THE American Society of Agronomy was founded in 1907. This is the 59th annual meeting. Through all the years, our interest has been focused on the improvement and production of food and fibre and it will continue to be so oriented. However, our horizons—as we increase, disseminate and use knowledge of crops and soils—have been expanded into many other fields such as natural resources, reclamation, pollution, and recreation. This is because a basic understanding of soils, plants, and water is so fundamental to the development of knowledge needed in these “other” fields.

As a responsible group of agronomists, crop scientists, and soil scientists, we must be alert to those subject matter and problem areas to which we can make contributions.

Important tasks face us. We must develop imaginative plans for the future. We must integrate the special capabilities of our profession with those of other sciences. We have to develop the manpower needed to meet our responsibilities.

Long Range Planning

The first task in any new undertaking is to make plans for it. In the past several years, innumerable studies have been completed that concern the present and future of agriculture and its related problems. Others are in progress. All of our universities and colleges dealing with agriculture, as well as other state and federal agencies, private organizations, and technical societies such as our own are deeply concerned with matters of research, education, extension, and agri-business as they affect the general welfare of our Nation. Some studies have been more comprehensive than others. Philosophies have been developed. Guidelines for the future have been proposed.

For illustrative purposes, I would like to mention three plans that have been developed recently and to refer to the implications they have for our Society and its members. The studies illustrate the breadth of the subject matter that is of concern to modern agronomy.

The Federal Council for Science and Technology established in 1963 a Committee on Water Resources Research to identify the technical needs and priorities for water research, to review the adequacy of current research and to recommend programs and measures to meet the needs. This committee, consisting of representatives from 10 departments of government, worked closely with a special and separate nine-member Panel on Water Resources of the Office of Science and Technology. The results of this study are in a 1966 report entitled, “A Ten-Year Program of Federal Water Resources Research” (Office of Science and Technology, Executive Office of the President). In this report, the water resources research performed by various federal agencies is delineated into 8 major categories and 44 subcategories, each with directional recommendations for research endeavors for the decade ending in 1976. The recommended programs include: the nature of water and the water cycle; water supply augmentation and conservation; water quantity, quality, and management; water resources planning; engineering works and manpower.

This national program, oriented to water as a natural resource, is, in many aspects, as vital to agriculture as it is to industry, municipalities, or recreation. The plans for implementation of this program provide for a multi-disciplinary attack on water problems. A segment of our profession is eminently qualified to undertake the research on certain of the problems specified and to contribute to the over-all solution. In fact, some are so engaged.

In 1966 a report now becoming familiar to all of us was released under the title “A National Program of Research for Agriculture.” This document provides a national inventory of agricultural research by State Experiment Stations, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and private industry. It gives guidelines for needed research in the next ten years.

This study was conducted by a U.S. Department of Agriculture-State Agricultural Experiment Station task force with the assistance of many individuals and groups. Some dozen or more state, federal, and private divisions and departments conducting agricultural research were represented, each with multi-membered committees. Ten goals for research to enable agriculture to fulfill its role in meeting overall national objectives were identified, and they were subdivided into 91 problem areas. The research needed to accomplish the goals and to build a scientific base for continued progress was designated. In addition to specifying the purposes of agricultural research and the commodity or resource involved, the study specified the fields of science that would be needed to accomplish the research. Manpower and facility needs