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Berkeley, California

Kenneth R. Farrell

TAKING THE UNIVERSITY TO THE PEOPLE: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Interviews conducted by
Victor W. Geraci, PhD
in 2008

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Kenneth R. Farrell
Interviewed by Vic Geraci, ROHO
Interview 1: September 18, 2008

Begin Audio File 1

01-00:00:14
Geraci: Today is Thursday, September 18, 2008, and we are in the Walnut Creek, California home of Dr. Kenneth R. Farrell. This is the first of a series of interviews with Dr. Farrell and is being conducted by Victor W. Geraci, Associate Director of the UC Berkeley's Regional Oral History Office. Dr. Farrell completed his master's degree and doctorate in agricultural economics from Iowa State University and served as an economist for the Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics and Cooperative Extension Service at the University of California Berkeley, and later served as Vice-President, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of California, and Director of the University's Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension. His curriculum vitae also includes both domestic and international assignments in agricultural economic policies, and founding of the National Center for Food and Agricultural Policy at Resources for the Future. Farrell has authored more than one hundred professional articles and papers about his work in agricultural policy, natural resources, economics, international trade, and marketing. This interview is part of a series, Taking it to the People, of interviews to document the post-World War II history of the University of California's land grand mission to the people of California. Funding for these interviews comes from private donors under the encouragement of Robert Dynes, past president of the University of California.

Dr. Farrell, first of all, thank you for being here. This is great. One of the things I like to do in our first interview is get your background, a little bit about your life. We all have a story, that serendipitous journey that leads us to our professional life. And let's start with your family. Your parents, your grandparents. I know you're not originally from America, so let's begin there.

01-00:02:10
Farrell: Thank you. No, I'm not originally from America. My grandparents and great-grandparents came from the United States in the period after the American Revolution. They were what was referred to at that time as United Empire Loyalists, meaning that they stayed loyal to the king at the time of the Revolution. They settled initially in the lower part of Quebec, east of Montreal, and then over the succeeding generations, they gradually migrated west into Ontario, which is the province to the west of Montreal. Having been United Empire Loyalist stock, they acquired a land grant from the Canadian government at that time and began a series of careers in agriculture in a little community called South Mountain, which is in the Ottawa Valley. That is to the south of the City of Ottawa. That farm until 1957, or thereabouts, was in

the Farrell family, and had been for over a hundred years. So there was a considerable family tradition and heritage in that.

01-00:03:54
Geraci: What kind of agriculture did they participate?

01-00:03:56
Farrell: It was basically a mixed agricultural, dairy, farming in particular. Dairy and livestock, which meant that they produced their own hay and their own feedstock. But it was primarily dairy and other types of livestock. It was a small farm, as most farms were at that time, about a hundred acres and it was, of course—when I first recall it as a child, completely dependent upon horses for all of its power. The power in the fields, the power of transportation to and from the local community, and it really was not until the aftermath or, actually, the beginning of World War II when technology began to change the face of agriculture in that part of Canada. Electricity was brought to the farms through a government effort. Telephones the same way. They were cooperative and government enterprises. And tractors, the byproduct of World War II manufacturing, became commonplace in rural Canada. And so at that point, particularly by the middle and late forties, agriculture was gradually changing from a labor driven to a technology driven enterprise. And my family was gradually a part of that evolution.

01-00:05:42
Geraci: So this Canadian story is actually paralleling the American story at that same—I mean, it's the 1920s and thirties that bring electrification to rural America, the tractor. After World War II, how many tractors did the government give out?

01-00:05:58
Farrell: You're right. The Canadian agricultural history, in that part of the country, at least, largely parallels that which occurred in the United States. I always thought there was a lag of perhaps five to ten years. That is, the Americans acquired the technology initially and then it was adapted to Canadian conditions five or ten years later. But roughly, it followed the same track of development and to this very day, has been affected by the same kinds of forces. That of industrialization, of population demographics, of the development of global markets. Pretty much the same set of forces have affected eastern Canadian agriculture. Western Canadian agriculture is a different proposition. It's based on export markets primarily for wheat and it developed much later than the east, of course.

01-00:07:05
Geraci: But Ottawa, that area has a huge agricultural base of many crops. It's a very diversified agricultural economy.

01-00:07:11
Farrell: It is a diversified agriculture. In addition to dairy and other types of livestock, there is cash grain farming. More recently, as a result of genetic advances,

corn and soybeans have become favorite crops in parts of Ontario, as is tobacco in the western parts of the province of Ontario. So it's very diversified. And like the United States, most of the activity in the economy up until World War II was directly or indirectly turning upon agriculture and its development.

01-00:08:00
Geraci: Now, your family at home. Brothers, sisters, parents?

01-00:08:03
Farrell: I had two sisters. I am the oldest member of the family. My father was born on the farm in which I was born, as was his grandfather. So there was a fairly lengthy history on the Farrell side. My grandmother was of German ancestry and my mother was—let's see, she was one of four children, two other sisters and a brother. But the interesting thing, of course, is that the communities in which they lived was the "world" in the early part of the 1900s. When my mother was courting my father, they were separated by a distance of about twenty miles, but that was a major effort for him, I'm told, to get back and forth to see mom.

01-00:09:07
Geraci: Made your mom feel good.

01-00:09:07
Farrell: Made her feel very good. So my sisters, both of whom were younger than I, grew up on the farm and completed high school. One sister became a nurse at the nearby city of Ottawa and the second one, as a secretary, migrated to Toronto, which is three hundred miles to the west. I am the only one in the family who pursued higher education. In fact, I was the first of any generation of Farrells that actually went to college.

01-00:09:59
Geraci: So no one within the family carries on the family farm, then?

01-00:10:02
Farrell: That is correct. The family farm was sold in the 1950s, interestingly enough, to an individual who proceeded to rent the farm. He and his wife commute daily to Ottawa to non-agricultural jobs. So it has become, to some extent, I suppose one could say, a bedroom community of the metropolitan area of Ottawa.

01-00:10:33
Geraci: Gentrified farmers.

01-00:10:35
Farrell: Yes. Gentrified. Definitely.

01-00:10:40
Geraci: They sell the family farm, but your interests still remained in agriculture.

01-00:10:46
Farrell: Yes. There is a saying: "You can take the boy out of the agriculture, but not agriculture out of the boy." So I did retain a strong interest in agriculture. Immediately upon completion of high school in 1944, there was a severe shortage of teachers in rural areas and the government of Ontario had a special eight week summer session to train teachers on an emergency basis. So I was one of the students of that activity and for two years after graduation from high school, I taught in small, one room rural schools in Ontario, but always in rural areas where agriculture was the predominant industry and virtually everything revolved about agriculture. I decided that school teaching was not something I wished to pursue, particularly in one room schools, so beginning in 1946, I enrolled at the University of Toronto-Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph. It was a four year bachelor of science degree granting program, and it was there that I discovered that economics was my forte. I have pursued that academic route ever since.

I graduated in 1950 from the University of Toronto, and took a position with an organization known as Canadian Industries Limited, which was a feed and fertilizer manufacturer throughout Ontario. I was given a position as—I think you would say that as a trainee but accountancy was the area that I was assigned to. I never really felt comfortable with accounting. I have an affinity for numbers and mathematics but the bean counting that goes on in accounting was not quite my cup of tea. Fortunately, when I graduated, I had a colleague who also graduated from Ontario Agricultural College and had gone to North Dakota, in the United States, as an instructor in a special program that the Veterans Administration had established for the training of World War II veterans who had resettled in agriculture but needed skills to be more successful.

01-00:14:04
Geraci: Part of the GI Bill type—

01-00:14:06
Farrell: It was part of the GI Bill, special program in the GI Bill, designed specifically for agriculture or for those in farming. So he wrote to me and he told me that he had become aware of a similar position to his, in a nearby school district and would I be interested. And he said, incidentally, the salary—I've forgotten the exact number—but it was somewhere in the vicinity of $4,000 annually, which was far superior to anything that I could earn in Canada. So being one who has been adventurous in various ways throughout my life, I decided that I should make the effort and try something different. I accepted the position and in late 1950, made my first cross country train trip to a little town called Bowman, North Dakota, which is in the extreme southwestern part of the state of North Dakota, near the Badlands areas of South Dakota and the north. It was a small, rural community of about 5,000 people. Again, virtually totally centered on agriculture. But it was a quite different type of agriculture than I was accustomed to. I mean, it was in the middle of the prairies and was

basically a wheat/livestock economy. So I had a good deal of learning to do while I pretended that I was teaching veterans useful skills.

01-00:16:04
Geraci: It was a high learning curve for you.

01-00:16:07
Farrell: It was a very high learning curve. I stayed in that area for about three years, but it was apparent that if I were to advance academically, graduate training was a necessity. As I mentioned, I had majored in economics at the University of Toronto in my undergraduate years, and I felt a continuation of that specialty would be what I would pursue in graduate school.

01-00:16:40
Geraci: Did you have any special mentors or anything at the University of Toronto that made you think about this?

01-00:16:44
Farrell: I did. Yes. I had, at the time, a professor who was also the chairman of the department, who encouraged me to graduate school when I left, and had volunteered to write letters of support and do some additional checking of opportunities. And it was with his help that I ended up at Ames, Iowa. It came down to a choice between the University of California Berkeley or Iowa State University at Ames or Purdue University in Indiana. Well, I didn't know a great deal about any of them in terms of their caliber of programs, except I knew that California had a strong program. But I did do some checking around and found that, among the three, that the best opportunity for a fellowship was at Iowa State. And for me, that was important that I be able to earn some income while going to graduate school.

01-00:17:58
Geraci: Doesn't that drive a lot of our graduate school experiences. Who can help us financially.

01-00:18:02
Farrell: It certainly turns on that, in the early stages, particularly. So I enrolled at Iowa State in the fall of 1953. I had decided that, for financial reasons, I probably would limit myself at Iowa State to a master's degree. So I took some extra time to take extra courses and to write a dissertation. I actually interviewed for a position with the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, but by this time, some of my professors at Iowa State were encouraging me to complete the program for a PhD. Since I had most of the coursework already completed, it was a relatively short leap from the master's program to the PhD program.

01-00:19:03
Geraci: What types of things were you studying at Iowa State, specifically?

01-00:19:07
Farrell: Basically, economics, statistics and political science. At Iowa State, there is no agricultural economics, per se. It is an economics department, and so the

focus was on general economics, economic theory, international trade, and I had a minor in statistics. At that time, Iowa State was perhaps the leading college in this country in the application of statistics to agriculture. That is, in the development of the application of sampling and the ideas and enumeration, and methodology.

01-00:19:50
Geraci: So quantitative studies?

01-00:19:51
Farrell: Quantitative studies, generally. Econometrics, which is a mathematical branch of economics, was a part of what was included. I've always felt that the instruction I got at Iowa State was outstanding and has influenced my career and my choices in many ways. There were two professors in particular. One of whom taught general economic theory, who was one of the most effective teachers I've ever encountered. And his teaching, and the readings that he prescribed, I think had a very large influence in how I approached economics.

01-00:20:41
Geraci: Who was this?

01-00:20:42
Farrell: A man by the name of John Nordin—N-O-R-D-I-N—who, shortly after I left, moved, I think, to the University of Kansas. But he was a truly great teacher. You meet truly outstanding teachers, rarely. At least that was my experience. But this man was a very rare, excellent teacher. The other man was quite different. He was an Austrian econometrician. Rather gruff, surly, and not inclined particularly to conversation, but again, was a master in teaching young aspiring students the fundamentals of econometrics. And since I was, by very nature, interested in mathematics and applications of mathematics ever since undergraduate, I was a very good fit and became a research assistant to him. This was a man by the name of Gerhard Tintner—T-I-N-T-N-E-R—who had written several books in econometrics. That was a relatively short assignment, but one from which I profited a great deal. And then my major professor was in the field of marketing, Richard Philips. He also was a very effective teacher and researcher. So all in all, the Iowa State experience was a fundamentally important one to me.

01-00:22:30
Geraci: Were there some things that you learned there that stuck with you the rest of your professional career?

01-00:22:36
Farrell: It was at Iowa State where I first really saw and experienced what we call Extension or the development of outreach programs—a college, or in this case, a department, reaching out to local communities and applying economics to the problems of those local communities. I think it was there that I formed the notion that an Extension specialist was an appealing position and one in

which you could apply theory and mathematics, to some extent, to practical problems faced in local areas, rural communities and in agriculture itself.

01-00:23:33
Geraci: Which is the key and the heart of agriculture Extension.

01-00:23:36
Farrell: Very key and the heart.

01-00:23:37
Geraci: Bringing the academic to the farmer.

01-00:23:39
Farrell: Precisely. Linking research, and Extension. Their appointments, which turned out to be a model I used later at the University of California—their model was that of what I would call an integrated model of linked Extension and research faculty. Faculty was appointed with either research or Extension appointments, but they were part of the one department, subject to the same conditions as teachers were, or as researchers were. That integrated, or linked model, I think is the appropriate model to use. As I will say later, California, for other reasons, chose a different path. But it was at Iowa State where I first formed this notion of the importance of linking research and outreach and Extension education.

