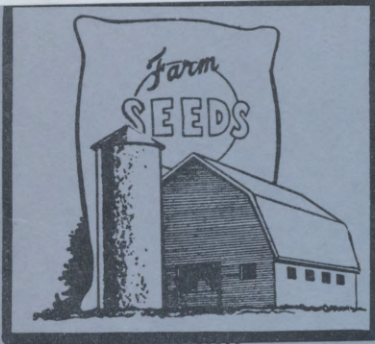


# Minnesota Retail Dealer Conferences



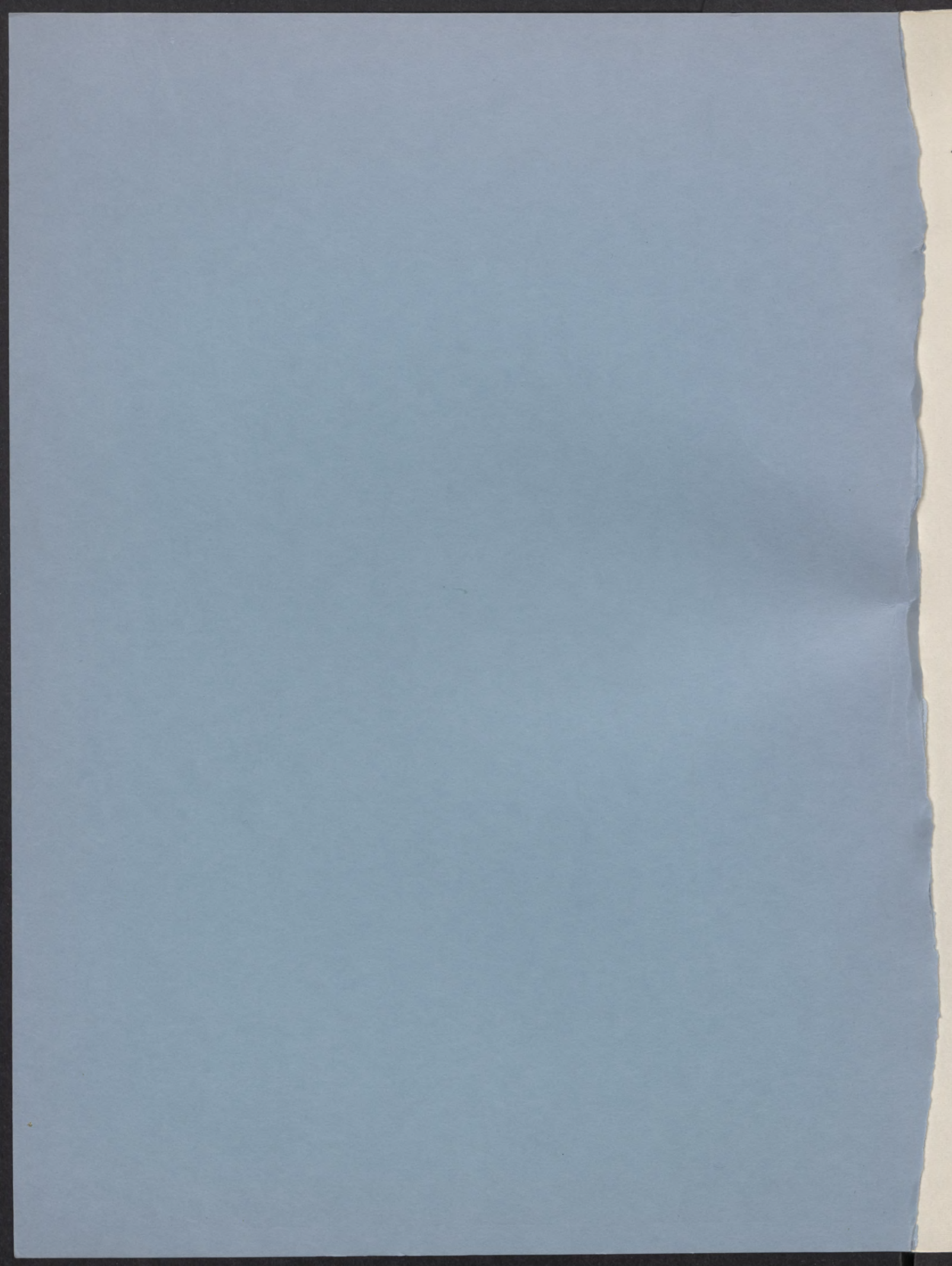
- Seed
- Fertilizer
- Agricultural Chemicals

**1963**



conducted by

**MINNESOTA EXTENSION SPECIALISTS in  
SOILS, AGRONOMY, PLANT PATHOLOGY and ENTOMOLOGY**



January 1963

Dear Cooperator

You have evidenced a real interest in the subject matter presented today by taking time from your busy schedule to attend. For this reason, we value your opinions and invite your constructive criticism.

