

Memorandum

To: JGH, the Directors (JEB, SW, JJM, NL)

From: KWT

Subject: A Joint Approach to Agricultural Economics

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R&P
Agr. Econ.
10/4/66

I have pondered our discussion of October 3 and would like to set down a few impressions and suggestions.

To begin with a conclusion, I have the sense we have not discovered the best approach for dealing with our common interest. This is not for one moment to detract from the reservoir of goodwill and the desire to cooperate that exists both in Agricultural Sciences and Humanities and Social Sciences. No Directors have been more anxious to make their efforts complementary. The same can be said of their Deputies and indeed of total staff. Nevertheless, we suffer from difficulties of communication and failure to mesh plans and projects. The present machinery seems ill-adapted to a joint approach although the machinery we have constructed in the past has not been ideal. I once thought that the answer lay in centering responsibility in a single officer with a joint appointment. For whatever reason, our one venture along this path was not wholly successful. When SW became Director, we (JEB, RKD, SW, JJM and I) discussed appointing Vernon Ruttan but up to now VR's Minnesota commitments have made this impractical. All are agreed he would be ideal.

If this alternative can't be realized in the near future, I would like to suggest for consideration the following joint AgSc-HSS approach:

1. The two Directors and their staffs be invited to nominate for Presidential appointments an Advisory Committee of 5-7 members patterned after the Agricultural Consultants or the LAPP Advisory Committee.
2. The Committee would include "wise men" of experience and stature both on the production side and from economics. Others would know better

that I who should be included but I had thought of men such as Professors Theodore Schultz, Vernon Ruttan, Glenn Johnson, Bill Myers (Cornell), F.F. Hill, Norman Efferson, Norman Borlaug, Gerald Trant, Gale Johnson, E.C. Stakman, and, ex officio (?) the two Directors and their Deputies. JGH might serve initially as the Chairman at the very least in convening the group. A sociologist such as John Useem of Michigan State University might also be invited.

3. One member -- Vernon Ruttan (?) -- might serve as Executive Secretary of the Committee preparing with RF leadership the first agenda, possible working papers, and serving to coordinate efforts between meetings.

4. The main tasks of the Committee would be:

A. To establish priorities and guidelines not for Agricultural Economics as a science but for RF program activity;

B. To explore possible areas of future cooperation and understanding between those approaching problems from the vantage points of production and economics;

C. To plan investigations on the ground of the "living problems" that confront those at work on the firing line in India, Mexico, or other developing countries;

D. To discuss, criticize, evaluate and recommend for approval or rejection projects such as the Brookings study; and

E. To continue to guide and assist researchers working on specific studies or action programs in the future.

The case for the RF assuming a more active role is to me beyond dispute. No other organization has had comparable experience and success

in raising agricultural productivity. Nowhere is there greater knowledge concerning "actors" in the field. No two programs are better equipped or more willing and able to join hands in a cooperative effort. Never has the need for an initiative by the RF been greater if leadership is not to pass to others ambitious to move ahead.

Therefore, I urge we discuss this vital matter at the earliest possible moment and more quickly to appoint a blue ribbon panel of well-paid advisors and consultants.

October 4, 1966