

# Editorial views by members of the University of California Division of Agricultural Sciences



## AGRICULTURE IN AN

**M**UCH IS SAID these days about *relevance*. There are people who might question the relevance of agricultural research when California's population is now 95 per cent urban. The same question might be asked about agricultural teaching or agricultural extension. The answer is that agricultural teaching, researching, and extension are just as relevant to urban California as they were to an older, rural California.

A large share of industry in California depending on and serving agriculture is itself largely urban. Packing plants are in cities. The trucking firms that move farm produce are urban, as are the drivers. Farm machinery manufacturers and the firms that sell the machines are urban. So are the chemical plants, and the refineries that provide farm fuel. Retail markets are urban. Jobs and profits are urban.

The University's Division of Agricultural Sciences helps solve problems that hinder the dependable flow of agricultural products to the consumer, extending those solutions to the people who must put them into practice, and training future specialists for careers in agriculturally related occupations—all relevant to the nutritional welfare and quality of living of urban people, and a basic part of the economic foundation of their lives.

Furthermore, some research and extension activities are related directly to urban people and urban problems. For example, studies of community development, and the interdependence of agricultural and nonagricultural resources, directly benefit urban people. The consumer sciences—nutrition, home and family management, and related areas—

draw no lines at city limits. Our 4-H youth programs cross city lines.

The terms rural and urban have become less clearly defined. We now use the term suburban to describe living areas outside of city limits. It is time for Californians, wherever they live, to recognize that agriculture is not only the oldest occupation of mankind but is one concerned with man's most basic need—food. Without an efficient and healthy agriculture, men would still be tied to the land in large numbers, without time to develop the amenities of life that now characterize our advanced standard of living. Recent generations in the United States do not realize, or have forgotten, the debt of gratitude they owe American agriculture for today's standard of living. They have forgotten or don't realize that agriculture's productiveness did not come by accident. It resulted from farsighted plans, made by concerned leaders nearly a century ago, to foster research and instruction in agricultural schools, colleges, and experiment stations. Too few realize that success can be sustained only by constant and continued input of new ideas, and new investments to support them.

All people have a vital stake in the present and future welfare of *their* agriculture. No person is without need of agriculture's products. "Keep agriculture strong and healthy," should be the battle cry of our nation. University agricultural research, the extension of that research, and agricultural teaching are fundamental to the realization of that battle cry. Public awareness of the importance of the battle cry and public support of programs designed to achieve this goal are absolute necessities. Agriculture *must* be an *urban* concern.