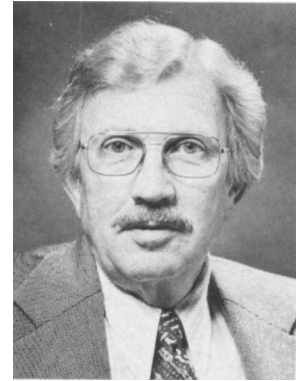


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## The Next Step

The first reactions to the Agricultural Issues Task Force report released last month are beginning to be heard, and it is apparent that the document produced few surprises for those in agriculture.

Comments to that effect were not unexpected. The report was not intended to provide answers and make recommendations. Its value lies in the fact that for the first time major policy issues facing agriculture in the years ahead are identified and assembled in one place, making clearer than ever that these problems interrelate with each other and must be approached systematically.

Small farm problems cannot be addressed without consideration of economic viability, land use, water availability, marketing opportunities, taxation policies, and governmental regulation as well as other issues identified in the report. Goals of recreational development in California's lands and waterways that appear to conflict with goals of agricultural development need to be assessed with the land and water resource issues clearly in mind. Thus, the report should serve as a reference point to be certain that actions are taken and policy decisions are made only after these factors have been fully analyzed.

The report may well be of greater value to those outside of agriculture than to those of us within because it shows unmistakably that some issues long thought to be solely in the domain of agriculture are in fact of concern to nearly everyone.

A question in nearly everyone's mind is what is going to be done now that the Task Force report is completed. What is the next step?

The report is but a beginning—a prologue of things to come. We intend to discuss the contents with a wide variety of interested groups both inside and outside of government. We need to get their assessment of what course of action to follow and what issues need to be addressed first. Furthermore, the report could serve as a milestone in the University's continuing role in agricul-

tural science and a source of stimulation for many.

Traditionally, agricultural research and extension programs at colleges and universities, ours included, have addressed themselves in large measure to the problems of production. Today more than ever before, policies, laws, and regulations are emerging at both state and national levels which affect the way agriculture will be conducted in this state and in our nation. We need analyses of policy alternatives and research in areas of economic and social goals that are or seem to be desirable to most people. We have been remarkably successful in attacking the technical problems and proposing successful solutions, but we have too little experience in dealing with emerging policy issues. Data gaps exist—gaps that need to be filled with objective and impartial study.

It is my intention to encourage an evolution of program development within the University's agricultural sciences unit so that we are regarded not only as a source of help to those needing technical assistance in agriculture but also as a source of help to the policy formulators who, in the long run, will control the fate of future agricultural production and supply.

Nearly everyone can agree that a healthy agriculture for both the participants and recipients of its activities is a desirable and worthwhile goal. We all want to be assured that everyone's equity is protected and appreciated. I believe the University's Division of Agricultural Sciences can perform its most useful service if it participates fully in understanding the issues, analyzes and researches them, and establishes a new relationship with those elements of society that are concerned about California's agricultural future.

I am under no illusion that the task ahead will be without difficulty. Policy issues are complex and inherently difficult, and provoke strong reactions. But those are not reasons to avoid the task. I look forward to this expanding relationship with optimism as well as enthusiasm.