

# Agricultural Research and Education – a *Noble and Practical* Endeavour

**Looking at the PPI/PPIC logo, one can begin to understand our purpose:** to encourage, focus and support phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) research, and to facilitate, through education, the use, integration and application of science-based evidence into knowledge and new technologies farmers can use.

**I recently spoke to a university faculty and graduate student audience on the subject:** *Why are we in Agricultural Research and Education?* Considering all those cooperators and colleagues I have had the good fortune to work with over many years, my deliberations revealed some very interesting traits about us; characteristics which I think help to define us and our careers, as well as our profession.

**Agriculture's researchers and educators are psychologically instilled with a noble spirit.** Our disciplines address one of mankind's fundamental needs – food and fiber, and we take this challenge seriously. Agriculture is the foundation on which societies are built. U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, when viewing the devastation of drought in the 1930s...America's dust bowl era...spoke to this point when he said: "The Nation that destroys its soil, destroys itself." Because our work benefits the lives of others, we ennoble ourselves as well as our effort.

**The practical nature of agricultural researchers and educators emerges from that noble spirit.** By determining how to produce food and fiber efficiently—that is, understanding the soils we plant to crops; the requirements of plants and how to feed and protect them; and the use of scarce inputs (water, fertilizers, etc.)—we produce food in a cost-efficient manner. That is how this basic industry generates wealth.

Noble effort is required to understand how to exploit, while at the same time to protect the soil, water, air, and genetics, as well as the intellectual capital we individually and collectively possess, to create the wealth that builds nations.

The last noble and practical act we commit is to freely pass knowledge and capability on to others. We teach and train, and in doing so, we enable others to improve their standard of living because they now have a greater understanding of how to effectively harness inputs for efficient food and fiber production.

On behalf of PPI/PPIC, I want to thank all our cooperating and collaborating colleagues in agricultural research and education for your *noble, practical and good* character.



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