01-00:24:40
Geraci: Kind of what we have in the UC system of the specialist today?

01-00:24:43
Farrell: Yes. That's part and parcel of that model. The specialist at Iowa State had a regular faculty appointment. It was not that of a specialist. You were an assistant, associate or full professor in the department, and in that role, you had certain functions that you performed: research, teaching, Extension. But it was the notion that this was one faculty, that the three stools of education, if you will, were linked and that it was important to keep them linked. So at California, where I first came after completion of my PhD, I discovered that as an Extension specialist at Berkeley, that I had a different type of faculty appointment than did research and teaching professors. And as I will discuss later, we moved to integrate the two functions in a more extensive way during my tenure as Vice President.

01-00:26:10
Geraci: So this experience at Iowa, then, really does have an impact for you?

01-00:26:14
Farrell: Very definitely. Not only in terms of my learning and understanding of economics, but in terms of my view of organization in a land grant college. So upon completion of the degree at Iowa State, we put our belongings in a small trailer and went West.

01-00:26:34
Geraci: I take it, you're saying when we—you were married by that time?

01-00:26:36
Farrell: By that time, I was married, and I should pause and discuss that. I was married when I left North Dakota. By the time we got to graduate school at Ames, we had three children and then one was born while I was a graduate student. We lived in what was then sort of typical Midwestern university post-World War II housing. Very flimsy, prefabricated homes. Huts would be a better way to describe it. But we survived. Not easily, but we did survive. So when we moved from Ames, we had a sizable family and few material belongings. I should mention how I was influenced in my decision to go to California. California was one of three options that I had for employment. One was at the University of Arkansas and the second was at Iowa State itself. They were happy and willing and anxious to employ me at Iowa State in a research and teaching role. But the choice came down to those three. And the choice was not an easy one, in some respects. It would have been more comfortable to have stayed where we were. I enjoyed Iowa State, both from a standpoint of the profession, as well as personally. But there was a man from Berkeley, from the department of Ag-Economics at Berkeley, by the name of Ray Bressler, who at the time was the department chair and had been at Berkeley for several years. He happened to visit Ames on a trip or conference of some kind. I had the opportunity to meet him and to speak with him about this opening at Berkeley. He was very persuasive and an individual whose personality and style I very much liked. I think that one visit with Ray Bressler was decisive in my thinking.

01-00:29:20
Geraci: Well, there was a face to this position that the other two did not have.

01-00:29:23
Farrell: It was a face. Yes. So hence the leap across the country.

01-00:29:31
Geraci: So you finish your PhD then in 1958?

01-00:29:35
Farrell: That's correct.

01-00:29:37
Geraci: OK. And immediately out of grad school had the opportunity—

01-00:29:40
Farrell: Yes, but I should correct that slightly. I finished the PhD in 1958 but I left Iowa State before I had completed the dissertation. I left Iowa State. So I had one year after coming to California in 1957 to complete the dissertation.

01-00:29:56
Geraci: So you came here as a post-doc?

01-00:29:57

Farrell: Came as a post-doc and finished the PhD in that first year. I knew no one, except Bressler, whom I had met briefly. I was not acquainted with anyone on the faculty, nor was I particularly knowledgeable about the orientation of the department. And of course, I knew, as I later discovered, very little about the University of California and its multi-faceted programs. But it was a receptive place for someone like myself. I became good friends, and I guess you'd say, a protégée of a man by the name of George Mehren—M-E-H-R-E-N—who was a professor of ag-economics, and shortly after I arrived, he became the department chairman of ag-economics at Berkeley. Mehren was a brilliant, outgoing, extroverted individual. He not only was a good teacher, but he enjoyed very much what I called, at the time, the Extension function of the faculty. I had many an occasion where I would go with him throughout the state to meet industry leaders and to sometimes write his speeches or contribute to writing his speeches. So he, perhaps more than any other individual on the faculty, was influential in guiding my research and Extension programs in the early parts of my career.

I had taken to administration by my natural instincts and after I had been in the department for about six years, I was asked by the Director of Extension if I would accept a position as the Extension Director on the Davis Campus in charge of specialists. I could not say no to that.

01-00:32:34

Geraci: Now, during this time, you say there's six years, were you teaching courses?

01-00:32:38

Farrell: Yes, I taught some courses. It was quite a varied set of activities. I taught some introductory courses. I had an active research program with two or more professors and with usually two or more graduate students that I was supervising, and in addition, carried on an Extension program, an active Extension program. So it was a blend of all three activities those first years.

01-00:33:09

Geraci: You were like associate professor or assistant professor?

01-00:33:13

Farrell: Well, going back to what I had said previously, the appointment titles were as an Extension specialist in the agricultural Extension service and associate economist on the Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics, which was a foundation established by the Bank of America to assist in the development of agricultural economics at UC.

01-00:33:42

Geraci: Now, we should talk about the Giannini Foundation. That was newly founded at that point, wasn't it?

01-00:33:48
Farrell: It was founded in the late thirties with a grant from AP Giannini, who was then the president of Bank of America and the head of the department at Berkeley, who was then Harry Wellman, who later became president of the University. The purpose of the Foundation, and the grant that was provided, which was a sizable grant at that particular time, was to assist in the development of the program of agricultural economics and its application to problems in California agriculture. So its emphasis was on research and Extension or outreach, if you will.

01-00:34:52
Geraci: And it would seem that Giannini himself would have had an interest in this because he's financing much of agriculture in California at that point.

01-00:34:59
Farrell: Exactly right. He had a vested interest in seeing this succeed, and as I said a year or so ago at an event marking the seventy-fifth year of the Foundation, I think it succeeded very well in achieving the goals that Giannini and others had laid out. In fact, by the time I came in 1957, if you traveled in California circles with the leaders of California industry, the only part of the campus at Berkeley that they were acquainted with was the Giannini Foundation. They equated that to the University of California because they had seen the work or had been the beneficiary of research that had been done by professors of the Foundation. So it was a powerful image maker, very positive for economics, for the department of ag-economics, and for the University of California overall.

01-00:36:13
Geraci: So this is pretty cutting edge research at the Center at that point?

01-00:36:17
Farrell: At that point, in that time, it was on the cutting edge, led by people like Bressler and Loy Sammett. The department itself gradually increased its emphasis and its capability in statistics and econometrics. A man by the name of George Kuznets became very well known throughout the world as a leading econometrician. So it was very much cutting edge, certainly in agricultural economics, and to an extent, in general economics.

In addition to the one year at Davis during this period, I was also invited to spend a year as a Fulbright lecturer at the University of Naples in Italy. The Ford Foundation had provided a grant to the University of California and to the University of Naples to develop the first program in graduate level agricultural economics in Italy. A succession of visiting professors from Berkeley, of whom I was one, over the next four or five years traveled to Naples to work with the students and faculty and the administrators in creating the department of agricultural economics at the University of Naples. In turn, Naples sent several graduate students to Berkeley for training as PhDs, and

when they graduated, they, of course, went back to the Center, as it became known, at Naples. So I spent one year on that program in 1963-64.

01-00:38:30
Geraci: What types of things were you doing there? I mean, this is the post-World War II. We're helping rebuild Europe.

01-00:38:36
Farrell: That's right. This was 1963-1964. This was not a direct part of the Marshall Plan, of course, but it was part of the Ford Foundation program of institution building around the world. And what we were doing was basically helping the Italians to design institutionally a graduate level program in economics. They needed help and understanding on how we organized, how we functioned. We needed help in designing the curriculum. They needed help in developing a balanced staff. California professors, while there, offered lectures in English.

01-00:39:30
Geraci: And in the meantime, they're sending their graduate students here to get trained to come back to teach.

01-00:39:35
Farrell: Precisely. And towards the end of the program of about four years, there was a direct link between the two. That is to say, students who had gone to Berkeley, had graduated with a PhD, and were now back in Portici. That is the community outside Naples, actually teaching students and carrying on a research program. That was a very, very rewarding year. Not only was Italy new to me and therefore exciting, it was in many ways similar to California in its geography and in its topology, soils, and in its cropping patterns. So I found it was a little bit like being home, but a different kind of home.

01-00:40:29
Geraci: A different kind. I mean, it's obvious that you're trying to take a certain knowledge base to them to help them develop. Is there anything that you pulled out of what they inherently had and brought back with you?

01-00:40:43
Farrell: Yes, to an extent. By the time that I arrived there, the European economic community had been formed and the idea of moving toward an integrated economy among the original six members was well established. What I learned was the role which international trade can play, or did play in those countries, in the development of their agriculture, and how important it was to have institutions, be they research or education or banking, or marketing institutions, that could make this system work. So I think this was my first practical experience in seeing economics applied to trade and development, albeit somewhat different than it was in America. Nevertheless, it was a good model of how economics was important in driving the development of these countries.

01-00:42:07
Geraci: So trial and error use of the theory.

01-00:42:10
Farrell: Precisely. And there was a great deal of trial and error. It's obvious that American methods and American technology does not fit precisely in a foreign community. You have to know how to adapt it and apply it, and I think that was part of what was going on throughout this Ford Foundation project.

01-00:42:35
Geraci: It would seem to me that there would have been more cultural barriers there. I mean, Italian agriculture is thousands of years old and deeply steeped in cultural background and tradition, whereas Americans don't have a lot of that baggage to bring to the table and are willing to experiment more.

01-00:42:53
Farrell: Yes. That's true to some degree, although I have found, whether it's in Italy or Greece or Africa or Canada, that if you provide farmers with an economic incentive to produce, they very readily find a way of overcoming any cultural barriers.

01-00:43:20
Geraci: Farmers are good capitalists.

01-00:43:23
Farrell: They are great capitalists. They're great innovators. If there's an incentive for change, they will find a way to do it, if it's to their advantage.

01-00:43:35
Geraci: In California, being the wine industry after Prohibition is rebuilt, and it's rebuilt basically by Italian immigrant families. Given an opportunity, they're good business people.

01-00:43:47
Farrell: Exactly right.

01-00:43:50
Geraci: So the Italians were just waiting for that opportunity, at that point.

01-00:43:52
Farrell: Exactly right. The economic circumstances of Europe were changing rapidly. The Italians saw opportunities within that new community to exploit their advantage and they were very anxious to receive technology, to receive information, to receive knowledge that would aid them in doing that. So it was, all in all, I think, a very successful program and venture on the part of the University of California. Although I was not involved, the University later had a similar program, again sponsored by Ford Foundation, with a university in Chile, helping to establish an economic research education program at that institution, modeled along the line of what we did in Italy.

01-00:44:48
Geraci: I guess in reflection we can say that those programs are highly successful, because both Chile, and Italy, at this point, their universities play major roles in agricultural economics and development today.

01-00:45:01
Farrell: Yes, yes. In the case of Italy, once this program at Naples, University of Naples, was established, it subsequently became a model for similar sorts of activities, and program, in other Italian universities. Now, there are perhaps a dozen internationally well-recognized agricultural research and education programs throughout Italy. So it was a generator and provider of knowledge over quite a long period of time and at various locations.

01-00:45:49
Geraci: It's also exporting American expertise. And this is the Cold War era. This is a major player, then, historically—

01-00:46:01
Farrell: Absolutely.

01-00:46:02
Geraci: —in exporting our capitalism, our technology, our faith in science to the rest of the world.

01-00:46:08
Farrell: Absolutely true. And that was true in Europe. It was true in other countries. In Africa, where I have spent considerable time in consulting roles, it was a different approach. But I think the point you're making is that it was important for the United States to have a presence in these countries as an element of the Cold War. And even in Eastern Europe, American technology and American know-how was highly regarded and highly sought after in every conference that you would attend. There would be people seeking to sit down and discuss an academic subject or an issue or an innovation they were thinking about with an American.

01-00:47:07
Geraci: It sounds like that was a great experience. How'd your family enjoy that?

01-00:47:09
Farrell: Oh, they loved it. They loved it. We had five children by that time. The oldest one at that time was, I think, fifteen and she adapted readily to the Italian culture. It was exciting and I think has influenced her even to this day. So they very much enjoyed it. The Italians were wonderful, warm, friendly people. I had studied Italian grammar, basically, at Berkeley for a semester before I went over, but soon discovered that it takes more than a study of grammar to communicate.

01-00:47:54
Geraci: The hand language in itself.

01-00:47:55
Farrell: Precisely. In fact, I was deflated the very first day we were in Naples. My wife and I went to establish a bank account at the local bank in Rome and the young man who took us up the elevator said to me after my attempts at communication in Italian, "Let's speak English," which was a major putdown. I concluded that communicating with students or at least some members of the faculty in Italian was essential. So I went to Berlitz School of Language three nights a week. And I learned enough to get by passably. Still love to go to Italy.

