

Ag Scientists – Take the Lead

What are agricultural scientists concentrating on in their programs? Genetic engineering? Complex plant and soil chemistry? New pesticides? Increased production? All are important. But the public is uninformed about most of it.

What does reach the public? Recently, two items received full page newspaper headlines:

“Historic Global Warming Pact Reached”

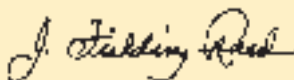
“Population Will Outstrip Food Production By 2025”

Undoubtedly these are distressing problems that need to be solved. How scientifically are we arriving at the answers? And what role are ag scientists playing in finding the solutions?

Especially disturbing is the matter of feeding the world. In the early 1960s, a book titled *Famine 1975* predicted disaster and outlined the areas that would starve. And in the 1950s, a widely acclaimed scientist predicted in *The Population Bomb* that “in the 1970s hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death.” Both predictions were wrong. World population has more than doubled since 1950, but food supplies have more than tripled.

Don't expect the answers to come from politicians or self-proclaimed authorities who are fundamentally misinformed. Facts on saving the planet and feeding the world must come primarily from ag scientists. But they must do a better job of assuming their responsibility and selling the public on their expertise and importance.

Americans are concerned because they are confused. Ag scientists, it is time to take the lead.



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