Agricultural Research

Is Agricultural research no longer important to the United States? It would certainly seem so with the President's proposed land grant college research budget which is to be reduced by 20% while the national budget increases by 8%. The fiscal year of 1974 begins July 1, 1973, and of all the research budgets proposed for 1974, 11 of 14 budgets are increased while three are to be decreased. The 20% proposed decrease in the agricultural budget is more than double the decrease proposed for the Department of Interior and 8 times greater than the proposed decrease in all other research budgets for fiscal 1974. Why?

Why is a question we cannot easily answer; and for us to only ask why will not change the catastrophic results of a budget cut of 20% in 1974.

An appeal has been made to members of our association to communicate with our congressmen from the states of Maryland and Virginia. It is strongly urged that we all take a few moments time to write a letter to our state senators and representatives from our congressional districts.

If Federal funds are not available to the Agricultural Research Stations, Land Grant Universities, and Extension Centers, we will no longer benefit from the data made available to us on the research of chemicals, fertilizers and new grass species.

Do we want to rely on regional door to door chemical salesmen for this information? Do we want to take a transient salesman's pitch as the absolute truth and endanger the health of our greens -- and our jobs for that matter, because we no longer have an impartial research center to test and evaluate turf chemicals?

The Superintendents in the Washington — Maryland — Virginia areas have for years reaped the benefits of three nearby agricultural colleges, several extention centers, and the USDA Center in Beltsville, Md., to assist us with our day to day needs for information. We have always taken pride in the fact these sources for information are at our back door and that tests of chemicals, new grass species, fertilizers, etc., are readily available for us to evaluate for our own needs.

Keep in mind if you will, that turf grass is a "luxury branch" of the total agricultural research areas and that the 20% total cut in the agricultural research funds will be again broken down within the agricultural research priorities. Turf research monies will be depleted very quickly if a decision is to be made on what agricultural research projects are of the least necessity to the economy of our country.

We exist in a transitional zone of grasses; much dependent on research to help us thru our summers. We must continue to provide funds to this research and continue to improve the strands of disease and drought resistant grass varieties.

Craig Spottswood