01-00:48:59
Geraci: Let's talk a little bit about your family. Your wife, your children. We've introduced them, so let's give them some names and talk a little bit about them for a second.

01-00:49:10
Farrell: Happy to do so. Well, my wife, Mary, was born in England. She's now American. Of course, we're all Americans now. She was educated in England and came to this country after World War II. She settled in North Dakota in this little town that I had mentioned, the town of Bowman, in North Dakota. She was widowed. By the time I met her, she had two children and when we married, I legally adopted the two children. The oldest, Janet, a graduate of Berkeley and Chicago, is now a professor of history at the Claremont Graduate School in California. Our second daughter, Betty, is a graduate of UC Santa Cruz and Harvard and is a professor of sociology at University of Chicago. Deborah, a Berkeley and Brown graduate, is an editor at the American Psychological Association in Washington , D.C. Our son, Robert, is a graduate of UC Riverside and UC Davis Law School and practices law in San Francisco. Patricia graduated in landscape architecture at the University of Virginia and resides in Oregon as an environmental biologist with the city of Salem and operates a small farm near Newberg, Oregon. Our youngest daugher, Lisa, who came as a delightful surprise late in our life, graduated in marketing from Radford University in Virginia and is now located at the Southern Florida University, Tampa as a marketing specialist. So that's the family. My mother and father are deceased and my two sisters are deceased. We have had, or my wife has had, close relatives in England until very recent years, when the last of her sisters passed away. So we have less incentive to go to England, which we used to do quite frequently.

01-00:51:57
Geraci: Quite frequently.

01-00:57:58
Farrell: —regularly.

01-00:51:59
Geraci: Any grandchildren?

01-00:52:02
Farrell: Grandchildren. We have now a total of seven.

01-00:52:03
Geraci: You have a few.

01-00:52:04
Farrell: I have a few.

01-00:52:07
Geraci: That's right.

01-00:52:08
Farrell: And probably more to be expected, in the extended family. As a matter of fact, we recently became great-grandparents. We have a grandson who had a son, making us great-grandparents now.

01-00:52:24
Geraci: That's great in itself. We're approaching towards the end of this tape and we'll finish this first interview. I think this was a good introduction to your life, and now we'll get into the further things, as we discussed. One of the questions I think I have for you at this point is why did you decide to leave farming? I find it fascinating for many people who come from agricultural families, especially generationally, and what makes us decide, "I don't want to do this. I want to move somewhere else."

01-00:53:02
Farrell: Well, I think that there are various factors that enter into these decisions. They're certainly partially economic. That is to say, facing the realities of agriculture in the post-World War II period. There was opportunity for perhaps one son to stay in agriculture and inherit the farm, but not more.

01-00:53:34
Geraci: And you had two sisters?

01-00:53:35
Farrell: Yes. I would have been the logical person to inherit the farm. But at that particular time, it was very difficult to earn a living in agriculture. Still, at the end of World War II, it was a subsistence type of agriculture. There was a surplus of labor in agriculture. The wages were low. The incomes of farmers were low and there were many new vistas opening up in the non-farm sectors. World War II created all kinds of new industries and a great deal of employment after the war. So there was a strong economic incentive to move out of agriculture. The pull factor.

80
01-00:54:55
Geraci: Is this also the transition era? Farming has always been subsistence plus, is the economic way that we look at it. The family farm has never been a profitable, as we think today, middle class existence. And in those post-World War II

years, America is economically exploding. And I think a lot of people get caught up in this.

01-00:55:21
Farrell: Yes, as I said, I think that the explosion of new enterprises, innovation, rapid social change, labor opportunities off the farm resulted in many people leaving agriculture. Young people who were graduating from high school at that time were caught up by that excitement, and wanted to try living in a different way and to earn improved income. I think the economic factor was the major factor. Now, life was hard on small family farms. You had to work hard and you were expected to do a good deal of manual labor. And perhaps that notion drove some people off. But I think the fundamental reason is simply that there was the attraction of new jobs, better income, a better style of living.

01-00:56:34
Geraci: That's quite a lure to give to young people.

01-00:56:36
Farrell: Yes. Irresistible.

01-00:56:38
Geraci: Yes. That's quite a lure to hold them away from that. And also, I think this is the era of the new corporate agriculture. Although we've always had corporate agriculture in world history, in US history. This was the modern lure, as farms are now shifting to that larger corporate—

01-00:56:57
Farrell: Yes. Well, in the United States, the period from about 1949, 1950 to 1970, there was a huge exodus of people from rural America. That was a result of both expanding job opportunities off the farm, but also the result of innovations on the farm which meant that you didn't have to have as much labor as you previously needed. Tractors, for example, greatly reduced the numbers of people involved in agriculture. So in that twenty year period—as our mutual acquaintance, Wayne Rasmussen has documented, there was a huge migration off-farm. It was also regionally affected. There was migration off farms across the country, but the major stream of migration was from the Southern United States to the Northern Industrial Rust Belt cities.

01-00:58:19
Geraci: And also, by the fifties, the Sunbelt.

01-00:58:21
Farrell: The exodus to the Sunbelt came later in the fifties. That’s right. So it was a very dynamic period. And all the time that this was occurring, farms were getting larger. As your neighbor left, another neighbor acquired the farm. Farms grew dramatically in size. Now, the number of corporate farms is, even today, relatively small, although California is somewhat the exception. But certainly the size of farms, whether corporate or non-corporate in structure,

grew immensely and became much more complex. They became much more dependent upon skilled managers and hence the development of management training programs at universities and technical schools. It was a period of very, very dynamic growth driven in large part by the development of the American economy.

01-00:59:29
Geraci: Are we saying that agriculture is business?

01-00:59:32
Farrell: We are.

01-00:59:36
Geraci: And I think that's probably the best way to describe it. Farming because much more businesslike in this era, which meant that we had to become efficient, you had to expand. All business, to be profiting, has to be expanding. So it starts answering to the real needs and necessities of a market based economy.

01-00:59:56
Farrell: Precisely. And what helped to make this, of course, was the flow of new technology that came from research and innovation at the universities, as well as the private sector into the agricultural sector at a very rapid rate inducing change at rates that we couldn't really ever have anticipated.

01-00:60:20
Geraci: OK. I think this is a perfect place to end our first interview.

01-00:60:24
Farrell: Very good.

01-00:60:25
Geraci: Thank you very much.

Interview 2: October 2, 2008
Begin Audio File 2

02-00:00:00
Geraci: Today is Thursday, October 2, 2008, and we are in the Walnut Creek, California home of Dr. Kenneth Farrell. This is the second interview with Dr. Farrell, as part of the Agricultural Natural Resources "Taking it to the People" oral history project, and is being conducted by Victor W. Geraci, Associate Director of the UC Berkeley's Regional Oral History Office.

Dr. Farrell, last time we were starting into your career, and we got up to about 1965. So we're going to continue that rather thematic or chronological approach to building the background for how you get to ANR, and your basic career, the specialties, and the things that you were doing. And I think we left off '65. We're just about where you're becoming the economist for the National Food Commission in Washington, D. C. You actually got a UC leave—

02-00:00:59
Farrell: Correct.

02-00:01:00
Geraci: —to go there.

02-00:01:01
Farrell: I was at the time an Extension specialist, and an associate economist on the Giannini Foundation, and was approached by the director of the commission as to whether I would be available to work for a year or longer in Washington as a co-director of one of the commission projects. Well, I decided that, having returned only a year—the previous year from Italy that it was time that I stayed at UC and did something that was of direct and immediate value to UC. So I turned them down, but we did work out an arrangement whereby I took leave, stayed in Berkeley in my office, and worked on a piece of the commission report, which extended over an 18-month period.

02-00:01:57
Geraci: Can you talk a little bit about the commission? What was the commission—?

02-00:02:00
Farrell: At that time, and at many different times in the history of agriculture, there's been great concern as to whether the farmer, the producer, is earning a fair share of the consumer dollar. At that time, there was a growing feeling that the marketing part of the food chain was growing, consolidating, and exercising a great deal of power over the prices and marketing practices in agriculture itself. And although there had been several studies of this question, there had not been a thorough examination of the marketing chain and how it affected and how it related specifically to agricultural economics. By that, I mean the economics of agriculture.

So the commission was formed. It was appointed as a presidential commission.

02-00:03:06
Geraci: Now, this is under Lyndon Johnson?

02-00:03:07
Farrell: This was under Lyndon Johnson. It was headed by a judge whose name I have forgot (from the northwest), a distinguished jurist. And the executive director was an economist by the name of George Brandow, from Penn State. He was a senior professor, well established and well regarded. He provided the overall direction.

One of the unique issues or areas that he needed help in exploring was that related to specialty crops. They had no one on the commission staff until I joined them on my leave of absence who had any familiarity or had worked to any extent in the economics of the specialty crop industry such as we have here. So my particular responsibility was to focus on the marketing questions related to specialty crops, and specifically on the use of what are called "federal and state marketing orders," which are devices sponsored by government to assist agriculture producers in more orderly marketing of their products.

So that was the particular area that was my focus. It resulted in a stand-alone chapter, which was published by the commission, and of course it was integrated into the overall commission report. It was a very interesting experience, because it involved travel to various parts of the country to interview industry leaders, agricultural organizations to get their perspective and their views on these issues. So I learned a great deal about American agriculture in the process of working for the commission.

02-00:05:17
Geraci: Now, let's talk a little bit about these marketing orders. This is a basic need of farmers at the lower levels. Whether it be cooperatives or marketing orders, there's always been a need to sell—farmers are not good sales people.

02-00:05:34
Farrell: That's right. They're not good sales people, and typically, they have very little bargaining power in the marketing process. If you just think about the typical system that has prevailed for the better part of the twentieth century, there has been a trend, toward fewer and fewer marketing firms. Those who process the food, those who transport it, the whole story there is one of consolidation, many fewer firms. And as they became fewer, they were able to exert more influence on how the farmer marketed, what he marketed, and of course, the allegation was that they were negatively influencing the prices being received by farmers.

The origin of marketing orders goes back to the New Deal. It was felt that farmers needed a means to organize collectively to do certain things in the marketplace, and to be exempt from certain of the antitrust laws which prevail for the industrial sector with regards to concentration of economic power and consolidation. So in the early stages—very early stages—of the New Deal, the federal government, and later the state of California, established enabling legislation for cooperatives, farmer-owned cooperatives, which meant that they were able to form cooperatives and market their products through those devices, and be exempt from certain of the antitrust actions that would otherwise prevail.

But it was soon found that cooperatives by themselves were not really sufficient, because there was lack of cohesion in the industry, and a lack of cooperation [laughter] among the cooperatives, so to speak. So the idea of a marketing order came into being. There were both federal and state legislation, initially at the federal level, which said in effect farmers are free to come together on a voluntary basis, and to do certain things collectively which they could not do individually. They were allowed collectively to withhold some amount of products from the market, for example, in order to enhance the prices—the price for that commodity. They were allowed to collectively engage in promotion and advertising to help strengthen the market for their products, which they could not afford to do as an individual farmer. And they were able to collectively establish minimum grades and standards for their product to enhance the salability and the confidence of the consumer in that product.

So these marketing orders which came into being generally formed around commodities: either a single commodity, or a group of commodities. For example, in California, we had at one time a marketing order for raisins, another marketing order for wine, a marketing order for tree fruits—several tree fruits. And so the producers of those products were required by law—once the marketing order was passed by a majority of the growers, to adhere to the terms of the order whether they had voted "yes" or "no," in favor of establishment.

So it became quite a powerful instrument to reshape—to shape importantly, at least—the nature of marketing systems, particularly in California. At one time, I believe we had somewhere in the order of thirty to fifty of these marketing orders, some actually controlling the flow of product to the market, some only doing promotion and advertising. But there were around fifty state and federal orders at one time in this state.

Now, just to continue the story, over time and up to the current period, the use of marketing orders has gradually decreased. In part, that's the result of changing views of the public regarding the use of market power and collective action by growers and others, generally opposing or trying to constrain that power in significant ways. It also was in part the result of a change in the

organization of agriculture itself. There were fewer and fewer farmers. There was not the large number of independent family farms [laughter] as we used to think typified agriculture. It became a more industrial-like agriculture. And as they did, they were able to do a much better job of marketing their own products. That's the era in which many of the prominent food labels of today came into being, Sunkist being an example. It was a cooperative that was very successful, and a—

02-00:12:26
Geraci: Sun-Maid Raisins.

02-00:12:27
Farrell: Sun-Maid. There are dozens of them now.

So the need for and the use of marketing orders has gradually declined. But at the time, in the thirties and throughout the fifties, well into the sixties, the marketing order was a very important device to enhance the economic position of farmers. And at the university, one of the things that we did that I think was a very significant contribution to the advancement of agriculture was to conduct economic studies that focused on marketing orders, or focused upon the markets for agriculture, and how marketing orders could be used to enhance the effectiveness of farmers in the marketplace.

