

SCIENCE

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VOL. LV MARCH 24, 1922 No. 1421

<i>A National Policy for Agricultural Research:</i> PRESIDENT RAYMOND A. PEARSON.....	229
<i>The 1921 Expedition of the California Academy of Sciences to the Gulf of California:</i> DR. G. DALLAS HANNA.....	305
<i>Appeal of the American Chemical Society.....</i>	307
<i>Scientific Events:</i>	
<i>An Institute of Hygiene in London; Co-operation between the Government and Industry in Standardization; Competitive Exhibition of Photographs of Mammals; Annual Meetings of the American Geophysical Union and its Sections; Lectures on Light and the Constitution of Matter....</i>	310
<i>Scientific Notes and News.....</i>	312
<i>University and Educational Notes.....</i>	316
<i>Discussion and Correspondence:</i>	
<i>The Vote on the Evolution Bill in the Kentucky Legislature; PROFESSOR ARTHUR N. MILLER. Roteria; DR. FREDERICK PALMER, JR. The Value of Tillth in Agriculture: L. S. FRIERSON.....</i>	316
<i>Quotations:</i>	
<i>Proposed Legislation against the Teaching of Evolution</i>	318
<i>Scientific Books:</i>	
<i>Stefansson's The Friendly Arctic: PROFESSOR RAYMOND PEARL.....</i>	320
<i>Special Articles:</i>	
<i>Acoustic Topography in a Room: PROFESSOR CARL BARUS.....</i>	321
<i>Meetings of the Genetics Sections: PROFESSOR L. J. COLE.....</i>	326

A NATIONAL POLICY FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH¹

THERE should be a well-defined national policy in reference to agricultural research because such research relates to questions of fundamental national importance and the value of such research to the whole nation has been proved; furthermore, agricultural problems affecting the national welfare are becoming more and more numerous and complex and research must be enlarged to enable us to cope with them.

The policy should be to provide ample support for the investigation of problems relating to the decrease of cost of producing farm products and their more efficient distribution and marketing, the improvement of their quality, the conservation of soil fertility and the betterment of rural life.

The policy also should be to encourage cooperation of all public agencies engaged in agricultural research, and to provide for proper supervision,—enough of each to produce the highest possible efficiency and not so much as to hamper efficiency.

Sound arguments in plenty can be given to support these statements.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE AS A FUNDAMENTAL INDUSTRY

About forty per cent. of the population of our country is engaged in agriculture. There are nearly six and one-half million (6,448,366) farms, including nearly one billion (955,676,545) acres. Each farm is an independent unit, and the character of the homes on these farms has a profound influence on the character of our nation.

The value of farm lands is estimated to be over sixty-six billion dollars (\$66,334,309,556).

¹ Read at the President's Conference on the Agricultural Situation, Washington, D. C., January 26, 1922.

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