AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH IN THE WAR AND AFTER^1

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Research workers in our State agricultural experiment stations, in the Federal Department of Agriculture, in universities and other research and educational institutions and in industry have faced a tremendous challenge during this war. That they are meeting it successfully is witnessed by the result—an unprecedented agricultural production, the development and utilization of new foods, drugs, fibers and strategic materials of many kinds; improved methods of distribution, packaging and processing of agricultural products; and increased knowledge of requirements for foods and other products needed in everyday living. These results have been made possible by utilizing the materials and knowledge accumulated through scientific research, as well as by effective organization for developing new knowledge to meet emergency needs. Scientists in all fields related to agriculture are playing an important part in this work and will play an even more important one in the future. Just as great a challenge awaits research in the post-war world as it faces now. By continuing to work together we shall be able to meet it.

But an overwhelming number of demands tumble upon each of us these days. In the complexity of details it is both difficult and important to keep the major problems clear and if possible see the general direction in which we are moving. So the question I wish to propound this morning is: What is the real value of the agricultural and related research work being carried on year after year in the form of thousands of big and little projects? We know that it is helpful to solve a lot of individual problems—but what do such solutions contribute as a whole for this nation and for mankind?

This question can be divided into three parts: What has agricultural research done in the past? What is it doing now? What can it do in the future?

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