When I first came to the Giannini Foundation, I worked closely with a man by the name of Sidney Hoos, a full professor of Ag Economics at the time, and one who had been a pioneer in the operation of orders, marketing orders, here in California. So I worked closely with him, and learned some of the "tricks of the trade," so to speak. We used to conduct, for example, statistical analysis of factors affecting the price of cling peaches, to use one example. Each year, we would conduct this study, and we would publish the results, and use it—using the Extension theme, to conduct industry meetings, present the results of our analysis, and permit them to ask questions about how we did it, and what the results would be if they went this way or that way with their order. So it was a very important component of the Giannini Foundation and Extension economic activity during the fifties and the sixties in particular.

02-00:14:58
Geraci: So they're basically—large corporations have in-house ability to statistically gather the information they—

02-00:15:05
Farrell: Correct.

02-00:15:06
Geraci: —need to make their future decisions. Farmers don't have that capability.

02-00:15:10
Farrell: Exactly. Yes, you said it very well.

02-00:15:13
Geraci: And it seems to me that from what—just listening to you right now, agribusiness makes a big—by the mid-1950s, we've even coined the term "agribusiness."

02-00:15:22
Farrell: That's right, that's right.

02-00:15:23
Geraci: It's becoming more corporate. So is—that's what's really changing?

02-00:15:29
Farrell: The term "agribusiness" was coined by Professor Ray Goldberg at Harvard University. He observed the evolution of small farms into larger farms, linkage of farming and marketing and the marketing, business-related functions that went along with it. In other words, agribusiness became an important organization feature in both the production of the commodity, but also in the marketing of the agricultural products. The term "vertical integration," which through ownership or contracts linked much more closely the production parts of agriculture with the marketing and distribution parts of the food system. So we had in effect a substantially changed structure, organization, and set of procedures affecting the marketing of food. And of course, it's still evolving.

02-00:16:51
Geraci: It seems to me the tensions of the time would be then that farmers had to learn to market, but at the same time, the market is evolving. I mean, we're looking now at grocery chains buying direct, and—

02-00:17:07
Farrell: Yes.

02-00:17:08
Geraci: —contract farming. We're—

02-00:17:09
Farrell: Yes.

02-00:17:09
Geraci: —looking at the large corporate farm.

02-00:17:12
Farrell: Yes.

02-00:17:12
Geraci: We're looking at the tension between the small farmer and the large farmer.

02-00:17:15
Farrell: Yes. That tension, of course, has always been there. Going back to the time when I was still on the farm, there was concern even at that time that the corporate buyers were taking advantage of the small farmer. And it certainly

evolved into being a very common and important theme during the thirties and the Depression period.

So, yes: agriculture has become not a way of life, as it was once described, but a business. And to be successful, farmers found that they had to use the same principles as an industrial organization in organizing their activity and making their choices, and in the way they marketed their products.

02-00:18:10
Geraci: And this idea of vertical integration, the industrial sector had already done that since the Gilded Age. We had seen the merger, the vertical and horizontal—

02-00:18:19
Farrell: That's right.

02-00:18:10
Geraci: —integration plans. But for agriculture, it was just a little bit behind on that—

02-00:18:23
Farrell: That's right.

02-00:18:24
Geraci: —curve, then?

02-00:18:24
Farrell: Much behind on that curve. It was not until the fifties and the sixties, when the industrialization of agriculture became obvious. It was beginning to evolve in a way that represented the industrial organization of other parts of the economy. And it was during that period when this conflict became very keen and very sharp, and when these new structures such as marketing orders, cooperatives, vertical and horizontal integration, contract farming, all of those were instruments that fostered the development of this more industrialized structure. And California, relative to the rest of the country, was on the forefront of all of this. In many ways, California led the rest of the country in terms of the creation of these institutions and organizations. So California truly has been a leader in the changing organization of American agriculture. And all of what is described as the "industrialization of agriculture" is most commonly found right here in California.

02-00:19:57
Geraci: Couldn't much of this change in what's—since the government is now becoming very much involved in all of this, could that have led to—there seems to have been a distrust of the New Deal and FDR by farmers. And could some of that have been the fact that it seemed to them even at that time, by the thirties, that he was turning agriculture over to the larger corporate or industrial—?

02-00:20:21
Farrell: I think that came later. At least, the zenith of that feeling came later. In the thirties, farmers were desperate. They were at the bottom end of the economic

totem pole, and almost anything looked good, including even the "socialization," if you want [laughter] to call it that, of the economy. I think that the period in which this tension became sharpest was after World War II, when the influx of new technology and the creation of job opportunities out of agriculture created this tremendous exodus of people out of agriculture, and a tremendous consolidation in the number and size of farms. So I would say that it was the period *after* World War II where this concern on the part of farmers about the intrusion of government into agriculture began. s

02-00:21:51
Geraci: And it's strange, yet.

02-00:21:51
Farrell: —World War II.

02-00:21:53
Geraci: In many ways, it's the New Deal, the 1930s prorate structure, that really helped many of these small farmers even survive.

02-00:22:00
Farrell: Oh, absolutely. If it had not been for the New Deal programs of the thirties for agriculture, it would have been much, much slower in recovering. World War II was a tremendous accelerator to the reorganization and industrialization of agriculture.

02-00:22:21
Geraci: The same was World War I had been a great accelerator to agriculture?

02-00:22:24
Farrell: Exactly. Exactly.

02-00:22:27
Geraci: Now—

02-00:22:28
Farrell: Just let me say that as one looks back on the evolution of American agriculture, I think that the postwar period from, say, 1950 to the mid-seventies, was what might be termed "the golden era of agriculture" in many respects. It was one of tremendous change and growth, and generally much improved incomes. The modernization—the technological modernization and the economic modernization—of agriculture was very pronounced in that period. Historians will look back and say that that was a unique and certainly a vitally important part of the evolution of agriculture in the last two centuries.

02-00:23:33
Geraci: Let's kind of tie together your position—I mean, we got off on this tangent, which I think is a good tangent because we're defining something that was very important for the work you were doing on this commission. What were your findings? What did you—the commission is over. Knowing this background now, what were your predictions and findings?

02-00:23:52

Farrell: Well, in some ways, the findings were—how would I put it?—those which you might [laughter] have expected beforehand. It's very difficult to prove economic malfeasance in the marketing of products. So the commission came out basically by saying that the farmer's share of the consumer's dollar had been declining, and was going to continue to decline, but only in part because of the growing power of agribusiness, or of the industrial manufacturing sectors; that what was behind the changing nature of agriculture and the falling farmer's share of the dollar was that consumers had become more and more wealthy. Their tastes and preferences for food had been changing. Wives were taking jobs off the farm, and the matter of convenience was more and more important: the convenience in being able to prepare and serve food. And all of that added to the "marketing bill," so to speak—the marketing share of the consumer dollar. So what was happening was not so much a raw exercise of economic power—although there was some of that, too—but more that there was the changing evolution of consumer tastes and preferences, which was that in favor of providing services, marketing services, much more so than increasing the quantity of food. So farm share naturally would decline under those conditions.

Now, beyond that, there were a number of important recommendations that did subsequently find their way into laws or practice over the course of the next several decades. For example, farmer cooperatives were criticized for their failure to provide the necessary leadership in some fields that they might have provided back in the thirties and forties. They were simply not availing themselves of the opportunities to enhance farmers' position in the marketplace. There were suggested changes, for example, in grades and standards. The matter of price reporting: how do farmers get information, and how reliable is that information? In some cases, not particularly reliable. For example, in the egg industry, the market had basically evolved and concentrated in such a way that there was only one source of information about the price of eggs in Omaha, let's say, or in Nebraska. So there was a recommendation that the universities and the state governments needed to play a much more active role to ensure that there was timely, reliable information. And the Extension Service was "encouraged," if that's the right term, to become more proactive in helping farmers to adjust their planning and their operations to the changes in the system.

So there were a number of important findings that came out of the commission. But unlike the charge that led to the establishment, there was no finding, no major conclusion, that farmers were being "ripped off," so to speak, mightily by a few firms in the industries they were dealing with; that it was more a matter of a natural economic evolution that was affecting agriculture.

02-00:28:34

Geraci: Now, that's an official stance.

02-00:28:36
Farrell: Yes.

02-00:28:36
Geraci: What do you think?

02-00:28:37
Farrell: I subscribe basically to that stance. I do think that cooperatives could have been more far-sighted in the way that they organized themselves and conducted business. For example, I think cooperatives could've been—and maybe still could be—much more active in development of export markets for farm products. I think cooperatives could've been more active in encouraging and inducing their farmer members to improve the grades and quality, and the marketing practices they used in preparing their product for the marketplace.

But overall, I think I subscribed, and still do, generally to the view that certainly, there is growing concentration, in part the result of the economies of scale. There needs to be oversight of that concentration. The last decade has been one of rather lax oversight and regulation of the antitrust laws. I think that we do need to go back and look at those laws again, and perhaps reinvigorate their application to parts of the food sector. But overall, I think the food sector has been one that has functioned efficiently; not always equitably, but certainly efficiently, to the betterment of consumers and farmers.

02-00:30:30
Geraci: It's delivered a high quality amount of food—

02-00:30:34
Farrell: Absolutely.

02-00:30:34
Geraci: —to a large population. And I think historically, there's no culture that's ever {inaudible}.

02-00:30:39
Farrell: And at the lowest cost relative to the income of consumers.

02-00:30:42
Geraci: Which is interesting to me. As you mentioned, as general consumer income is rising, farmers are not keeping up with this. Yet the consumer in America has learned to—spends less on their food than any other country.

02-00:30:57
Farrell: Yes.

02-00:30:58
Geraci: —industrialized nation.

02-00:30:58

Farrell: That is correct. The overall cost of producing and marketing food, while it's gone up—particularly the marketing cost—consumer incomes have gone up more rapidly, and that's because of industrial economic development. So therefore, you expect the share of consumer expenditures on food to fall. Now, ours fell quite precipitously during the sixties and seventies. It's been much more stable in the last several decades. If anything, in this past year or two, it might even be increasing. But it's pretty low, at around 10 percent or less on average. So I don't see anything inconsistent in what you've described. It's a part of the process of economic development.

02-00:32:09

Geraci: I think what's interesting about the conversation we're having right now: this is something that most people don't understand about the Department of Agriculture, or about Agriculture and Natural Resources, or Extension, and that ag economics has been one of the key facts and themes since the beginning of the department of Agriculture.

02-00:32:30

Farrell: That's right. While I was in USDA, I worked for four different Secretaries of Agriculture. And only one of them was an economist. Three were not. And I never will forget the statement of one of the three, who said, "I'm not sure about how we should work with your organization"—the Economic Research Service, which I was in charge of. He said, "My feeling is that we can't get along with economists, but we can't get along without them, either." [laughter]

I think all Secretaries of Agriculture find that having good economic analysis, having a well-trained corps of economists, is essential to the development of good policy. You might not like what they have to say, and they might not say it very clearly, or even consistently with each other. But having that kind of information and that decision-making power is a powerful tool.

02-00:33:51

Geraci: Let's move on to the next— So this is 1965-66 that you're working on the commission. Then in '66-67, you become the Assistant Director of the UC Davis Cooperative Extension Service, and a Special Assistant to the Dean of Agriculture. Tell me about those years.

02-00:34:08

Farrell: A very interesting two years. When I finished my assignment on the National Commission on Food Marketing, I came back to my responsibilities as an Extension Economist and in the Foundation. And about that time, in 1966, the Dean of Agriculture—that's the position of the Vice President for Ag and Natural Resources today—was a man by the name of Maurice Peterson. He was an agronomist from Davis. George Alcorn, an agricultural economist, was the Director of Cooperative Extension. Because agriculture was growing very rapidly, they had received many expressions of the need to expand their programs, to serve California agriculture and its changing and growing needs

for information, scientific and other kinds of information. It was Peterson who said, "I think that one of the things that we're going to have to think about is the establishment of a new field research station."

So he appointed me as a special assistant to him specifically for the purpose of conducting a study of the need for additional research and Extension facilities. Over the course of the next year, he appointed an external committee to advise him and advise me with external points of view about this, the issues and the needs. I spent about a year preparing this report, and it ended up being a unanimous recommendation of the study committee that the university establish a new or expanded facility at Kearney, which is near Parlier, south of Fresno, to enhance the field research capacity and the Extension programs in that area.

So that was my role of special assistant. Now, at the same time, I was given a state car and said, "You're going to travel to Davis daily." [laughter] Which turned out to be a rather burdensome assignment; Highway 80 was no joy to drive at that time. And so I took on or had the title of assistant director for the Davis campus Extension specialists. It was largely an administrative role, but it was my responsibility to help develop overall Extension programs among specialists on the Davis campus, and to encourage linkage between the Davis specialists and the Extension advisers located in all of California's counties.

