a National Organization: but, each of you will have to assist. We can't let the price squeeze, labor market, shortages and/or surplus reduce our overall concern for Agriculture.

We must press forward to be able to meet the Changes and "New Challenges" facing NACTA. I request and expect your assistance this year. Please feel free to make suggestions, and contact me as you desire.

Thanks again for the confidence the Organization has placed in me.

IOTA WORKSHOPS AT COLLEGES OF AGRICULTURE

Evaluation of Instruction and IOTA in Agriculture at Washington State University

Martin Waananen¹ and John A. Froseth²

Underlying reasons for involvement of the Washington State University (WSU) College of Agriculture in the IOTA (Instrument for the Observation of Teaching Activities) program can be traced back to events which occurred several years ago, even before development of the IOTA program for higher education.

Mandatory Student Evaluation Adopted

In 1962, the College of Agriculture Faculty decided, by a

61% affirmative vote to institute a program of mandatory student evaluation of instruction beginning in 1963. *This vote* was affirmed by department chairmen in 1965 even though a survey of the faculty at that time indicated that many favored voluntary participation in student evaluation of instruction as opposed to mandatory participation. The ground rules of the system were altered slightly in response to faculty comment, but the basic mandatory system continued in use until 1972.