State Agriculture Predicted As Billion Dollar Business

By BOB ANGERS JR.

A prediction that Louisiana agriculture could become a billion dollar business in five to six years was ventured by the director of the Louisiana State University Experiment Station at an address Tuesday at the Farm-City Week luncheon in Lafayette.

The director, Dr. Doyle Chambers, made the pronouncement at the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce luncheon. He said that each dollar at the farm gate generates from three to five additional dollars.

The Balanced Farm and Home Award went to Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Baker with Roy Louviere of the Hub City Kiwanis Club inviting farm leaders to the Jan. 7 Southern Farm Forum in Memphis, Tenn.

Employ Six Million

Dr. Chambers encouraged farmers to help communicate the message of agriculture to urban consumers. He said that U.S. farming employs six million persons, represents an investment of $238 billion in assets and added people in the agricultural industry buy $30 billion worth of consumer goods and $30 billion worth of services annually.

The experiment station director said that the American consumer's food bill cost dropped from 26 percent of his take home pay in 1947 to less than 18 percent today leaving $56 billion more in his pocket.

Noting the decrease in the farm population, but an increase in production, he encouraged farm people to support programs that would provide the nation with more food than is needed or else there would be an increase in food costs to the consumers.

Efficiency Rises

He said farming had reached the stage where efficiency rises six percent annually, while marketing and related services have shown increases in efficiency of less than three percent annually.

Dr. Chambers noted that labor had been trimmed to a level on the farm that can hardly be cut any further. He told of union workers receiving more money for unloading cars in New York than the producers.

Chambers stated that many dairymen had investments of $100,000 to $150,000 and that in Oklahoma a farmer needed as high as 1,200 acres to earn $5,000 annually. He backed the need for research saying that it benefited the consumer more than it did the farmer. He warned of the danger of a concentration of farm production in relatively few hands and encouraged lines of communications with urbanites to underscore the importance of a strong agriculture to the consumer's welfare.

FARM HOME AWARD-Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Baker of Youngsville were selected to receive the Balanced Farm and Home Award given by the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Agriculture Committee yesterday.

The award was made by Russell Guarino, chairman, right, at the annual Farm-City Week Luncheon sponsored by the Chamber.

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