INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF AGRONOMIC RESEARCH.¹

L. E. Call.²

The field of agronomy is still a new one in America. Carleton ³ in his presidential address before the first session of this society in 1908 said, "In this country the segregation of agronomic work from general agriculture began with the new century. Before the year 1900 the word agronomy was rarely heard or written." The field of activity of the early agronomist was scarcely less restricted than that occupied by the earlier men in general agriculture. He had far too many duties and too many lines of activity to attempt the necessary specialization that would enable him to pursue any carefully planned line of research. A decade ago the agronomy department in most educational institutions was charged with the teaching and the investigational work in agricultural engineering and farm management, as well as in soils and crops, and its small staff attempted to do the extension work in these fields as well. It was not uncommon in our smaller institutions to find the same man engaged in all of these lines of activity. In fact, fifteen years ago in some of the smaller departments the same man taught courses in general crops, soils, and farm machinery, and often did a limited amount of teaching in farm management and meteorology. In addition, some extension work, as well as experimental work, was attempted. Undoubtedly the greatest improvement in the efficiency of agronomic work in the past has come through gradual elimination of the diverse lines of activity of the agronomist. Today in most institutions the work of the department of agronomy is devoted

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² Professor of Agronomy, Kansas State Agricultural College, Manhattan, Kan.