So that was a busy year—a year and a half, actually. I drove practically every day to Davis, and back at night. It was—

02-00:38:28:00
Geraci: [laughter] That's tough in itself.

02-00:38:28
Farrell: —a challenge.

02-00:38:29
Geraci: Yeah.

One thing you've mentioned here is you're overseeing specialists and advisers. And those roles have changed over time.

02-00:38:37
Farrell: Yes.

02-00:38:38
Geraci: What was it like to be a specialist or an adviser then? What would—?

02-00:38:43
Farrell: Well, the roles have changed. Generally, what's been happening is that the amount of formal training by both advisers—that is, Extension advisers in the counties—and the specialists, the training has become more and more science-based, more and more technical, and as a result, programs have become more

and more specialized. So there is quite a difference in the way the system operates today as compared to what it was when I came in 1957. I think that the basic functions are similar, but advisers at one time were almost totally dependent upon specialists and campus departments for the information that they used for local Extension programs. Nowadays, they are in their own right applied researchers, and they are not only extending information: they are actually involved in the research process, some of them quite deeply with their colleagues on the campus or with specialists.

So the division, if you will, the separation that was present in the sixties, let us say, during this period we are talking about, and the structure today is different in the sense that there is a much closer linkage between the two, between the specialist based in the campus and advisers. All specialists are now based on the campus, or virtually all, in their respective subject matter departments. We'll talk about the change that I made to bring that about later on, but that is an important change. There is a stronger administrative *and* programmatic linkage between the campus and the county advisers than there was in the earlier years.

02-00:41:02
Geraci: Now, for the specialist on the campus at that point, are they faculty senate? What's—?

02-00:41:08
Farrell: Well, they were not at that time faculty senate, nor are they today faculty senate. They have their own personnel system, their own grades and pay system. When I first joined the Extension system in '57, they were all, virtually all, administratively responsible to the director of Extension based in Berkeley. Now it's much more decentralized.

So the roles have changed certainly in the last couple decades in substantial ways. Even before I integrated them into the department, they were housed in departments. In many cases, they worked closely with faculty. But they were not a formal part of the academic senate or the academic structure. Their titles were different, and their pay scales were different. Their decisions on program evaluation, on promotion and advancement, were not taken in the department, as they now are. They were taken by the administrative body in the director's office—director of Extension office—at Berkeley. So it's quite a different system.

02-00:43:03
Geraci: Yeah, and I wanted to bring it up now, because as we get to it later on, there becomes a tension—

02-00:43:09
Farrell: Yes.

02-00:43:10
Geraci: —over how this is taking place.

02-00:43:12
Farrell: Very definitely.

02-00:43:14
Geraci: Was there anything else, then, in those years?

02-00:43:18
Farrell: Well, of course the years on the campus were dominated by student unrest, [laughter] as you will recall. The sixties were not—

02-00:43:30
Geraci: Maybe it was good that you were driving to Davis daily.

02-00:43:33
Farrell: It didn't have any great impact on my programs or my operations, because at that time, I was not involved directly in the teaching programs. But it was an exciting, vibrant, very productive campus—it always has been. And it continues that way today.

One of the problems that Extension has had over the years, in my judgment, in attracting really capable specialists has been the academic separation of the specialists and regular faculty. There's been a tension there for many years, and I think that that to some extent adversely affected the recruitment of staff in Extension. I think they're beyond that now, but at one stage I think that was a distinct disadvantage that Extension had to work with.

In terms of the issues of the time and our involvement, my involvement and the university involvement generally, it was a period of continued rapid growth and development throughout the sixties and the seventies. Agriculture was growing, consolidating; it was a very vibrant industry, and an effective organization in many ways in its representation in Sacramento. It was, I think, the envy of many other parts of the country.

02-00:45:41
Geraci: And then in 1967-1969, keeping along with your ag economics, what you're doing, you become the Director of Marketing Economics Division and Chairman of the Outlook and Situation Board, assistant administrator for the Economic Research Service. You are working for USDA, Washington, DC—

02-00:46:01
Farrell: Yes. That resulted from two factors. One was the—an outgrowth of my work with the National Commission on Food Marketing. Because I concentrated on marketing issues related to agriculture, I was—"nominated," I guess, is the right term—for a position in the USDA to head up the marketing research conducted in the USDA in the Economic Research Service. I concluded that I really did not want to move to Washington, but I was intrigued by the professional aspects of the position. So I took a one-year leave, and then I was fortunate in getting an Extension for a second year, to head up the marketing work in the Department of Agriculture.

Well, I found that to be interesting, and I think that I did make some modest contributions to strengthening their programs. But it was not the same sort of institution that I had become used to at Berkeley. It was much more bureaucratic, [laughter] as you would expect, and people were totally dedicated to serving USDA Washington, much more so than the general population of the country, or even agriculture. So while I enjoyed it and took on additional responsibilities in the second year, it was not something that I felt that I wanted to stay with long term. I did change my mind a little bit later on.

The Outlook and Situation Board which you just mentioned is a rather unique institution within USDA, which is designed to make available to the general public, but particularly to agriculture and to rural America, economic information related to agricultural markets. Each month, the specialists of the department would come together and discuss the latest developments in, say, trade, international trade. What's happening in the European—at that time, the European Economic Union? The commission was just beginning to function. What is the outlook? What did we expect we'll be able to export to those markets next year? Are we competitive in these markets? Or we would publish also commodity-specific situation reports, outlook reports—forecasts, to some extent—on commodities like cotton and rice, and dairy.

So my work was to head up this board, and to oversee the generation of that type of information, which I did for about a year. Then I made a choice to come back to Berkeley. At that stage, my leave had expired, and there was no interest on the part of UC or myself on extending it at that time. So I came back and resumed my old position as specialist, but also became the associate director of the foundation.

02-00:50:18
Geraci: That's the Giannini Foundation?

02-00:50:19
Farrell: The Giannini Foundation. And my role there was to provide leadership and coordination in the development of economic research programs between Berkeley and Davis, and to a much lesser extent, Riverside. The Giannini Foundation was established at Berkeley, but it was a system—it *is* a system-wide organization operating out of Berkeley, Davis, *and* Riverside.

02-00:50:55
Geraci: So it has a presence on all three of the campuses?

02-00:50:06
Farrell: It has a presence on all three campuses. Because Davis had grown substantially in size, there was beginning to be some overlap in what was being done at Berkeley and what was being done at Riverside, and what was being done at Davis. So my role was to try to get some coordination—not

integration, but to get coordination among these campuses in the conduct of research.

So we tried a few things. Generally, what I was trying to establish was that Berkeley would over time become the department that would have a comparative advantage in natural resource economics, and Davis would have a comparative advantage in production economics, and marketing would be shared between the two. The problem was that I had no budget to persuade anyone to do anything, so it was a strictly [laughter] volunteer effort on the part of the faculty. And it became obvious that it was going to be very difficult to get truly coordinated programs unless there was *some* budget made specifically available to provide incentives for faculty to do so.

I was here a year after I left the USDA. One of my mentors in agricultural economics from the time that I first came here in 1957, George Mehren was appointed Assistant Secretary for US agriculture, the USDA. And he in effect recruited me to a new position in the Department of Agriculture, which I accepted in 1971. I became an assistant and later the Deputy Administrator and Administrator of the Economic Research Service. And I stayed in that position basically from the period 1971 to 1981, with several special assignments over those years.

But that was a major change. I had decided at Berkeley that while I enjoyed very much what I was doing, and I certainly enjoyed the intellectual stimulation of the campus and the department, and people in the field as well, that I really wanted to have a chance to assume larger administrative responsibility. And the move to Washington gave me that opportunity.

02-00:54:28
Geraci: Because from my notes, I show that—I mean, these are national programs. You had over 2,200 workers in 44 states, an annual budget of over $85 million.

02-00:54:38
Farrell: That's right.

02-00:54:38
Geraci: And this is the late sixties, early seventies. That's a large program.

02-00:54:42
Farrell: Yes. Actually, the Economic Research Service is—or was at that time, and is today—the largest single agricultural economic research organization in the world. So it was indeed a very sizable staff. I'm glad you mentioned that, because while I was there, we had in the Economic Research Service field staff located in departments like the ones at Berkeley and Davis. The ERS field staff worked with faculty on the campuses. It didn't work out all that well over the years, and after I left in the early eighties, subsequent administrators withdrew the staff, and there is no formal linkage now with the campuses.

But it was mainly for the opportunity to be involved in larger administrative responsibilities, *and* to have the opportunity to interact with policy makers at the highest levels in Washington, which I found very exciting; still find exciting, as you will discover.

02-00:56:08
Geraci: There's two immediate questions that come to my mind. Number one is that—why do people choose to go into administrative things? And we'll probably get to the next tape on this: commenting on agriculture's need to become political to have its role—

02-00:56:27
Farrell: Yes.

02-00:56:27
Geraci: —and what it needs.

02-00:56:28
Farrell: Yes, yes.

02-00:56:29
Geraci: And I think we're just about at a point on this tape where we'll stop, and that's where we'll pick up then on the next tape.

Begin Audio File 3

03-00:00:05
Geraci: Today is Thursday, October 2, 2008. This is interview number two, tape number two, with Dr. Kenneth Farrell, for the ANR project.

When we left off, we were talking about your last little stint, I guess, in Washington, D. C.. And one of the things that we left off on are the need for farmers to become more political. Would you like—and I think that's what maybe the Washington, D. C. experience really is all about for you.

03-00:00:41
Farrell: Yes. As I mentioned, that definitely was one of the reasons that I was attracted to Washington, was the opportunity to be an observer and participant *in* the policy process related to agriculture, related to the USDA, on a variety of topics. I think I mentioned that I had worked with four Secretaries of Agriculture?

03-00:01:15
Geraci: Right.

03-00:01:16
Farrell: In the role that I had as Deputy and then Administrator, my task was to bring economic research and information to bear on the policy questions, policy issues of the department as seen by the Secretary, and to work with them on the presentation of it. With respect to agriculture itself, it is in a broad sense

represented by the USDA, although one of the things I used to kid people about in Washington was the fact that their view of the world was "everything east of the Potomac." The notion of California and California agricultural problems were not something that they were terribly familiar with. And on occasion, they would simply scoff at the nature of policy issues that I told them that Californians were interested in. But in any case, it was a great opportunity to observe and participate in the policy process.

Farmers don't fully appreciate the importance of and the need for effective political action. Farmers tend to think that world begins and ends with sunrise and sunset on the local farm. But agriculture is of course much more than simply producing fruits and vegetables, or for that matter, any commodity. To be successful in agriculture, you not only have to be able to know how to produce: you have to know how to market; you have to be able to manage finance; you have to be a planner to make decisions that affect your own livelihood and the markets for years in advance. And you need to be able to shape your policy positions, and explain them, and present them in an effective manner before the appropriate legislative bodies at the right time, and in a manner that's effective. Few farmers are able to do this themselves. I mean they generally rely on organizations, whether it's a commodity organization, or a general farm organization, or some other group that they are affiliated with. They rely on those groups to present their positions in the legislature.

I think that it is amazing to many people, particularly political scientists that really don't understand agriculture, to find that agriculture has as much clout as they do in congressional committees. There was a time when the Agriculture Committee and all of its subcommittees were dominated by senators or congressmen from the South. They operated those committees and strategized on behalf of commodity producers in a generally very effective way over many years in Washington. Gradually, as the number of congressmen with agricultural backgrounds has receded, the direct influence of Agriculture chairs and committees of course has also diminished to some extent. But those committees are still among the most effective and productive in Washington.

Farmers need to take a more proactive role in this process. And it seems to me the way to do that is through farm organizations. I think that some of them—for example, Farm Bureau has got a large staff, and they do a predictably good job. But I think that the commodity organizations could be more effective than they are. Although I must admit that, for example, the commodity organizations related to dairy are pretty powerful, and if you get on the wrong side of that committee, you'll hear about it, as a good friend of mine did.

03-00:06:22

Geraci: Well, could it be also commodities—look at the role that tobacco played for decades. And it's a role that was exaggerated, to the point where—

03-00:06:44
Farrell: Exactly

03-00:06:45
Geraci: —certain senators controlled a lot.

03-00:06:48
Farrell: That's right. Or cotton. The same—

03-00:06:51
Geraci: Cotton?

03-00:06:51
Farrell: —is true there.

03-00:06:51
Geraci: Right.

03-00:06:52
Farrell: Yes. And to a lesser extent, perhaps rice. All of those being Southern dominated. I mean dominated by Southern legislators. And very powerful interest groups.

03-00:07:07
Geraci: I think what's interesting is this is something that maybe farmers forgot? I mean, we go back in American history, and the Populists in the Gilded Age, they fought hard and furious through the National Granges—

03-00:07:20
Farrell: That's right.

03-00:07:21
Geraci: —to get a political voice. And then it seems that maybe that lost that voice?

