

# Executive says society limits farm output

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Society, not science nor technology, will determine the world's ability to feed its growing population, the nation's home economists were told here earlier this month.

Speaking at a meeting of the National Association of Vocational Home Economics Teachers, Philip G. Connell, Jr., said science can ac-

complish what society allows. However, the productivity of science in food production, he added, is directly related to regulation which determines what technology can be developed, and to incentives which offer the opportunity to profit from the money invested.

Connell, president,

Agricultural Division of American Cyanamid Company, cautioned that society would have to begin thinking in terms of numbers of meals as well as other environmental factors in making decisions. He cited recent action against pesticides and possible action against animal feed additives as examples of how regulation can affect the food supply.

“These and all regulatory actions are cumulative. In fact these regulatory actions, added together, can reduce the corn supply by enough calories to feed more than 85 million people each year,” he stated.

“While regulation is essential,” Connell added, “it can also be costly. We need to do more than pay lip service to benefit-risk considerations; we must recognize that the benefit we are talking about is food: its supply, quality and price.”

Technology already exists which, if fully utilized can greatly increase the world's food supply, the home economists were told. Even in the U.S., corn yields in 1975 averaged only 87 bushels per acre, while the better American farmers produced more than 150 bushels and record yields are higher than 300 bushels per acre.

“What can we accomplish if we only bring our own agriculture up to its present potential with existing technology, and effectively pass that technology to others?” Connell asked. “The answer is exciting.”

Future possibilities include increased feed efficiency in livestock, better pest control in crops, plants which use water and nutrients more efficiently, and a long list of other scientific possibilities, the agribusiness leader said.

However, food production is the result of a complex web,” he cautioned. “Most of the strands in that web are controlled by society, not by the agricultural community.”

Society must provide the farmer, American and foreign, with effective demand to increase his production, Connell told his audience. Such incentives must permit the farmer to see a possible benefit from his increased efforts. While widespread poverty is the primary limiting factor of food production, the speaker said, arbitrary and sudden embargoes or regulations, price ceilings and other political opportunism reduce effective demand and discourage production.

Society must also provide an economic climate which makes production capital available to the farmer. And, it must also provide, through education, an understanding of the food production complex and its requirements so that the farmer “is not a voice crying in the wilderness.”

“The research laboratories of agribusiness produce new technology, and farmers adopt that new technology,” Connell concluded, “in direct proportion to the incentives society provides.”

## Soil testing up

The number of soil tests being made at Penn State University Merkle Laboratory for the State of Pennsylvania is growing. This past year 64,530 samples were analyzed and recommendations made. This is up from 55,560 in 1974.

Greatest increases in sample numbers came from farm crop uses followed closely by home owner samples.

The most important

potential is on the farm and many farmers have not taken advantage of this important tool — soil testing. Soil testing is the most economic use of a \$3 investment on any top producing farm. Samples collected now while soil is not frozen. Sample kits are available at numerous fertilizer outlets and county Agricultural Extension Offices.

## Poultry groups certified

Fifty-two egg producer organizations have been certified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to participate in selecting an Egg Board to operate a possible Egg Research and Promotion Order.

out the provisions of an Egg Research and Promotion Order as authorized by the Egg Research and Consumer Information Act of 1974.

pertinent data as to the nature, size, stability, permanency, and functions of its operations.

Certified organizations will have to submit requests for the Egg Board. The results of the referendum are to be decided by the vote of the members.


The 18-member Egg Board would administer and carry

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service earlier had notified egg producer organizations, associations, or cooperatives that they should submit requests for certification by Nov. 21 if they wished to nominate Egg Board members and their alternates. In its certification request, each organization submitted

Organizations in this region which were certified include: Northeastern Poultry Producers Council, Fairless Hills, Pa.; Pennsylvania Farmers' Association, Camp Hill, Pa.; Pennsylvania Poultry Federation, Harrisburg, Pa.; Poultry and Egg Institute of America, Washington, D.C.; Producers' Pride Corporation, Worces-

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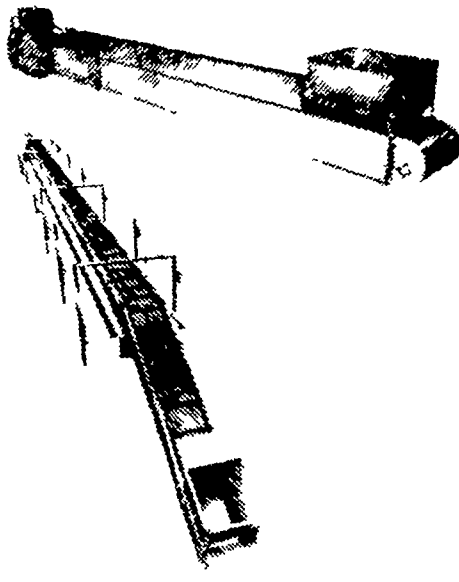
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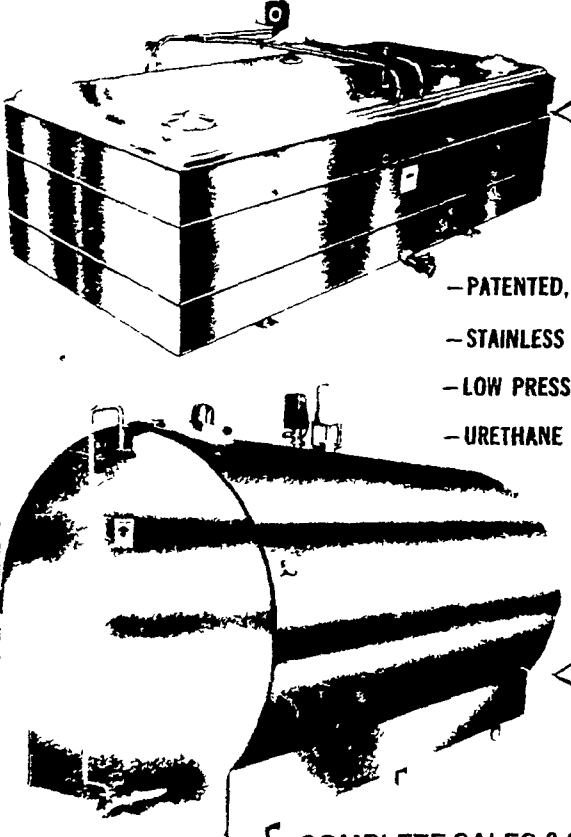
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