It is hard to find a contrasting viewpoint or differ much with Dr. Ruttan's paper (Ruttan, 1992). We mostly agree with it. Therefore, our comments concentrate on the need that scientists working in crop production have for understanding economic concepts. We argue that Mexico has need for advancement in conventional technology as a strategy for increasing crop production. However, we accept that any advancement in conventional technology, as currently sponsored by our government, will buy us only a little more time (10–15 yr) before our need to produce more food forces us to redirect the way research is organized in our country. Proper utilization of time during the present period is crucial because we must strengthen our economy and convince organizations of agriculture producers, or the private sector, to get more involved in the support and conduct of agricultural research.

We expect that in time, research will become more market oriented, and this is a very important point from which to start. Under the globalization of the world’s economies there will be increased competition, resulting in significant redefinition of the needs for, and importance, of crop and other agriculture commodities.

Irrigable land is around $4 \times 10^6$ ha. Thereof our arable land is cultivated under rainfed conditions. Due to measures resulting from the agrarian reform law that followed the Mexican Revolution of 1910, the average land holding per family is now 2.7 ha.

Cash grain production for 1991 totaled 20 x $10^6$ tons, meaning a very low average of 1.5 ton ha\(^{-1}\). Maize (Zea mays L.) production averages 1.7 tons ha\(^{-1}\), soybean (Glycine max Merrill) 2.0 tons ha\(^{-1}\), field beans (Phaseolus vulgaris) 0.5 tons ha\(^{-1}\), and milk 1365 L yr\(^{-1}\) (Calva, 1991).

Prior to 1991, we were investing about $1 billion (U.S.) annually for purchase of food from abroad. There are 12 million extremely poor and hungry people (FAO, 1991). Among the causes of this poverty are: i) high population growth of over 2.7%; ii) poor agricultural performance, at an annual increase rate of 2.2%; iii) little income for most farmers—a rural family earns about $700 per year; iv) huge foreign debt—this is a heavy burden for agriculture because it impedes fresh capital investments in credits, materials, etc.