

Reactor—have already been identified by other groups that have turned in recommendations to the Grace commission, and they were not spelled out in the R & D report. The report deals mostly with planning and coordination of science and technology in the federal government, and the burden of its message is that the government is not very business-like.

Take, for example, strategic planning. The report faults the major science agencies for failing to have clearly defined goals and plans for meeting them. This, the report argues, makes it difficult for agencies to drop marginal projects and causes them to fund a lot of work that is not directly tied to their missions. For example, it criticizes the stated mission of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood institute—"to advance the national attack against diseases of the heart and blood vessels, the lungs and blood . . ."—as being too nebulous, but does not say how it should be reformulated to get the corporate stamp of approval. Proper strategic planning, estimates the task force, could save \$7.3 billion over 3 years.

How basic research fits into the task force's ideas about goals and strategic plans is not clear. It barely attempts to deal with basic research, except to note that the university-government relationship is strained by arguments about indirect costs. It recommends that a fixed indirect cost rate be adopted, thereby freeing the universities from the burden of detailed cost accounting and saving \$387 million over 3 years.

Although the Grace commission is philosophically in tune with the Administration, it is unlikely to have much of an impact on R & D—especially during an election year when the Administration is expected to cast itself as a friend of science and technology.

—COLIN NORMAN

Agrigenetics to Go Public

Agrigenetics Corporation, a leader in genetic engineering research and its application to agricultural products, is planning to go public. The company, the seventh largest seed company in the United States, intends to offer 2 million shares of common stock in hopes of raising \$37 million, accord-

ing to a preliminary prospectus filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on 9 November. Agrigenetics says it will use the money solely to pay off the company's short-term loans which amount to \$34 million and account for about half of Agrigenetics' total debt. The company intends to go public as soon as possible, pending SEC approval of its prospectus.

Agrigenetics, whose sales totaled \$88 million in fiscal 1983, apparently is in a financial squeeze because of accumulated short-term debt and the loss of net income over the past 2 years. The company had to take out loans primarily because of needed capital, investments in research facilities and, to some extent, the acquisition of other companies. At the same time, the company's FY 1983 sales dropped 12 percent from \$100.5 million during the previous year. The shortfall was caused by changes in the federally subsidized programs in agriculture and, as a result, the planting of hybrid corn and grain sorghum dropped. Seed sales for these two crops account for about 50 percent of the company's revenues.

The preliminary prospectus reveals that the current principal stockholders of Agrigenetics are two foreign companies. Atlantic Industries Limited, an affiliate of F. Hoffmann-La Roche & Company, owns 16 percent and the Rothschild Bank of Switzerland has a 13 percent share. The Kellogg Company, maker of cereal products, owns 6 percent of the stock. Agrigenetics has collaborative research agreements with F. Hoffmann-La Roche and Kellogg. Chairman of the board David Padwa, who founded the company in 1975, owns less than 2 percent of the stock. His salary is listed as \$115,000 plus benefits.

According to the prospectus, Agrigenetics and its subsidiary, Agrigenetics Research Corporation, spent \$19 million in research in FY 1983 and funded 200 scientists from universities and institutions in the United States and overseas. The company itself employs 45 Ph.D's. The bulk of the research is focused on the development of crops that are hardier and produce greater yields. The company currently produces seeds by conventional methods but is exploring genetic engineering techniques to achieve these goals and also to reduce production costs.—MARJORIE SUN

Kangaroos Defended

The Office of Endangered Species (OES) has been deluged with more than 100,000 pieces of mail since last March—the overwhelming bulk of it from women—protesting a proposal to remove kangaroos from the list of threatened species.

Kangaroos were originally listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act because Australia did not know how many there were and had no management plan for them. A ban on imports of kangaroo hides was lifted in 1981, and last fall Australia, claiming that its 10 million kangaroos were now being managed and accounted for, petitioned to have them de-listed.

According to OES official John Paradiso, the OES has postponed action, pending more information from Australia. Meanwhile, wildlife protection groups have been generating ferocious resistance from the public. Much of it has also been spurred by a television documentary called "Good-bye Joey," made by Australian conservation groups, which depicts brutal butchering and torture of kangaroos.

According to Paradiso, kangaroos are regarded as extreme pests by cattle ranchers, who have often taken matters into their own hands. However, he says the government no longer permits this and instead licenses hunters to shoot limited numbers. He says the Australians claim the TV film was contrived.

Conservationists say it is unrealistic to think the government can control illegal killing so long as there is a demand for the products. They say a severe drought has drastically reduced the population, estimated at 36 million in 1980, and that one species, the gray kangaroo, may be endangered. Paradiso says the animals should recover, being remarkably efficient reproducers.

Asked if recent leadership at Interior had had any effect on the OES, Paradiso said no. He said that work was more difficult under President Carter because of the variety of analyses that had to accompany every action. But this Administration does not have a driving interest in endangered species, so the OES is left to itself.

—CONSTANCE HOLDEN