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ARS DECENTRALIZES

REORGANIZATION of the Agricultural Research Service last year increased the interest of farmers and cooperating institutions alike in the direction of its future efforts. The action was taken to strengthen our research in the same missions ARS has pursued since its creation. These include crops and livestock production, environmental improvement, pest management, marketing and utilization, food and nutrition, and rural development.

ARS was created in 1953 as the principle research agency of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Its administrative structure primarily was based on scientific disciplines.

The reorganization changed the structure to a simple line and staff arrangement. It also created four regional offices. Each is headed by a Deputy Administrator who reports directly to the Administrator. The regional offices are located in Berkeley, Calif., Peoria, Ill., New Orleans, La., and Beltsville, Md.

Moving administrative officials to the field strengthens ARS's potential for joint planning with State Experiment Stations, Extension and industry. It also gives the public easy access to the ARS planning process. A staff person at each ARS location has been designated to serve as the contact point for the public. The new staff structure makes it much easier to develop a team approach to research problems requiring expertise in two or more areas.

I am highly honored with the opportunity to serve as Western Region Deputy Administrator. I am pleased also that the Western Region Office is located in California. A native of California, I have maintained much more than an official interest in the State's agriculture during my years in the Midwest, at the Beltsville Research Center, and Washington, D.C.

The Western Region is responsible for administering all ARS work in 12 Western States including Hawaii. The Region is divided into eight areas. An Area Director administers all ARS research in his area. Three of the eight Area Centers in the Western Region are located in California—at Albany, Fresno, and Riverside.

Many factors influenced the selection of California as the location for the Western Region headquarters. Forty-six per cent of the ARS scientists in the Western Region are in California, and five major ARS facilities are here. The Berkeley location places the Western Region office close to the University's Agricultural Experiment Station and Extension Service headquarters.

Many of our staff are located on the several campuses of the University of California. We also have cooperative research with other educational institutions, other State and Federal agencies, and with private organizations.

Now what does all this mean to California and the West? Our concern is PEOPLE! Since good research raises more questions than it answers, ARS expects an ever-challenging future to meet present and emerging public needs. Resources are always limited in terms of needs that we all face. Meeting research needs of the future will demand prudent management of all public resources now available for research. The reorganization puts ARS in a position to move in greater concert with all who share our interests and responsibilities in servicing the agricultural industry in particular and the American public in general. It also puts ARS in position to serve these needs with the ever increasing effectiveness the public has come to expect and has the right to expect of a publically supported agency.