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To Keep in Touch

As the nation's number one agricultural state, California produces about 250 commodities, providing the United States with about 25% of its table foods. Just about everything grown anywhere in the United States is raised somewhere in California, and many of the commercial crops grown here are grown almost nowhere else. Because of this happy situation, the university's agricultural scientists have a greater number and diversity of problems to deal with than their counterparts in other states.

To cope with this diversity more effectively, the Division of Agricultural Sciences has developed a means for improving coordination of Division research with the nearly 30 organized agricultural groups that fund research programs under the California Marketing Act or other arrangements.

The new system has four parts:

- (1) A small Research Advisory Committee for each commodity, to work with the commodity organization in establishing research objectives and encouraging research programs to meet these objectives. The committees are composed of university and in some cases USDA scientists familiar with the research needs of their respective commodities and with the general research already underway for that commodity.
- (2) A liaison officer for each Research Advisory Committee, to serve as chairman of the committee and as a representative of the Division of Agricultural Sciences, in order to maintain contact between the commodity group and the scientists whose research is relevant to that commodity.
- (3) An administrative advisor for each Research Advisory Committee, appointed from among the current administrative officers in the Division, to

advise on policy and procedure and maintain contact between the university administration and the commodity group for that committee.

- (4) A general Policy Advisory Committee to determine university-industry research policy. Chaired by the vice president of agricultural sciences, this committee is composed of the associate directors of the Agricultural Experiment Station, the director of Cooperative Extension, the administrative advisors and liaison officers of the Research Advisory Committees, the chairmen and managers of Marketing Order Boards that fund agricultural research, and the chief of the Bureau of Marketing, Department of Food and Agriculture.

I have recently appointed all committee members, liaison officers and administrative advisors. A policy statement to guide them in their responsibilities has been written and distributed, and the first meeting of the Policy Advisory Committee will be scheduled soon.

Although this new mechanism involves many people and appears bureaucratic, there doesn't seem to be any easier means of establishing a coordinated effort to deal with so many and such varied agricultural problems. I have delegated the decision point regarding the actual research to be performed as close to the action as possible to insure that knowledgeable people are involved. Our goal is to maintain agriculture as a major and viable part of the economy of this state and to be certain that the flow of agricultural products into the hands of the consumer continues unimpeded. Our challenge is to improve our ability to identify and evaluate research needs and to provide the means to bring the university's statewide agricultural expertise to bear on those needs.