03-00:07:28
Farrell: I think that voice has been weakened, and I think to a certain extent that's the result of the changing nature of the Congress itself. The urban interests dominate, and many of those legislators probably have no real interest or no real knowledge of conditions in agriculture. So I think agriculture is on a bit of a treadmill. They're going to have to run harder to stay in the same position politically because of the fact that their power is gradually being diluted by the urbanization of the nation.

03-00:08:16
Geraci: Since the time of the Populist to the present, we've gone from maybe 70-80 percent of the population involved in agriculture to less than 1 percent—

03-00:08:27
Farrell: That's right.

03-00:08:28
Geraci: —in modern times?

03-00:08:28
Farrell: That's right.

03-00:08:29
Geraci: I mean, this is a huge urbanization.

03-00:08:31
Farrell: It is truly remarkable. And as I have said, on many occasions, agriculture must expect to gradually lose its political power because of the dilution of the interests on the Hill. But when you look at particular issues, and you look at the quadrennial farm bill, agriculture is still able to sway a lot of votes to get favorable legislation. But it requires a much different approach. Rather than a hammer, to finalize everything by the chair of the committee, it requires the building of various kinds of coalitions. “Farm” policy has little chance of succeeding by itself. What it has to do is to find coalitions with other interest groups: "If you will support me on this vote, I will support you on that vote." So it requires a different strategy and a different mindset on the part of those who are representing agriculture.

03-00:10:02
Geraci: And these farm bills that we're—every five years, we go through this rituals of our farm bills. And it seems that in the last two or three of them, the arguments against the money being spent in these farm bills becomes stronger—

03-00:10:17
Farrell: Yes.

03-00:10:18
Geraci: —and stronger—

03-00:10:18
Farrell: It's gradually—

03-00:10:19
Geraci: —and stronger. So I think that's making your point that their power is diminishing?

03-00:10:22
Farrell: Yes, it is. If you look at agricultural policy historically, it's gradually eroding. And I have said before, I would not be surprised that the last—the bill that we passed a year ago—may be the last such omnibus piece of legislation for agriculture. Because of budget problems, because of the changing political scene, because of the change in leadership, it may be very difficult to get anything like that through the Congress. A bill that totals $40-50 billion is not going to be easy to come by given the circumstances in the country these days.

03-00:11:21
Geraci: What will be the ramifications if we can't do that?

03-00:11:26
Farrell: I think what we'll see is a policy process that will be greatly fractured. You'll not have the USDA or the Farm Bureau, such large organizations, such large and diverse organizations, playing the important roles they now play. I believe what you'll see is that there will be more specialized, more commodity or regional or more focused but smaller interest groups looking not just at the agricultural committees, but at other committees: the environmental committees, the natural resource committees. I think you'll see sort of a fracturing and refocusing of the political forces.

03-00:12:24
Geraci: Could a good example of the beginnings of that be the Wine Caucus? The Wine Caucus today in Congress has—just under 300 members of Congress belong to the Wine Caucus—considering now that almost every state has a wine industry.

03-00:12:38
Farrell: Yes.

03-00:12:39
Geraci: And they're acting—

03-00:12:40
Farrell: Yes.

03-00:12:41
Geraci: —on their own.

03-00:12:41
Farrell: Yes, yes. That would be a good example. That's a specialized interest group that is acting on their own. They're not dependent on USDA; they're not dependent on Farm Bureau for whatever legislative purposes they have in mind. So—

03-00:12:59
Geraci: So this could be a trend that's moving for all agriculture now?

03-00:13:04
Farrell: I think so. I think it would be a trend that will result in much more fractionalization, and much more specific interest groups, interest group focus. Now, what the end result will be, I don't know.

03-00:13:20
Geraci: [laughter] Well, I think given the present state of the American economy, all predictions are off at this moment.

03-00:13:27
Farrell: That's right. We should avoid those.

03-00:13:29
Geraci: Yeah, all predictions—

Well, so you are doing this between 1977 and 1981 with the Economics and Statistics Service. And then from '81 to '86, you serve as a Senior Fellow and Director of the National Center for Food and Agricultural Policy, which is a Kellogg Foundation, and Ford Foundation, and Rockefeller Foundation, those three foundations fund it.

03-00:13:52

Farrell: It was the most exciting five-year period of my life. I had become concerned about the ability of USDA to present what I would call, in the nomenclature of today, a "fair and balanced" perspective on public policy [laughter] related to agriculture. The policies of USDA were the policies of the Secretary, and whoever happened to be the party in power. But because agriculture was becoming more and more integrated into general society, because agriculture and natural resource issues were becoming much more closely linked, because agriculture and environmental concerns were becoming topics of great concern, in addition to the concerns of consumers in such matters as food safety, food quality, and the like, the singular focus on production aspects of agriculture were becoming less and less relevant to the American public. The department was still largely focusing on what I called "production agriculture," and not these broader dimensions. We were missing the linkage between ag and the environment. There was very little cooperation/collaboration while I was there between Agriculture and EPA, for example, on issues related to water or land use. They were like two ships passing in the night. So I felt that the long-term interests of agriculture are in the direction of taking advantage of this interdependence; of being able to form the coalitions and the linkages that are going to be necessary to place agriculture in this larger context.

I became during this period President of the American Agricultural Economics Association, and I used the occasion of my presidential address in 1976 to indicate that I felt there was a very obvious need for a nonpartisan, independent policy group somewhere in the country. After much discussion about the concept, a friend of mine, Emery Castle, who at that time was the President of Resources for the Future called me and said, "Well, Resources for the Future is a non-profit, nonpartisan non-advocacy group. Our focus at the moment is primarily on natural resource and environmental issues, but I would like to build an agricultural component along with the environmental and natural resource components. Would you be interested?"

Well, it was a perfect fit for what I had been advocating, and so at that point I joined RFF, and in the first year or two was supported by the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. Their relatively small grants permitted me to hire a small staff—one person—[laughter] and to do some travel, and do some writing. Toward the end of the second year, I was approached by the Kellogg Foundation, Bob Cramer, who said, "We are interested in what you are trying to do, and we'd like to talk with you about getting you some support." Which they did, to the tune of a $5 million unrestricted grant.

That permitted me to get a foothold. I hired additional staff, and we began such things as policy-related conferences, specialized briefings for congressional staff on policy topics. We would settle on a topic, and then bring in experts from around the country to focus on that issue. We had a training program for young emerging leaders—primarily from universities to come to Washington to the National Center for a period of three weeks, I think it was. They would have the opportunity then of observing the policy process, meeting people on the Hill, and meeting people around Washington, getting to understand how policy was developed and what the process was for presenting it, and how it was enacted.

So that was a very important, very exciting period of time. We contributed to one farm bill in a major way, and we were quite actively involved in a number of issues, including issues that jointly involved agriculture and natural resources, the land use issues, agriculture and the environment. Water was a big issue, and it was an important part of RFF. So it was a very natural connection. It was a full-time job, but a very exciting one. I had decided that I was going to stay there until I retired. I felt that I could have found additional support for what I was doing.

But then came the announcement that they were looking for a Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources—

03-00:20:49
Geraci: [laughter] Which I want to—

03-00:20:50
Farrell: —at the University of California.

03-00:20:51
Geraci: Yes. Which I want to save for our next interview. That's where—

03-00:20:53
Farrell: Very good.

03-00:21:54
Geraci: —we'll pick up. But I want to—let's expand a little bit about—you said you had some major impacts while with the National Center on one of the farm bills. What types of things specifically?

03-00:21:05
Farrell: Specifically on some of the international trade language that was written into the farm bill, and on some of the research and education components that were written into the farm bill. We worked with the staff of several different committees—the Ag. Committee, but several different subcommittees—on trying to actually develop language —that went into the farm bill. Now, it wasn't quite that simple, because that usually meant that we would sit down with the principal of a bill and discuss the issue, provide information that they

felt they needed to make a decision, and actually work in an advisory role on language to be sure that it made sense.

03-00:22:04
Geraci: We talk in American politics today about "think tanks." We have think tanks for—Is this an agricultural think tank?

03-00:22:13
Farrell: That is an agricultural think tank.

03-00:22:15
Geraci: Do we have any of those around today? I mean, how—set a context, I guess. Who is doing this for us?

03-00:22:22
Farrell: Well, actually, an organization I started, the National Center for Food and Agricultural Policy. is still functioning in Washington. They have downsized, so their presence is not as obvious anymore. There are two or three others in Washington that have specialized focus on agriculture or agricultural and environmental issues. There are several university-based centers that conduct this kind of policy analysis. For example, at Davis, we have what is called the Agricultural Issues Center. It's an attachment to or a part of the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. And it conducts conferences, it does research on significant policy issues related to California. There is one at Texas A&M, for example. It does something similar for the Southern Plains. And there's one at Iowa State which—and it covers the Midwest.

So yes: there are those think tanks around. Their effectiveness varies widely. Some are timely and on the ball, and do make a difference at critical junctures. But most of them, and most of the research which goes on at universities, is not always well adapted to the political process. It may not be timely; it may not be focused on the issue in the way that the issue is seen by the legislator. It may be poorly articulated or put together, and it fails to be effective in its impact.

Timeliness of contribution is terribly important, and that's where a specialized think tank operation like the one I had has a big advantage. We were located in Washington; we had connections out all over the country, to universities and other individuals. We could bring people together quickly. We could harness information in a very effective, timely manner—although we were dependent on the universities for doing much of the basic research that was behind the work that we used.

03-00:25:31
Geraci: It seems then that today, what we have is more of a commodity or regionally-driven—

03-00:25:36
Farrell: Yes.

03-00:25:36
Geraci: —basis. And what your organization offered was more of a national plan.

03-00:25:43
Farrell: Yes.

03-00:25:44
Geraci: And I think there's a need to have this national—

03-00:25:46
Farrell: Yes.

03-00:25:47
Geraci: —at least an overview I think—

03-00:25:49
Farrell: Yes. That's an important point. You're exactly right. When Kellogg funded the National Center, they told me that it was their hope to be able to fund a selected number of regional centers that would be a part of this "family," so to speak. But they never established such centers. I don't know what happened, but funding may have been inadequate. The centers that I've mentioned are by and large those which have been funded by the universities themselves, or in a few cases, with congressional grants.

03-00:26:39
Geraci: And another benefit I see of this is how do all of these—the Morrill Act, the old "cow colleges," how do they communicate? How do they network? How do they share all this regional and commodity and state information for the benefit of the nation?

03-00:26:58
Farrell: Yes. That is an important problem. There is no doubt about it. And it hasn't been alleviated by new information technology completely, although the advent of the computer and use of information technology has provided a means to enhance communication. But it doesn't always happen. There is, as a result of that, substantial overlap on what's being done in some fields of research and Extension. There are those who question whether we need a land grant agricultural college in every state, and whether we need a land grant college in every state which is studying this, that, or the other thing. Attempts at coordination of these institutions have been not particularly effective.

Some of these institutions have become so large and independent they could function as a university whether or not the federal government provides any grants. So it's difficult in getting focused coordination. In agriculture there is still a strong need for an effective institution of the kind that I created at RFF. Support for the center has decreased sharply, and there is only a minimal staff there now. But the concept is still very valid.

03-00:28:53
Geraci: So that those definitely work, citing yours, then?

03-00:28:55
Farrell: They work.

03-00:28:57
Geraci: I like the way you said that, with the smile. There was a little passion—

03-00:28:59
Farrell: [laughter]

03-00:28:57
Geraci: —in that one. There's— [laughter]

Well, I think that'll hold us up for today. Our next interview, then, we'll dump you right into—we get into California.

03-00:29:09
Farrell: Thank you.

03-00:29:09
Geraci: We're coming right back again.

03-00:29:10
Farrell: All right.

03-00:29:11
Geraci: Thank you very much.

03-00:29:12
Farrell: Thank you.

Interview 3: October 30, 2008
Begin Audio File 4

04-00:00:00
Geraci: Today is Thursday, October 30, 2008, and we are in the Walnut Creek, California home of Dr. Kenneth Farrell. This is the third interview with Dr. Farrell as part of the Agricultural National Resources Taking It To The People Oral History Project. It is being conducted by Victor Geraci, Associate Director of the UC Berkeley's Regional Oral History Office. Ken, when we left off, we had just got you to the point where you're going to take this job in California. So let's talk a little bit about the background, coming to California, maybe a little bit about the hiring process, and then from there we'll move into more specific things.

04-00:00:51
Farrell: Well, it began, of course, upon my gaining knowledge that there was a vacancy in the Office of the President about to occur. And that's while I was still in Washington, of course. To make a long story short, I sent in my résumé, a letter of application, and had a call in from the president saying, "Well, we think we'd like to talk with you." So we set up an interview at the Hilton Hotel Airport, Oakland Airport, in early December, I believe. I agreed to the timing and the location and the general format of the interview. I was very pleased with the committee. I knew several people on the committee, and the chair, who was a professor from Berkeley, was someone I had met previously, although I did not know him well.

