

Progress Without Profit

The temperature outside was 101 degrees. I watched the Wimbledon tennis matches, live, in the comfort of an air-conditioned room. Without moving, I pressed a button and watched the golf matches in California. I saw both better than if I had been there. Miraculous!

A friend was in the hospital recently—chest pains. The emergency crew reacted immediately. Complex tests, impressive equipment—the next day a triple by-pass—the ultimate in scientific achievement. Complete recovery. Thirty years ago he would have died. Brilliant!

The farmers I visited had the latest expensive farm machinery, used the appropriate chemicals, planted varieties developed through years of plant breeding and genetic engineering. Maybe not as glamorous as the changes in electronics and medicine, but quite impressive. Wonderful!

But despite the technological discoveries in agriculture, little progress has occurred in two areas: (1) Too many people in the world are not fed properly or adequately. The whole system of production and distribution, including the U.S. farm program, is not working as it should. (2) The average farmer fails to make a reasonable profit—return on his investment and labor. Progress without profit.

Great minds produce great technological achievements in electronics, medicine, and agriculture! When are we going to assign such great minds to the task of developing a farm system that both feeds and flourishes? Are these discoveries simplifying or complicating the issue?

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