THE RELATION OF THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM TO AGRONOMIC BETTERMENT

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The national agricultural program, developed at first under the Agricultural Adjustment Act and more recently under the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, has reached further into the field of agronomy than most of us probably anticipated. What effect will its impacts exert in the betterment of agronomy itself?

The essential features of the A.A.A. program are generally known. Its objectives and its plan of operation are likewise familiar. Plans for 1938 operations have been outlined and discussed on our program during the current sessions of the Society. There is no reason, therefore, to go into these details, or to consider other than some factors directly important to us as agronomists.

The attitude of many agronomists toward A.A.A. activities has been that of the "innocent bystander." This rôle implies some curiosity and more or less mild interest. It is also pertinent to recall that the "innocent bystander" sometimes gets shot. This latter is mentioned merely to emphasize the fact that any enterprise as broad in scope and as active as the A.A.A. sooner or later may strike any one of us in a very direct way. It also has happened before now, in spite of "peace pacts," "neutrality acts," or what have you, that the "innocent bystander" found himself in the thick of things before he realized what had happened.

On the other hand, in the beginning there was good reason for the agronomist to feel somewhat detached from A.A.A. activity. The original avowed purpose of the program was to correct inequalities in farm income and to place the farmer on a more secure economic basis. It dealt with surpluses, crop adjustment and control, prices, income, and other economic factors. Its leaders properly were economists. We as agronomists have been sure from the beginning that agriculture can-