04-00:01:57
Geraci: Do you remember the names of these people?

04-00:02:00
Farrell: Yes. Well, some of the people that were on it were Larry Vanderhoef, who is the chancellor at Davis. A friend of mine from ag-econ by the name of Gordon Rousser, a former dean at Riverside by the name of Seymour Van Gundy. Mac Leach was the chair of the committee. He's from the Berkeley campus. They had an Extension adviser on there by the name of Gonzalez from Imperial County. I don't remember the others, but it was a good cross section of ANR.

04-00:02:48
Geraci: Sounds like a well-rounded—

04-00:02:48
Farrell: It was well-rounded and Leach was a superb chair. He handled it all very well. Interestingly enough, I am one who likes to be thoroughly prepared before I make a presentation of any kind under any circumstance. But the night before my interview with the committee, I, for some reason, simply could not get my act together. I just couldn't seem to jot it down in a talking point form, so I said, "Well, I'll just make a few notes and we'll have to wing it." Well, it turned out to be one of my better interviews, so I learned something from the

process. I think it was about a month after that, after the committee meeting, that the President called and said he would like to meet with me personally. I had not met him before. The President, David Gardner, turned out to be a wonderful man to work with. So I came out on a confidential basis. There was still no knowledge of this process and who was involved in it. Had a great interview with David Gardner. I remember it very clearly, because he did what I suspected he might. That is, he started off in this nice, warm, wonderful way, welcoming me to California and to the university, and then he said, "By the way, I have really five or six questions." He proceeded to state these questions, one, two, three, four, five, and then stopped and left me hanging out there to answer the questions. Fortunately, I had had that experience before, so I really made an effort to remember those questions. I was able to rattle them off and give him a response right on the spot. I think that impressed him.

04-00:04:50
Geraci: Yes. It's always kind of nerve-wracking.

04-00:04:54
Farrell: It's extremely nerve-wracking.

04-00:04:55
Geraci: And I think sometimes it's more than just the answer you give, but watching the way you give it and how you organize it.

04-00:05:02
Farrell: Yes. I'm sure that was the way he was looking at it, as well. I think what he was testing me on was my ability to recollect things, but secondly, the way I organized my thoughts. And so it was, I think, perhaps two, three weeks after that when I received a call and he said, "We'd like to make an offer. Here it is. Call me back in forty-eight hours or less and we'll go from there."

04-00:05:39
Geraci: That's actually fairly quick.

04-00:05:40
Farrell: It was. It was all very quick. My letter of application probably started about the preceding September or October. But once the search committee met, things moved very rapidly.

04-00:06:01
Geraci: Now, I realize the process is confidential, but did you ever find out who your competition was?

04-00:06:08
Farrell: Indirectly. I don't know that I've identified all of them, but f, I did find out that at least two others had had interviews.

04-00:06:19
Geraci: I know that's a nerve-wracking part, because I've been in that part. You do try and find out who is my competition. How can I set myself up to be different.

04-00:06:29
Farrell: Sure. Well, one of the competitors was the incumbent, the Director of the Experiment Station at the University at the time. He later told me that he had applied for the job.

04-00:06:53
Geraci: Why did you apply for the job? What drew you to California? What was here that made you want to?

04-00:07:00
Farrell: Well, there were two things. One, the University of California is recognized nationally and internationally as the most prestigious, the most effective institution of higher education in the country, in the public sector, at least, and also with respect to the agricultural research system. It is viewed as second to none. It is a superb system, has been for many decades, and is widely viewed as the place where an aspiring administrator should end up. And secondly, since we had lived here in the sixties, we knew that it was a wonderful place to live. So the combination of the pull of the position and the prestige which attached to it, and the location, was unbeatable.

04-00:08:09
Geraci: How was the family with it?

04-00:08:12
Farrell: Wonderful. Couldn't get here fast enough.

04-00:08:16
Geraci: So that shows you there was a draw, then, to California.

04-00:08:17
Farrell: Oh, yes. Definitely.

04-00:08:20
Geraci: I guess the big question is, like with any new job when you take it, you walk in day one. What's your approach to figure out just what you have in front of you? I mean, that's actually step one for any administrator, is what am I really supposed to be doing with this? What was there? What was the structure?

04-00:08:47
Farrell: Just an aside before I talk about the structure. I came to work on a Monday morning, early because I wanted to be there when the rest of the gang arrived, so to speak. But I made a serious mistake. I parked in the President's parking space. An hour or two later, one of his assistants in his office came to me and said, "Do you have a little red Honda car, perchance?" I said, "I do." Well she said, "Would you mind moving it? It's in the President's space. He'll be arriving soon."

04-00:09:35
Geraci: So it's like, "Here I am, day one, and I'm ready to be president."

04-00:09:39
Farrell: Yes, right. I, of course, had a fairly good inkling of what the structure of ANR was before I came. I remembered it from the days I was here in the sixties and early seventies, but also, I had been back and forth several times between Berkeley and Washington. So I had some general notion of what it was like. But I discovered rather quickly that it was a very fragmented, and I would even say disjointed, office. The previous vice-president, Jim Kendrick, who was in the office for years and years and years (I think eighteen years or thereabouts) was one who believed in delegation. He had delegated most of the responsibilities and spent a very large part of his time, I believe, working with the President and the Board of Regents.

So there were three major components to the Division of Ag and Natural Resources at the Berkeley headquarters. By the way, at that time, the headquarters were actually located in an office off the campus near University Hall. Actually, it was above a hamburger joint on the corner of Shattuck and University. But there were three components. There was the Agricultural Experiment Station, which was headed by a man by the name of Lowell Lewis. There was the Cooperative Extension headed by a man by the name of Jerome Siebert and what is called the Natural Reserve System, which is a very special unit that I'll talk about later, headed by a man by the name of Roger Samuelson. And those were the three major programmatic components of the division. They operated as if they were completely independent. They had their own budget officer. They had their own personnel people. Just happened that they were a part of DANR!

It didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that it was going to be very difficult to really find out what resources I had to work with, because they were each housed in these independent little entities. So I made a mental note that one of the first things I needed to do was to try to bring some system or a systematic approach to the development of key information for decision-making in the division. I will talk more about this later, but that led to a series of reorganizations in the office. The other thing that struck me within the first two or three days was what I found to be a very disturbing fact, was that there was a large number—by large, I mean fifteen, twenty—of affirmative action cases pending, but not resolved, most of them involving the Cooperative Extension and most of them involving offices in the field. Well, that sort of situation is just not acceptable. When you have affirmative action cases, you need to resolve them and resolve them as promptly as you can.

04-00:13:41
Geraci: This is 1987?

04-00:13:43
Farrell: This is 1987.

04-00:13:43
Geraci: I mean, this is way after even {inaudible}.

04-00:13:46
Farrell: Oh, yes.

04-00:13:49
Geraci: So this is very problematic.

04-00:13:49
Farrell: A serious problem. It basically required a recasting of the entire affirmative action program and a restaffing and repositioning of the affirmative action office in the division. I think those were the two major features that struck me within the first week or so after arriving. I spent much of my time in that first week just walking around meeting people and seeing if there were any new ideas that I should be aware of or any developments that I should be aware of that were not obvious. But in any case, it took a month to really get a feel for the organization and who's there, and what sort of information you can depend upon your staff to be able to provide you as you need it. With the exception of the affirmative action, which I was disturbed by, the rest of it I was pretty sure I could manage that.

04-00:15:15
Geraci: What was the work culture like? Were people happy? What's the morale?

04-00:15:20
Farrell: I would say that there was no obvious major friction. There was inevitably some friction between the research side and the Extension side, because they were doing somewhat similar things with respect—

04-00:15:42
Geraci: But that's just inherent in all systems.

04-00:15:44
Farrell: Yes, but the general culture was seemingly quite normal and acceptable. I didn't detect major problems, with a few exceptions related to personnel policies and personnel management, which, of course, you always have in an organization of that size. Many of the staff had been there many years and they knew all of the crooks and crannies of the organization, and who did what to whom. So it was a pretty good looking staff, let's put it that way, to start with.

04-00:16:25
Geraci: I mean, because, natural tendency is sometimes, within that first few months, people want to give you their political side of the story. They're all jockeying for positions for the new administrator.

04-00:16:38
Farrell: I had that. I experienced that, no doubt about it.

04-00:16:41
Geraci: And I imagine particularly with three very separate divisions.

04-00:16:45
Farrell: Yes.

04-00:16:46
Geraci: Who decided the budgets for these three divisions?

04-00:16:50
Farrell: The budgets were handed down from the Office of the President, more or less by formula. In other words, starting in Sacramento, when the University received its state budget, a certain x-percent of it was intended for Agriculture and Natural Resources. And over the years, so much had been allocated to Extension, so much to research and the Natural Reserve System through that process and that formula—I don't know it was a formula, but it appeared to be.

04-00:17:40
Geraci: Just, in other words, gave them block amounts of money and said, "Run your division."

04-00:17:42
Farrell: Yes. That's right. It worked pretty well for many years, I think, in part, because of the personalities that were involved. When I was there as an Extension specialist, the director of Extension and the director of the experiment station did, in fact, work pretty closely together. And so there was some voluntary cooperation or collaboration. But over time, as personalities changed, the stresses began to develop. They were not insurmountable, but they were quite evident.

04-00:18:30
Geraci: Now, as you're walking into this organization—let's put this in the context of the state and the national. What were the times like? You're coming into, as you put it, a top ranked division.

04-00:18:44
Farrell: The times were very good. In retrospect, the funding of agricultural research and Extension, from both state and federal sources, had just peaked. I would say they were at the tail end of what I call the golden era of research and Extension funding. The national budgets had grown. The University of California had competed quite successfully for federal funds. Formula funds from the USDA that go to the land grant universities were increasing. David Gardner had done a wonderful job of turning around a nasty situation in Sacramento, and university state budgets were also growing. But it was reaching a crescendo. It peaked in 1990. I came in '87. I didn't realize, of course, that things were going to go sour in 1990. So resources were relatively plentiful. There was a lot of very good research being done. I think the university, the division, was generally well-regarded in the state, and generally regarded professionally, among peers, as being an outstanding, productive organization.

04-00:20:26

Geraci: Now, we've talked about the organization as you walk in. There's also another element to all of this, and that's dealing with farmers and the Farm Bureau. What were the relationships like as you came in with them?

04-00:20:41

Farrell: Very close. Maybe too close. But Extension, through its county offices and its specialists on the campuses, had done a very good job in linking with the traditional farm agricultural organizations such as Farm Bureau. In fact, I found, to my surprise, that the Director of Cooperative Extension was a board member of the California Farm Bureau Federation, and had been ever since Extension had been founded in 1914. Well, it struck me that that was not really an appropriate relationship, but I did nothing to change it at that time. The University and the division enjoyed a strong reputation with people in the field as being productive and very useful. When I arrived, I was sort of on the cusp of what one might call the traditional agricultural education enterprise. As it turned out, the beginnings of the environmental movement had already manifest themselves, and over the course of the next decade, the environmental questions, as they related to agriculture, became a larger and larger part of our agenda, and of our working relations with external groups. To repeat, it was favorable when I arrived but things were changing. And there was a need for change.

04-00:22:52

Geraci: So we have the environmental—I mean, obviously beginning with the Nixon era. Within the next decade, that really takes hold. What about the demographics of the shift in the nation from rural to urban?

04-00:23:07

Farrell: Again, an interesting development. Of course, cooperative Extension, as it is known in California, grew up with agriculture. It grew out of the development of agriculture, and its focus, its clientele, was on farm agriculture, primarily the production aspects of agriculture and farm families. As the demographics changed, as the rural population declined and the urban population grew and the power and legislatures began to turn as a result of that, the education institutions that were previously agricultural began to take on new dimensions of work at the rural-urban interface. Of course, a classic example is that of 4-H, in which cooperative Extension operates 4-H programs for children in the cities themselves. It has clearly urban components to it now. But that was beginning to change, and that was part of the challenge relating this agricultural enterprise they called Extension to the increasingly large percentage of the population unfamiliar with agriculture. They were taxpayers, but they had a very poor understanding of what agriculture was about and what these institutions were designed to do in serving agriculture. So that's a challenge that is still out there. It's still a challenge that has not been, and I'm not sure ever will be, fully resolved. But back in the sixties, seventies, and eighties, it was a very significant issue that we had to deal with.

04-00:25:25
Geraci: Just to reframe it a little bit. You mentioned one thing. The golden era. Can you define that golden era a little bit for us?

04-00:25:35
Farrell: If you look at the national development of agricultural research and Extension in terms of budget, in terms of personnel, in terms of the breadth of their programs, their diversity, you can see that it follows a definite cyclical pattern. The beginnings go back to the 1860s when the first land grant college was established. And, of course, at that time and into the pre-World War II era, the colleges of agriculture were solely and singularly focused on agriculture itself, and there was some moderate growth. But that's basically the takeoff stage. By the 1920s, the experiment stations which were located in each of the states had begun to make significant progress, and there were innovations and products that were created as a result of that research that, again, gave agriculture a nudge—moved the development along a little more rapidly. And with that came an increased budget and increased numbers of employees.

