Adjustments in Agriculture—A Challenge to Agronomy

III. Implications to Extension Education

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HOW does a Director of Extension and a former agronomist view the role of education in the changing scene of agriculture? These remarks will have little meaning to those not already fully aware of the changing scenes in agriculture. In view of the time allocated for this presentation, there is little opportunity to more than hastily mention some of these recent adjustments.

Farms are larger and farm populations lower. More farmers and their wives are working part-time off the farms than 20 years ago. Efficiency of agricultural production has increased markedly. Capital in the form of machinery, fertilizers and labor saving devices has been used to offset rising labor costs. Not more than one out of five young people stay on the farm in any of our states; we do not have a dwindling agriculture, but rather a strong agriculture as a segment of the national economy, if we consider the high proportion of nonfarm people who are engaged in allied agricultural industries. Standards of living for all people, including farmers, have gone up. Consumer preferences are drastically different from what they were a few years ago. Transportation and communication advances have contributed to suburban living. The needs of the individual and the role of the family in society have changed drastically.

The scope of educational programs needed to serve tomorrow’s agriculture and the responsibilities of educators...