Future depends on 'coordinating' disciplines

ITHACA, NY - The bright future promised by scientific developments in agriculture will not be fully realized unless new technologies are coordinated with social and economic factors, a Cornell University scientist contends.

Norman R. Scott, director of research for the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell, says that agricutural research must become a broad based effort that coordinates a myriad of economic and technical factors.

"We've got to put together not only the production of a product but also a system to handle that product and a strategy to market it." Scott explained.

For example, someone who wishes to devleop an aquaculture business must know more than how to raise fish, Scott said.

"You have to know where the

fish are going to be sold, how they will be handled, and how they will be transported. You must bring together marketing, handling, processing, and transportation, he emphasized.

Scott, who is also a professor of agricultural engineering, made his comments during the recent Cornell Nutrition Conference for Feed Manufacturers in Syracuse, NY.

Emphasizing the need for coordination in agricultural production and research, Scott predicted that biotechnology, microcomputing, microelectronics, and robotics will play vital roles in future agricultural research.

For example, disease-resistant crops can be developed through conventional plant breeding methods or more exotic genetic engineering. Livestock can be made more productive by using

newly developed growth hormones. Energy production can be boosted by creating strains of bacteria that can turn agricultural waste into ethanol on an industrial scale.

Developments in microcomputing and robotics can lead to computer controlled fermentation. automated packaging, marketing research, and other improvements to agribusiness.

In dairy herds, electronics will

make it possible to achieve automated electronic identification of livestock, recording cows' milk yields, and detection of farm animals in estrus.

Coordination of technological developments in these fields with economic and social factors is essential for the continued health the rapidly changing of agricultural industry, Scott stressed

"Agriculture today is facing

some major issues such as increased interstate competition for markets, reduction in government supports, high interest rates, changing consumer trends, shrinking export markets, and changes in the country's population," Scott noted.

In order to cope with the future agriculture's effectively, researchers and industries must take those issues into account. Scott said.

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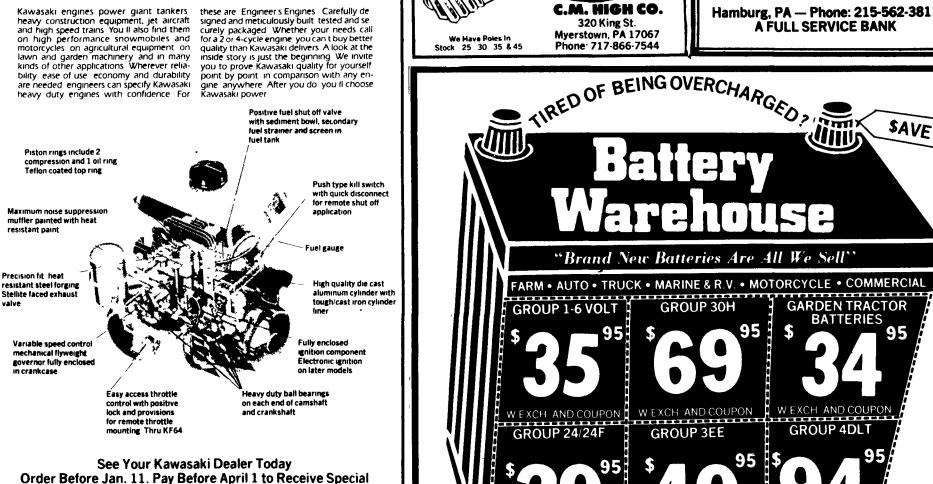
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