INTRODUCTION TO SYMPOSIUM

R.E. Schlittenhart, President
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Farm production costs continue to escalate to all time highs. Because of the tremendous escalation in farm input costs, many farmers are becoming apprehensive about their ability to continue to produce some of the basic crops for traditional markets at a reasonable profit. Even the most resolute market oriented producers have been wondering if higher Government price supports are the only solution to the problem.

While there are no quick and easy solutions to the problems confronting farmers today, we are exploring alternative crops and new markets for some of our traditional crops. Our program today will examine some of the alternatives available. We recognize that the potential for some of the crops under discussion today has not been fully established. We further recognize that the potential markets for some of the new products under consideration has not been thoroughly explored, however research is continuing and I am confident that in time many of the problems involved will be resolved.

I personally feel that the American farmer must look to the market place for the highest income potential from his production. Many of our most productive and profitable programs have had their origins in the private sector.

I do not want to discount the value or importance of Government programs for agriculture, such as the recent grants and loans being made for production of energy from farm commodities. However I would not like to see a return to the Government regulated agriculture that we experienced in the 1950's and 60's. Therefore I think it is important that we continue to work with our College of Agriculture, the Cooperative Extension Service and our local county agents in improving income opportunities for Arizona farmers.

I feel encouraged by the interest and desire to achieve these goals that has already been evidenced, and I look forward to the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Arizona Alfalfa and Grain Yields Continue to Climb Upward

Robert E. Dennis, Extension Agronomist

Arizona's average yields for alfalfa hay and grain crops reflect the continuing success of growers as they apply the latest in field crop production technology, Table 1. Progress has been especially significant for alfalfa and wheat. High-yielding, pest-tolerant alfalfas and improved cutting management have helped this crop move forward. High-yielding, stiff-strawed wheats provided the foundation for advances in wheat production. Quality of durum and of bread wheats has been improved and the future appears bright for wheat in Arizona. Prior to 1969 about 50% of Arizona's sorghum was grown in southeastern Arizona where high-yielding, full-season, hybrids are used. Much of this sorghum has been replaced with corn. State average yields have been maintained, even though most of today's sorghum is double-cropped at lower elevations using short- or mid-season hybrids. Improved varieties and management systems will continue to increase barley, corn, and sorghum yields in Arizona during the 1980's.

Average yields tell only part of the story of Arizona's field crop production. Each year some growers obtain yields from most Arizona crops that are more than double the state average. Much of the technology for further increases in field crop yields is already available. Everyone in agriculture must do his best in the continuing process of finding the most desirable combination of varieties and cultural practices to maximize field crop production in Arizona.