INTEGRATING RESEARCH AND EXTENSION
IN AGRONOMY

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In every field of scientific endeavor epoch-making discoveries and rapid accumulations of knowledge have given rise to tremendous problems of fitting the segments and elements into unified and usable systems of action. A layman's casual inspection of the proceedings of various societies and organizations indicates that the topic of "integrating" must truly be a perennial that often buds but seldom discloses the wonders of the blossom! Nor would I lead you to anticipate herein any striking floral display of integration of research and extension in agronomy.

To some the integrating of research and extension in agronomy may be evident both as to desirability and as to methods of accomplishment. Yet any discussion of integration may easily become a series of trite, speculative, vaguely general phrases, and be neither factual nor quantitative. At the start may I note that although this discussion is limited to integration within the field of agronomy, I am quite aware of the tremendous responsibilities that confront research and particularly extension in the correlation of knowledge and activities from all fields that affect the farm family, its home, and its enterprises. Would we not be presumptuous to assume that we are qualified to solve these larger problems, unless we may first effect a greater degree of integration within our own field?

Pasteur gave us a simple but forceful expression of the significance of integrating research and extension when he wrote, "What really leads us forward is a few scientific discoveries and their applications." We are all familiar with the functions of the researcher in agronomy in making discoveries, organizing knowledge, and creating materials, but are we aware of the functions of the extension agronomist? The extension agronomist is the interpreter, the teacher, the correlator of those facts and processes that seemingly may be incorporated into scientific systems of soil management and crop production. His work is going through significant transitions. Formerly the extension agronomist was largely concerned with getting to more farmers the information and practices that were already in use by a few of the leading farmers, who may or may not have acquired the practices as a result of formal agronomic research. This type of extension will and should continue. But with the rapid development of knowledge and creation of new materials, the extension agronomist must concern himself with methods of transmitting these results of research quickly, effectively, and properly balanced for fitting into the agricultural...

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