

1591 This Week in *Science*

Editorial

1593 The Funding Crisis

Letters

1594 U.S.–China Collaboration: T. C. CAMPBELL; J. A. STORY AND C. M. WEAVER;
M. J. STEINBACH; EDITORS ■ Support for Systematics: R. T. O'GRADY AND
R. MOOI ■ EPA and Asbestos Removal: J. BERRY ■ British Radiation Study:
S. D. PHINNEY ■ Usefulness of the Human Genome Project: J. H. WEIS

News & Comment

1596 AIDS Meeting: Unexpected Progress
1598 A Question of "Fitness"
1599 Fraudbusters Back at NIH
1600 Tough Times Ahead for the Genome Project
Hubble Trouble
1601 Women Left Out at NIH
1602 Breast Cancer Therapies Weighed

Research News

1603 The Tide of Memory, Turning ■ Swimming for Dear Memory
1606 A Prism for Electrons ■ Circuit Boards: Heal Yourselves
1607 Solar Neutrino Deficit Confirmed?
Glasnost, Greenhouses, and Ice Ages
1608 Big Number Breakdown
1609 Closing the Gap Between Proteins and DNA
1610 *Briefings*: Extension Service for Industry? ■ Catch Some Rays ■ "Turing Test"
Prize ■ British Study Endorses Chiropractic ■ NASA Scrubs Martian Instrument
Package

Article

1612 Experiments with Separated Oscillatory Fields and Hydrogen Masers:
N. F. RAMSEY

Research Articles

1619 Comparison of Two Forms of Long-Term Potentiation in Single Hippocampal
Neurons: R. A. ZALUTSKY AND R. A. NICOLL
1625 Functional Domains and Upstream Activation Properties of Cloned Human
TATA Binding Protein: M. G. PETERSON, N. TANESE, B. F. PUGH, R. TJIAN

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COVER A view of the localized phytoalexin response of a single epidermal cell of *Sorghum bicolor* to the phytopathogen *Colletotrichum graminicola*. The response is characterized by the accumulation of phytoalexins in cytoplasmic inclusions that enlarge as they move toward the fungal infection structure, releasing their contents and restricting the growth of the pathogen. See page 1637. [Photograph by Ralph L. Nicholson]

Reports

- 1631 Influence of Environmental Quality on Pollen Competitive Ability in Wild Radish: H. J. YOUNG AND M. L. STANTON
- 1633 Light-Evoked Changes in the Interphotoreceptor Matrix: F. UEHARA, M. T. MATTHES, D. YASUMURA, M. M. LAVAIL
- 1637 Synthesis of Phytoalexins in Sorghum as a Site-Specific Response to Fungal Ingress: B. A. SNYDER AND R. L. NICHOLSON
- 1639 Human CD4 Binds Immunoglobulins: P. LENERT, D. KROON, H. SPIEGELBERG, E. S. GOLUB, M. ZANETTI
- 1643 Induction of Neonatal Tolerance to Mls^a Antigens by CD8⁺ T Cells: S. R. WEBB AND J. SPRENT
- 1646 Cloning of a Transcriptionally Active Human TATA Binding Factor: C. C. KAO, P. M. LIEBERMAN, M. C. SCHMIDT, Q. ZHOU, R. PEI, A. J. BERK
- 1650 A cDNA for a Protein That Interacts with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus Tat Transactivator: P. NELBOCK, P. J. DILLON, A. PERKINS, C. A. ROSEN
- 1653 Intracellular Calcium Release Mediated by Sphingosine Derivatives Generated in Cells: T. K. GHOSH, J. BIAN, D. L. GILL
- 1656 Mediation of Wound-Related Rous Sarcoma Virus Tumorigenesis by TGF- β : M. H. SIEWEKE, N. L. THOMPSON, M. B. SPORN, M. J. BISSELL
- 1660 PDGF-Induced Activation of Phospholipase C Is Not Required for Induction of DNA Synthesis: T. D. HILL, N. M. DEAN, L. J. MORDAN, A. F. LAU, M. Y. KANEMITSU, A. L. BOYNTON
- 1663 Endothelin Stimulation of Cytosolic Calcium and Gonadotropin Secretion in Anterior Pituitary Cells: S. S. STOJILKOVIĆ, F. MERELLI, T. IIDA, L. Z. KRSMANOVIĆ, K. J. CATT