We are genuinely interested in improving the content and quality of this meeting series. Because we don't "see ourselves as others do," we need your help. Won't you please complete and return the following questionnaire at your early convenience? No need to sign it unless you want to.

Thanks for your help and interest!

Sincerely

*Merle V. Halverson*

Merle V. Halverson for  
Extension Specialists in Crop Production

MVH:mls

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. I am attending the Retail Dealer Meeting in \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of town)
2. I have \_\_\_\_\_ have not \_\_\_\_\_ attended previous Retail Dealer Meetings.
3. I deal in seed \_\_\_\_\_ fertilizer \_\_\_\_\_ herbicides  
\_\_\_\_\_ insecticides \_\_\_\_\_ fungicides  
\_\_\_\_\_. Of these, my greatest gross dollar volume comes from \_\_\_\_\_.

4. Having attended previous meetings, I find the Handbook useful \_\_\_\_\_  
excess baggage \_\_\_\_\_. I refer to it seldom \_\_\_\_\_  
occasionally \_\_\_\_\_ frequently \_\_\_\_\_. It could  
be improved by \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Another year I would prefer an afternoon \_\_\_\_\_ evening \_\_\_\_\_  
meeting in \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of town)
6. The subject I would like most to see written up in next year's Handbook  
is \_\_\_\_\_.
7. My main reason for coming was to hear the presentations on (a) plant  
diseases \_\_\_\_\_ (b) soils and fertilizers \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) insect control \_\_\_\_\_ (d) varieties and weed con-  
trol \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The part I liked least about this year's program was (lay it on) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
This could be improved by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
9. The reason more dealers don't come to these meetings is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
10. I would \_\_\_\_\_ would not \_\_\_\_\_ prefer an all day session on  
\_\_\_\_\_, instead of a "once over lightly"  
(name of subject)  
treatment of several subject matter fields.
11. The recent Dealer Meetings should be stopped \_\_\_\_\_ continued  
\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
12. I have the following additional comments:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## WHY DO WE NEED MORE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH?

W. M. Myers, Head  
Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics  
University of Minnesota

Because of apparently troublesome surpluses of several agricultural commodities, the question, "Why do we need more agricultural Research" is being asked with increasing frequency. It is asked by the man of the street, the urban dweller who has little knowledge and less concern about the problems of agriculture, by legislators and members of Congress, and even by some agricultural leaders. It is pointed out that we are now spending about \$280 million annually of public funds on agricultural research. This consists of about \$120 million of federal money for research conducted by the USDA, \$38 million of federal money for grants-in-aid to the state agricultural experiment stations and \$122 million of state support to the agricultural experiment stations. Why, we are asked, should we spend about \$280 million to produce more when we, at the same time, must spend in excess of \$6 billion for benefit payments, commodity loans, storage, etc. to take care of the surpluses we already have? It is seriously suggested that the total amount of agricultural research should be reduced, to the benefit of all concerned.

Obviously, this is a very serious question. The future welfare and strength of our agriculture, and hence of our nation, may well be determined by how wisely we answer that question in the next few years. There is no simple answer to the questions but several factors, having a direct bearing on it, must be considered in seeking an answer to it. Among these factors are the following:

1. By no means all of the funds for research are for so-called "production" research. For example, of the \$120 million for the USDA's own research program, only about \$50 million is for "production" research. The remainder (\$70 million) is for such things as forestry, economics, marketing, utilization, consumer use and human nutrition research. Furthermore the so-called production research is not concerned primarily with increasing pounds, bushels or tons per acre. Rather, its primary objectives are increased efficiency and reliability of production, control of diseases, insects and other pests of plants and animals, conservation and utilization of soil and water resources, and mitigation of the hazards of weather. In addition, only a few agricultural commodities are in difficulties because of surpluses, notably wheat, corn, other feed grains, cotton and dairy products. Support of "production" research on these commodities is only a fraction of the total of \$50 million devoted to so-called "production" research.

