

Tweedy addresses ASAE 75th meeting

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Critical resource shortages, declining research and education funding, and public policies relating to agriculture are key issues facing agricultural engineers in the next decades, according to Robert H. Tweedy, president of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers, which celebrates its 75th Anniversary in 1982.

Tweedy was featured speaker March 4, before the Washington, D.C. Maryland Section, ASAE. His speech was entitled "Agricultural Engineering and Future Issues."

Competing interests for resources by various special interests will demand that new

public policies be established. This will impose new obligations on our profession," he said.

Land, water and energy use are three areas where clearly defined public policies will be needed in order to assure adequate amounts of each of these resources for agriculture, Tweedy said.

By being active during the formation of legislation affecting agriculture, engineers can be more efficient, Tweedy said. He emphasized that this participation must be balanced by a "politically neutral objectivity."

Public-funded agricultural research has served well to provide abundant, low-cost food in

the U.S., and the ample food supplies exported by this country, Tweedy said, yet public and private research funding for agriculture is declining.

"Agriculture is possibly the only federal research investment with a positive rate of return to the public. The 'rate of return' are so attractive that we should be increasing it, not reducing it," he said.

In addition, declining public funding for education threatens both the quantity and quality of engineering graduates, Tweedy contends.

A combination of high industry engineering salaries and low



Robert H. Tweedy

cern about mechanized agriculture as an issue that, left unresolved, could further reduce agricultural productivity and result in food costs rising.

"We must basically be pro-mechanization when it results in improved productivity and reduced food costs," he said. "I feel mechanization is usually appropriate when it reduces or eliminates the drudgery of farm labor."

Historically, productivity in agriculture has been high and has maintained annual increases above those in other industries, Tweedy said.

ASAE, a technical and professional society, has begun to address many of the complex issues facing agriculture. Tweedy said, but the major successes can only be achieved with the grass-roots support of all interests working within the agricultural sector.

ASAE is a non-profit, technical, scientific and educational society committed to improving agriculture through the application of engineering principles. Headquartered in St. Joseph, Michigan, the Society's membership includes 9,000 full members and 2,300 students in 50 states and 90 foreign countries.

graduate assistantships will reduce the number of PhDs in agricultural engineering, placing even greater strain on the teaching ranks.

"Further, the quality of engineering graduates is threatened in some schools because they lack modern engineering equipment and laboratories," he said.

Tweedy described public con-

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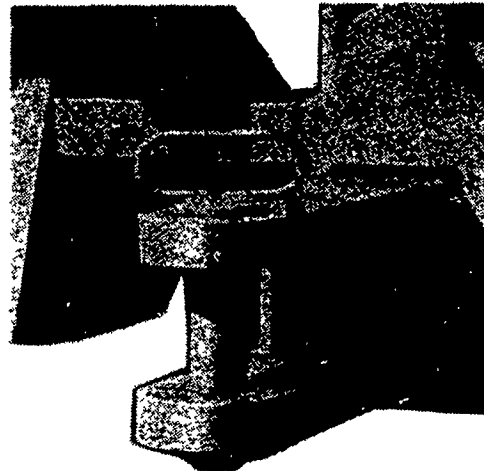
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