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FOREWORD

All of us have readily accepted the changes in our intellectual, physical, biological, and technological environments for pursuing our teaching, extension, research, and service functions in Agronomy—crop science, soil science, and climatology. Indeed, we have been the instruments of these changes. On balance, we consider these changes as beneficial since they help us to fathom the mysteries of the elements with which we deal.

The political environment which nourishes our science and technology has changed drastically during the last generation. It has changed from one which was generally benign toward agriculture, where the decision-makers were mostly acquainted with the farm and rural America, to one in which the decision-makers no longer clearly understand our vast basic food production system and the resources it depends on. While not hostile, the environment is no longer spontaneously caring and generous.

We have not been as willing, or able, to perform effectively in the present political environments as we have in others. Perhaps we have not been convinced that we should take part in fashioning this environment, or even know how to go about it if we were. The 1978 ASA Special Session speakers addressed how and why there is a need for assuring that decision-makers in agriculture have sound bases to chart the course of agricultural science and technology.

This ASA special publication presents the two addresses which many of us heard. William F. Hueg, Jr., is a member of our society, and an agricultural administrator. He has been promoting agriculture in his state through his position on the National Science Board. He challenges us by asking, "Will You Inform the Decision Makers?" J. B. Cordaro sees the need from a different background. He is program manager of the Food Program Staff in the Office of Technology Assessment, an agency of Congress. He agrees that scientists should be involved as he tells us in, "The Scientists Role in the Making of Food Policy."

We think you will enjoy reading these two papers and that you will find "food" for thought and action in them. It is becoming increasingly evident that there is something agricultural scientists can do about the future of science in agriculture.

John Pesek, President
American Society of Agronomy