2. Agricultural research has been and continues to be an impressive source of national economic growth. But the benefits have gone primarily to society as a whole. Farmers, as a group, have not been the principal beneficiaries of the results of agricultural research. An economic study at University of Chicago shows that return to the nation on dollars invested in agricultural research are from 30 to 170% annually. Any individual or industry (or nation) can afford to make further investments when returns of 30 to 170% annually can be anticipated.

The benefit to the consumer is best shown by the fact that our food and fiber production last year would have cost \$13 billion more if our farmers had had to use the seed, fertilizers, insecticides, machinery and other technology which was available as recently as 20 years ago. Any housewife can go to the supermarket almost any day and be certain of finding almost any kind of food in almost any quantities. Furthermore, food (even when one considers the built-in preparation and processing available today) is one of the few necessities of life that costs less today in terms of hours of labor required to pay for it than ever before in history. Perhaps the principal reason that the urban dweller gives so little thought to agriculture is that we have not, in this country, had a good famine for generations.

The benefit to the nation is best indicated by the fact that we are feeding and clothing our population today on less land than was required 40 years ago and that only 8% of our population is engaged in producing food and fiber. Compare this to India, where 75% are engaged in agricultural production, or Russia, where the figure is 40 to 50%. We have released a large proportion of our people for other productive pursuits. Furthermore, it is well known that even greater efficiency can be attained, if we have a vigorous agricultural research program, in use of our human, land, water and other resources. Gains made to date are only indicative of the gains to be expected from further investments in agricultural research.

3. We cannot control our surplus productive capacity by reducing our agricultural research investment. The technology used in production today came from research already done. Much of the research in progress today will not pay off in improved technology for 5, 10 or even 20 years. Thus reduced research today will have its greatest impact in the future, when the population explosion may make the needs most critical, and when it is too late to recover the precious lost time.

The most important reason, however, for not reducing research to control the surpluses is that we thereby also reduce efficiency and economic growth which require greater, not less, efficiency. Furthermore, we might speculate about the disaster to our hard red spring wheat producers, and the processing industry that depends on them, if research on development of varieties resistant to black stem rust were curtailed for a few years. Anyone familiar with farm production problems could cite many similar examples.

4. The superiority of our agricultural productivity is the largest advantage that we have over the countries back of the Iron Curtain. With more than 3/4 of the world's population perpetually hungry, our food and our agricultural production technology are the best weapons we have in the struggle for the minds of man. If we can spend \$40 billion a year building and maintaining our capacity to defend ourselves in a hot war, can we afford to spend so little as \$1/4 billion to strengthen our most potent weapon in the cold war? Make no mistake about it--if the USSR had an agricultural productive capacity equal to ours, they would be a lot more difficult to handle. Or we may ask, is it more important to place a man on the moon than to insure our continuing ability to feed and clothe an exploding population? The single man-on-the-moon project will cost, it is estimated, \$30 billion. Do you know how much \$30 billion will buy? Dr. Warren Weaver, former vice-president of the Rockefeller Foundation and former president of the American Association for Advancement of Science wrote under the title "What a Moon Ticket Will Buy" that with \$30 billion we could: "give a 10 percent raise in salary, over a ten-year period, to every teacher in the United States, from kindergarten through universities, in both public and private institutions (about \$9.8 billion); give \$10 million each to 200 of the best smaller colleges (\$2 billion); finance seven-year fellowships (freshman through Ph. D.) at \$4,000 per person per year for 50,000 new scientists and engineers (\$1.4 billion); contribute \$200 million each toward the creation of ten new medical schools (\$2 billion); build and largely endow complete universities, with medical, engineering, and agricultural faculties for all fifty-three of the nations which have been added to the United Nations since its original founding (\$13.2 billion); create three more permanent Rockefeller Foundations (\$1.5 billion); and still have \$100 million left over to popularize science."
5. Now, in closing, let us bring our focus closer to home--to the farmers that we serve. Are your farmers faced with any problems for the solution of which research results are not available? If the answer to this question is "yes," and it most certainly must be if you have talked to many farmers, then it is obvious that the agricultural research job is not yet done. And if you encounter as many of these questions as our extension specialists and research workers do each year, it will become obvious that our funds and resources for research, yes even production research, are still much too limited.