

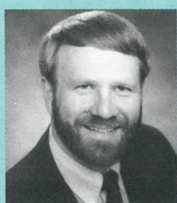
## *Is Precision Farming Good for Society?*

By Luther Tweeten

**I**n our market economy, technology isn't adopted by firms unless benefits exceed costs. The articles in this issue show many advantages of precision farming for production agriculture, and the technology seems destined to pass the profitability test on large numbers of farms. But it is well to go beyond the farm to examine whether precision farming is good for society on national economic, social and environmental grounds.

### **National Economic Impact**

The nationwide economic impact of precision farming will depend on whether the technology mainly saves inputs and costs or mainly increases output. By combining soil test, seeding rate, yield, pesticide and fertilizer application data for hundreds of plots per farm, precision farming offers unprecedented "experimental" data. Such data more precisely dictate optimal economic input and crop



### ***Dr. Paul E. Fixen Appointed PPI North American Program Coordinator***

**D**r. Paul E. Fixen of Brookings, South Dakota has been named North American Program Coordinator and Director of Research in North American Programs for PPI. His new responsibilities begin immediately.

Announcement of the promotion came from Dr. David W. Dibb, President of PPI. "Paul Fixen has been a valuable asset to PPI with his work in the Northcentral region and we know he will be an even greater asset in his new role," Dr. Dibb emphasized.

A native of Minnesota, Dr. Fixen received his B.S. and M.S. degrees at South Dakota State University in

Agricultural Education and Soil Fertility, respectively. He earned his Ph.D. degree at Colorado State University in 1978 with a specialization in soil fertility, plant nutrition and soil chemistry. Dr. Fixen joined the staff of PPI in 1989 as the Northcentral Regional Director and has served Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Kansas and Nebraska.

Dr. Fixen and his family will continue to reside in Brookings. An office will be established there for coordination of the Institute's agronomic research and education programs in North American regions. 