

'Nickels for Know-How' Will Provide Funds To Stamp Out Crop Diseases

(An explanation of the "Nickels for Know-How" program is presented herewith for the benefit of those not acquainted with the program which will be held on November 3.)

Agricultural research work in North Carolina is, at present, supported with funds from three main sources—Federal funds, State funds, and private contributions by individuals or industry.

A. Federal Funds.
By virtue of its large farm population as shown in the 1950 census, North Carolina will now receive an increased proportion of federal funds apportioned to states for agricultural research. But this increase, whatever it is, will be small compared to the funds needed. For instance, in the fiscal year ending June 30, 1950, federal funds accounted for only about a fourth of the total funds spent for agricultural research in North Carolina.

B. State Funds.
The 1951 Legislature made a generous appropriation for research as compared to appropriations three or more years ago. But, the State, with its obligations for the health, education and welfare of all its citizens, obviously cannot afford to provide funds for all these proposed research activities which are of direct benefit to only part of the population.

C. Private Contributions.
Private support of public institutions has long been an accepted means of financing worthy projects. The Agricultural Foundation, Inc., was organized at North Carolina State College in 1944 as an agent for soliciting and administering private funds donated to support research and teaching at the College. To date, the Foundation has amassed a fund which has made it possible to assemble a staff of top scientists. Without this help the College would doubtless have been unable to acquire or keep many of its most able men.

By the fall of 1950, it has become obvious to officials of the Agricultural Foundation that some new method of soliciting and collecting

private contributions for agricultural research must be found. The reasons behind this decision were: (a) Individual contributions are too expensive to solicit; (b) Solicitors found themselves going back to the same people time and time again—to bankers, industrialists, dealers, etc.—in other words, sources of contributions were too limited; and (c) Special contributions are too irregular as a source of funds. They vary with the level of prosperity, often meaning that funds are scarce at the exact time they are needed most.

Accordingly, Tom Pearson, president of the Agricultural Foundation, appointed a committee to investigate means of increasing the flow of individual contributions to support research. This committee, headed by E. Y. Floyd, made a full investigation of all possibilities, and drew up recommendations.

The recommendations were based on the following assumption:

1. That the fund-raising plan must reach a much wider proportion of the people than had been reached in the past.
2. That the plan must provide a continuous flow of funds into the Foundation treasury without the costly prospecting and soliciting that had been necessary in the past.
3. That it would be preferable to link the fund-raising plan with an educational program to acquaint the people with the work of the College and the services that it offers.

To achieve these objectives, the committee made the following proposal: First, secure from the Legislature an enabling act similar to that used in setting up Tobacco Associates. In accordance with this act, a referendum could then be held among farmers to see if they were in favor of a system of self-imposed contributions to be used in support of research.

The recommendation was accepted, and immediate steps were taken to secure enactment of an enabling act by the 1951 legislature. The act

changes the North Carolina Farm Bureau, the North Carolina Grange, and the Agricultural Foundation with setting up the machinery for and conducting the referendum.

Purport to this act, the designated parties agreed that perhaps the best means of collecting such contributions was in connection with the sale of farm produce or supplies. Here again, the model was Tobacco Associates, which is financed by a purchase levy collected at the time the tobacco is sold. It was agreed that of all farm purchases or sales in the State, the ones that affect all farmers most uniformly are the purchases of feed and fertilizer.

Hence, the proposal is for each farmer to contribute five cents per ton on all the feed and fertilizer that he buys. The contribution is to be included in the purchase price of the supplies, but either tags or placards will be used to inform the buyer that he is paying the added levy and describe what it is to be used for. This point-of-sale educational material will also inform the buyer that it is his right to request the return of collected levies if he so desires. The funds collected in this manner by the manufacturer will be remitted to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture along with regular feed and fertilizer inspection fees, and forwarded, in turn, to the Agricultural Foundation, Incorporated.

It is estimated that under this proposal the average farmer will contribute about 20 or 30 cents per year to the support of the agricultural research. When compared to the usual contributions for such purposes, this amount seems trivial. But with all farmers in the state contributing, the yearly return from such a system is expected to be about \$100,000.

November 3, 1951 has been set as the date for the statewide referendum concerning this proposal. Polling places will be set up in every community. In most cases, these polling places will be the same as those used in P.M.A. committeeman elections. Every person engaged in the production of farm commodities using feed and/or fertilizer will be eligible to vote, including the wives or husbands of such individuals.

Some possible questions regarding this proposal:

Question: Why should I pay extra for the support of agricultural research work in North Carolina when I am already paying for it through my regular taxes?

Answer: Because you, the farmer, will benefit most from the results of agricultural research. When the restaurant owners or bankers of North Carolina want to work together toward common objectives, they band together in an association, with each member paying his proportionate share of the expense. Such will be the case with supporting agricultural research. As soon from the preceding discussion, increasing our research effort is a worthy goal. Federal and State funds are already committed to the fullest extent possible. Further increases must come from those primarily interested—in this case the farmers. The proposed referendum is your opportunity to band together with other farmers of North Carolina and work toward a common goal.

Question: Will not the subscription of private funds for this purpose tend to discourage or reduce Federal and State appropriations?

Answer: No. The University of California is one of the most richly endowed institutions in the nation. Yet, President Robert G. Sproul of California said recently that the most valuable results of private contributions to that institution has been the added State support which has followed. A brief look into the psychology of this question may be reassuring. Isn't it logical that a state legislator will feel more disposed toward helping a group which has shown interest enough to help itself? Wouldn't farmer representatives have a stronger talking point if they were able to go to a legislator and say, "We have made this sizable contribution to agricultural research on our own. But we are subscribed to the limit. We need more help from public funds."

Question: Isn't this just another case of surrendering some of our freedom to big government?

Answer: No. The ballot box is the highest expression of freedom. For this system to continue, even if at first approved, it must be approved every three years at the polls. If you find out you don't like it, you can vote it out. Furthermore, if a majority of the farmers approve it and you are not willing to abide by the majority, you may request and get a refund of every penny you have contributed. In fact, this proposal is a step toward greater freedom—freedom from the devastating attacks of insects, weeds and diseases, freedom from the drudgery of too much hand labor, freedom from "poor" housing, and low incomes.

Question: Isn't this just "a foot in the door"? How do I know but what you'll raise this levy from five to ten or even 25 cents per ton once it's approved?

Answer: You will pay only the amount that you approve in the referendum—and no more. If the benefits from this program are great enough, you yourself and other farmers will determine any future change in contributions. But before it can be changed, it must be submitted to all farmers of the State for their approval.

Some Obvious Advantages—Of This Proposal

1. It is a fair and equitable method of apportioning the costs of added research to all farmers. Large farmers will pay more to support this program because they will be buying more fertilizer and feed.

2. The proposed contribution is small enough that it will impose no burden on anyone. It has been estimated that the average farmer will contribute from 20 to 30 cents a year. Only an exceptionally large operator could have an annual contribution of \$1.00 or more.

3. It is democratic. No one will contribute a penny until it has been submitted to a popular vote and approved by a two-thirds majority of those voting.

4. It will provide a continuous flow of funds at no great expense of collecting.


5. It will provide an opportunity—in fact an obligation—to acquaint all farmers with work of the Department Station, the benefits and the services it offers. Not only at the time of the referendum, but each time the farmer buys feed or fertilizer, he will be reminded of the purpose and functions of research. This program would be

worthwhile in itself if only to acquaint farmers with the latest and best farm practices available for their use.

6. It is voluntary. Anyone who wishes may get a refund of money he pays in, if he so desires.

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