Book Reviews

- 1667 Scale and Scope, reviewed by R. M. ABRAMS ■ Vision and the Emergence of Meaning, K. NELSON ■ Some Other Books of Interest ■ Books Received

Author Index to volume 248 is found on pages I-X
Information for Contributors is found on pages XI-XII

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flicting points of view, rather than by publishing only material

The Funding Crisis

A visit to laboratories across the land will expose the traveler to cries of alarm in regard to the scarcity of research funds. Too many good proposals are not being funded, too many good investigators are getting less money than they can manage fruitfully, and too many young investigators are having difficulty getting started. Yet cries of alarm will not translate into funding increases without action on the part of scientists.

The total budget for basic research is pitifully low. Federal funds for basic research went from \$9.5 billion in 1988 to \$10.5 billion in 1989 and to \$11.2 billion in 1990. These increases are a minor increment above inflation and certainly do not reflect the increased sophistication of modern research, the number of new investigators entering the field, or the needs of the nation (see J. Palca, *Science*, 4 May, p. 541, and 18 May, p. 803). A country that can squander hundreds of billions of dollars in a savings and loan scandal can afford to spend a great deal more of its total national product on providing the means to a better life and a more competitive nation. We are in great need of bacteria to clean up oil spills, higher temperature superconductors for industry, pharmaceuticals for the mentally ill, polymers strong enough to replace scarce metals, better remote sensing to monitor the environment, more efficient cars, better urban planning, and so forth.

The dramatic changes in eastern Europe mean that in the near future there will be even more competitors in the global economy, and any nation that falls behind in research and development will certainly fall behind in international competition. Thus the scientific community has two tasks. The first is to think into the future for areas in which science can make a contribution toward solving the problems that beset us, and the second is to educate or persuade legislators and the public to invest more money in research. It is not possible for a single central scientific organization to mastermind an overall strategy to carry out that mission. Moreover, Congress and the President will argue correctly that they are the final arbiters in any case. Each discipline must develop its own plans, looking to the future of the country, and then make convincing presentations of well thought-out scenarios. The emphasis must be on what we can do for you, not what you ought to do for us. As Don Langenberg, chancellor of the University of Illinois, said recently, "Nobody ever bought a Buick because they were sorry for General Motors."

What is important is to think big about "little science." There will undoubtedly be some megaprojects, but what the nation and the world really need is a major expansion of investigator-initiated science, because that historically has been the source of great discoveries that have opened new frontiers.

The strategy would be to identify an area, such as the environment, and provide the analysis that a good program requires research in ecology, toxicology, biodegradables, recycling, and microbiology. Furthermore, the analysis must provide convincing numbers that the scattered, inadequate funding in these disciplines needs a major coordinated expansion to, for example, the \$2-billion level. The implementation would be achieved by investigation-initiated research in the targeted areas. A similar effort is needed in population control since it is the population explosion that has created most of our current problems and can well undermine our future. Public transportation, auto efficiency, land use, mental health, and solar power are also among the research frontiers that need major expansion as the world comes to grips with a swelling population on a finite globe. The learned societies play a vital role in the advocacy for new monies, since they are the organizations that can make public information available, and they have the expertise to validate legitimate claims and exclude exaggerated ones. What they, and individual scientists, need to do is to develop currently sketchy outlines into well-designed programs and to advocate those programs for little science just as "big science" has done. In the future, however, learned societies should generate cost-benefit analyses of "big" and "little" science initiatives to place them in perspective.

The first priority is to find out how science can contribute to a better world. The second is to deduce how science should be organized to carry out the task. Asking for small increments to keep current programs going is desirable and needed, but conventional approaches may not be politically effective. We will need procedures to improve funding decisions within the infrastructure, but thinking big means a focus on the massive problems that need to be solved and seeing them as a challenge to create realistic pathways to a bright new future.—DANIEL E. KOSHLAND, JR.