Campbell Dedicates Control And Quarantine Facility

America still needs the kind of problem-solving cooperation that unlocked the bounty of American agriculture, Under Secretary of Agriculture J Phil Campbell said at the dedication of the Biological Control and Quarantine Facility in Gainesville, Florida on July 12

"The construction and operation of this facility--dedicated to seeking balance and harmony within the environment--is a good example of the kind of teamwork that can produce remarkable results," Mr. Campbell said "Built by the division of plant industry of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, with assistance from the Florida Department of Natural Resources, this facility will house the work of scientists from the University of Florida, and from state and federal government agencies. Even more agencies are involved in the funding of specific research projects.

"The American agricultural revolution could not have occurred without the cooperative development and rapid dissemination of pracitcal scientific information about farming. Without that miracle of teamwork, supported by historic legislation encouraging intergovernmental and interdisciplinary cooperation, American agriculture might still just be getting off the ground--22 percent of our civilian labor force would still be involved in agricultural production instead of 4.2 percent employed today.

"If we had not freed the bulk of our labor from the land, we would not have been able to create the industrial might that characterizes our country today, with all of the goods and services which serve as models for the rest of the world.

"By developing better ways to control insect pests and weeds, scientists here will be helping to attain vital national goals, that of maintaining agricultural productivity and of protecting the environment.

"In terms of the damage inflicted upon agricultural products, the threat that these pests represent is very real. It has, in fact, nullified to some extent many of the benefits that science has provided for farmers over the past several decades.

"Insects and weeds have been -- and still are -- preventing the full realization of benefits from improved production practices, new and improved plant varieties, mechanization, and fertilizers. Even with the newer control measures that have been developed, insects cause an average of 9 percent of annual losses in the production of major food crops in the United States.

"Even with controls, agricultural crop losses due to diseases, insects, nematodes, weeds and other pests reached an estimated $14.3 billion per year in the United States alone during the period from 1951 to 1960. Losses of forest and shade trees and damage to wood in storage are believed to reach more than $1 billion annually.

"It has been estimated that the productive efficiency of our farms would drop from 25 to 30 percent without adequate controls.

"This is not to say that chemicals alone provide the only effective means of control. While chemicals have a function in many control programs, they will probably prove most effective when used in conjunction with other control techniques.

"The other control techniques, mostly biological in nature, will be studied closely by scientists at this facility. Attention will be devoted to inventing and developing many methods of pest suppression, as well as to identifying the advantages and limitations of each method. Total systems of pest management are the goal.

"Agricultural scientists can be proud of their successes in imaginative control of pests. The screwworm eradication program, for example, is an outstanding example, demonstrating the feasibility of managing a pest population throughout its range, instead of simply on a field-by-field or farm-by-farm basis.

"This total population suppression approach has helped to reduce boll weevil damage in the rolling plains of Texas, in the Mississippi Delta, and in other areas. It alleviated tobacco damage caused by the tobacco hornworm and the tobacco budworm. It reduced the pink bollworm to minor pest status in Texas. And it totally eliminated the khapra beetle from the United States.