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Agricultural Research Institute

THE Agricultural Research Institute has been organized under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council at the request of approximately 100 scientists, representative of agricultural industries and research agencies, who met on December 10, 1951.

The intent of the ARI is to provide a mechanism for the collaboration of industrial, academic, and governmental scientists in promoting agricultural research and practices that will lead to the best long-time utilization of the nation's agricultural resources. The plan establishes the ARI as a fiscal organization of industries having a stake in agriculture, participating through designated technical representatives, and the Agricultural Board as a functional and deliberative body of scientists, appointed by the NRC to survey the scientific potentials of agriculture. The ARI will not control either the membership or the activities of the Agricultural Board but will aid in its activities and benefit from participation in its proceedings.

The Agricultural Board was established under the NRC in 1944 upon joint recommendation of the Division of Biology and Agriculture and of the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities. Although members serve without compensation, funds are required for meetings and for administrative facilities to effect the objectives of the board.

Several board committees in the field of animal science have sponsored the publication of useful reports, and committees dealing with the plant sciences have recently become affiliated with the board. One, the Committee on Preservation of Indigenous Strains of Maize in the Americas, is collaborating with the Technical Cooperation Administration and the Rockefeller Foundation. Another, the Committee on Plant and Crop Ecology, has subcommittees on aerobiology, agroclimatology, conservation, crop geography and vegetation analysis, plant crop yields, and plant diseases and pests.

The Agricultural Board, if properly implemented, can (1) mobilize the scientific talent of government, industry, and universities into committees competent to comprehend the broad problems of agriculture and the order in which they should be attacked; (2) collect facts and evaluate existing knowledge in relation to predictable results of present policies or practices in agriculture; (3) determine trends in current research and select neglected areas most likely to yield profitable long-range results; (4) disseminate knowledge and expedite the transition of research discoveries to applications in technological practice, governmental policies, or socioeconomic affairs.

The ARI, when fully activated, can help provide funds for the Agricultural Board; provide information, suggest pertinent problems, and keep the board alert to forces that determine the course of development of agricultural industry; disseminate the judgments, implications, and applications of the board's activities.

Funds for the ARI are proposed to accrue from annual dues and from other sources approved by its governing board and by the NAS-NRC. Contributing members would be drawn from corporations engaged in the production, processing, and marketing of agricultural products; in the manufacture of agricultural equipment, materials, or supplies; and in scientific or economic research related to agriculture. A class of non-dues-paying membership drawn from state and federal experiment stations, academic institutions, scientific societies, and other organizations or individuals engaged in agricultural activities directed to the public welfare is also contemplated.

The ARI is one new organization among many, and its success will depend on the need for this kind of service and the willingness of prospective members to participate in its affairs. It must be dedicated to the public welfare and to objective scientific judgment. Inquiries and expressions of interest may be addressed to the Agricultural Research Institute, 2101 Constitution Ave., Washington, D. C.

LEROY VORIS

National Research Council

SCIENCE, founded in 1880, is published each Friday by the American Association for the Advancement of Science at the Business Press, 10 McGovern Ave., Lancaster, Pa. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Lancaster, Pa., January 13, 1948, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at the special rate postage provided for in the Act of February 28, 1925, embodied in Paragraph (4-2) Section 34.40 P. L. & R. of 1948.

All correspondence should be sent to SCIENCE, 1515 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington 5, D. C. The AAAS assumes no responsibility for the safety of manuscripts or for the opinions expressed by contributors. Four weeks' notice

is required for change of address, and an address stencil label from a recent issue must be furnished. Claims for a missing number will be allowed only if received within 60 days from date of issue.

Annual subscriptions, \$7.50; single copies, \$.25; foreign postage, outside the Pan-American Union, \$1.00; Canadian postage, \$.50. Special rates to members of the AAAS.

The AAAS also publishes THE SCIENTIFIC MONTHLY. Subscription and advertising rates on request.

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