Then came World War II, and that was a game-changer, so to speak, because after World War II, agriculture itself was undergoing this tremendous reorganization. Massive out-migration of people from rural areas into urban and suburban areas. The very nature of agriculture was being changed as farms consolidated and employed new technology. By this time, the research and Extension establishment had created all sorts of new chemical innovations: fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and that began to flow into agriculture. The Extension service was a major source of that information, research being a major source of the creation of a product. Well, again, that had the effect of kicking up yields and productivity in agriculture, and as that happened, again, there was an increase in the budget and an increase in the number of employees involved in ag research and Extension. That increase rolled on through much of the seventies. But by the late seventies or the early eighties, it began to flatten out and increases came—both increases in productivity or yields, as well as increase in personnel and budget—came much more slowly and that trend began to level off.

The golden era, as I describe it, is that period that began mainly in the late seventies and early eighties. Agriculture was still, at that point, a comparatively well-funded enterprise at the universities. As I look back on universities, I now understand why ag universities generally had more and larger fellowships and assistantships than did the liberal arts, because they were being fueled by this tremendous increase in funding from the USDA and from the state. And they were attracting graduate students far better than they could in any other discipline. But to come back to the golden era. For about a decade, agriculture maybe kept pace with inflation, but there was no real growth in the research and Extension program. Staff pretty much flattened out. The budgets flattened out. And then beginning in the nineties, there began to be some real stress, primarily coming from the state level, where state

budgets became problematical and budgets actually, in many cases, including California, actually dropped fairly significantly. And the sheen was off the organization, so to speak.

04-00:30:53
Geraci: So it seems that you were coming in just at the peak.

04-00:30:58
Farrell: Exactly.

04-00:30:59
Geraci: The era was peaking out and things were beginning to change.

04-00:31:03
Farrell: That's right.

04-00:31:02
Geraci: That's what I was trying to set—

04-00:31:05
Farrell: That's precisely it. That's a very good way to describe it. It had peaked out or was peaking out and changes were beginning to occur, changes that persisted through the rest of the eighties into the current period.

04-00:31:22
Geraci: That had to give you some cause for reflection as you're entering this job.

04-00:31:26
Farrell: It did. But that's partially why I was attracted. I thought it was a challenge to reorient these institutions and to prove their worth, if you will, to both the ag and the non-ag. Both the urban and the rural parts of the economy. I'm not sure I was totally successful, but that was an important component of what I was striving to do.

04-00:31:59
Geraci: And just as an insight to it, because we'll probably come back to this later in the interview, this golden era is also the heyday of agricultural policy. Michael Pollan school of journalism right now, and all of his food writings, has been making the key point that we as a nation turn to industrial food and we've created policy to make sure that that happened. Now, whether it worked out to be the best for us or not is arguable politically. But that this was really the heyday.

04-00:32:31
Farrell: Yes. That is exactly right. The heyday in federal aspects of agricultural policy really began during or just prior to the New Deal, in the late twenties. There were stirrings at that time in the federal government to enhance agriculture's position in the economy because they were falling behind in terms of wages and salaries and incomes. But when the New Deal came into power in the thirties there was enacted a series of fundamental legislation that drives

agricultural policy in major part to this very day. Things such as the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 set the terms for price programs or programs to support prices in agriculture. Programs were enacted to enhance a farmer's ability to market their products through cooperatives or through other means. Much of those very basic soil conservation programs were put in place in the thirties. So yes, this same period of time was characterized by these far-reaching developments in agricultural policy.

04-00:34:14
Geraci: It seems to me, in looking at this, one of the dynamics that begins coming out of this post 1930s, FDR, the New Deal agricultural policy shifts, is the emphasis on large agri-business farming and giving them the subsidies, giving them the pro-rate, giving them the commodity structures they needed. Created large farming, industrial farming. And this becomes a sore point, I think, for at least free Extension services. Small farmers are going, "Wait a minute. We're being left out."

04-00:35:54
Farrell: You're right. The way that ag policies, the ag policies of the New Deal were initially formed, the basis of those, was not that of large or small farms. It was simply production, technology—applying science to agriculture. And whatever happened, happened. If it enhanced large farms, so be it. If it stifled small farms, they didn't worry about it too much at the beginning. But later, as this development progressed and we saw the huge number of farms that went out of business, we saw the rise of the very large family farm, or the industrial farm. The process became industrialized. Then the policymakers began to worry about, well, "What are we going to do to help the small farms?" But by then the horse was out of the barn, so to speak. And we still don't have what I would call a small farm program or small farm policy. It still emphasizes productivity, not structural outcome.

04-00:36:21
Geraci: Structural. So the reason for this part of the discussion is this is what you're coming into.

04-00:36:28
Farrell: Yes.

04-00:36:30
Geraci: So you had some challenges laid out for you.

04-00:36:33
Farrell: There were a number of real challenges, no question about it.

04-00:36:38
Geraci: Well, we have you just in the first few months of coming into the position. I guess there comes a point where you have to look at it and you go, "What are the key problems I have?" and prioritize. I mean, we can never solve all the

problems, so we learn to start beginning to prioritize. What were becoming your priorities then?

04-00:37:01
Farrell: Well, my first priority, say, in the second and third year, after I had become thoroughly familiar with the system and its organization and structure, was to reorganize the division in a manner that would create a cost efficient operation at the Office of the President level. I'll describe that in just a moment. Second was to decentralize functions that were then held in the division, to decentralize those to the campuses and/or the regions of the state, on the basis that those that are closest to where the action is are in the best position to make programmatic decisions. Just as an aside, when I came in, Extension had several statewide—what were called statewide program leaders. These were people in Extension who had responsibility for certain kinds of programs statewide. They were disconnected from their subject matter departments. They were in Extension headquarters in Berkeley. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that those people would be better off if they were located closer to where the scientists are, because they depend on the scientists for the program that they develop and try to deliver. So the result of that was that we moved all of the specialists from their programmatic dependency in the Office of the President. We moved that responsibility to the three deans, Berkeley, Davis, and Riverside, and said, "You place these functions and these people in your department and make them responsible administratively, as well as programmatically, to the department chair as your regular faculty is dependent on the department chair.

Now, I'm absolutely convinced this was, in the long run, a very necessary and sound move. But it created a firestorm that took several years for me to dampen down. I never did put it out, so to speak. It was not well regarded because many in Extension had grown up in a different system.

04-00:40:03
Geraci: Very interesting, at least to me, is whenever you study agriculture, it is regional, it is geographic.

04-00:40:10
Farrell: That's right.

04-00:40:11
Geraci: And every area has a specialty. What were the elements of this firestorm? What were the embers that {inaudible?}?

04-00:40:21
Farrell: Well, from within Extension and from Extensions traditional supporters in the field, the concern was that by moving these specialists from under the direct responsibility of the director of Extension, by moving them to the campuses at the department level, that these specialists would turn inward and would become captured by the departments, so to speak, and therefore would be less

inclined to provide service to local advisers and to farmers than they were under the other arrangement. The primary concern was that I was going to destroy that close linkage that there had been between Extension and between the specialist and the advisers in the counties. There was concern on the part of some of the department chairs, who said, "We're not really prepared to accept this Extension function. We've never had an Extension or outreach function, and this is something new to us. We're not sure we want it or can handle it well." So there was some resistance there. And then some people were just not interested in that. I mean, the departments that were more involved primarily in basic science saw no advantage to this kind of arrangement.

It took about two to three years for this to shake out to the point where de facto a specialist did realize that they were going to be evaluated by and promoted on the basis of evaluation by the department chair, not administrators in Berkeley. Well, once they realized that, things began to change. And, of course, as new hires were brought in, they were from a culture that was more like the one that we had just created. There was no major difficulty with them. So gradually, as the older members of the staff retired, a new culture developed, and I think today is much more positive in that respect than it was when I first came to the division.

04-00:43:14
Geraci: For these specialists, that had to be somewhat scary, especially for the ones that had been there for a while, because they had been in a work culture of delivering directly at the farm level, and now you're asking them for their performance, for their merit increases, for all the things, they have to perform in the academic style.

04-00:43:33
Farrell: They have to be—

04-00:43:34
Geraci: And that's a huge paradigm shift.

04-00:43:35
Farrell: It is. Now, some department chairs really liked this idea. The concept is what Extension has to offer to farmers is dependent on the flow or research and innovation that occurs in the research area. The two should be linked to be as efficiently as possible and to be as timely as possible. Some department chairs accepted the concept readily and really made it work. Others took much longer because of their concern of the type of thing you just mentioned, and other reasons, as well. But gradually, I think that the concept has proven its merits.

04-00:44:25
Geraci: Now, internally, this had to have created some problems. But what about externally? How did the farmers {inaudible} back to the farm bureau and on the ground?

04-00:44:36
Farrell: They did not like it, generally speaking, for the very reasons that I just mentioned with respect to Extension. They saw in this the possibility that they would lose some of their immediate contacts with Extension specialists and that their advisers would lose contact, and that concerned them. It alarmed some of them. I would say that was the attitude of the more traditional farmer. But the man who had increased his farm in size and was an innovator and, of course, was following technology and innovation, saw this as an advantage, because now he could go directly to the Extension specialist who was in the department where the research was being produced, and garner information directly, rather than having to go through this indirect method of going to a farm adviser and then go to Berkeley and then go back to the department. So the most progressive of farm managers, I think, saw this as an opportunity.

04-00:45:58
Geraci: I like your use of the term farm managers. I mean, it seems to me what you're saying is farmers are becoming better educated.

04-00:46:04
Farrell: Absolutely.

04-00:46:05
Geraci: Farmers are becoming much more knowledgeable, and therefore, they need a closer tie to the university, rather than the agent or the specialist on the ground.

04-00:46:14
Farrell: Beginning in the fifties, certainly by the sixties, a growing proportion of farmers seeking information, technical information, technical guidance, rather than going to their local adviser, would pick up the phone or would get in the car and would drive to Davis, or to one of our field stations, and talk with researchers directly about the problem that they were having. So there was this tendency to bypass the local adviser to go directly to where the research was being produced. Still a trend that is developing.

04-00:46:58
Geraci: Now, within this system, how was this playing out at the county level? Because we have county agents, we have state agents.

04-00:47:07
Farrell: Generally, the county governments did not object. I think that they were not as well informed as some of the farm organizations, and somewhat less concerned. In California, all of the counties provide some amount of in-kind assistance to Extension. That is, they provide it in the form of building space or automobiles that Extension can use, that sort of thing. There was some

concern about that, a fear that we were somehow going to disturb that arrangement. But when they realized that what we were talking about was not disturbing the county level, the disturbance was really with the specialist. With few exceptions, I had no major problems in dealing with county governments on matters related to this matter.

04-00:48:16
Geraci: But didn't this in some ways raise the ante for the county level? That meant that their agents had to be better educated and more in tune.

04-00:48:24
Farrell: Yes, it did. But remember that those agents were all employees of the University. The University decides who's employed and whether they're competent or not. The counties are more or less bystanders in that process.

04-00:48:41
Geraci: Through the paycheck?

04-00:48:42
Farrell: Paycheck is from the University.

04-00:48:45
Geraci: Right. But the budgeting.

04-00:48:47
Farrell: Right.

04-00:48:48
Geraci: Any other reorganizational things? I mean, this is huge, but other ones?

04-00:48:58
Farrell: Yes. A couple of other ones that I will mention. We alluded to the importance of external relations and the linkages between the university and the public and its importance. We didn't then have a person in Sacramento that represented the division. The University has an office in Sacramento, a legislative office in Sacramento, and one person there had been appointed by the previous vice-president to represent agriculture. So we continued with that. But I thought, "Well, since a sizeable part of our budget is coming from the federal government, and we're going to have to broaden our context beyond USDA, we're going to have to get EPA, we're going to have to get to know the Department of the Interior, we're going to have to get to know committees on the Hill that we've never worked with before. So we need to have someone from the division located in Washington, DC." So we set that person up. And that program, I think, was helpful in stabilizing our federal dollars at a time when budgets were declining, generally speaking.

On affirmative action, what I indicated previously, I did the usual sort of thing. I appointed a high level blue ribbon committee to examine the facts and to make recommendations as to what we should do. In fact, the chair of my committee was a former California Supreme Court justice. He took the

assignment seriously and it was a very good committee. They came down with a number of recommendations, one of which was that the office of affirmative action should report directly to the vice-president.

In the meantime, I had consolidated the budget functions. I'd taken the functions that were previously located in these independent entities of Extension, research, and financial reserves and pulled all those out, along with personnel, and consolidated them under a new assistant vice-president for administration. And that helped a good deal in providing focus and in the allocation process between dollars that come to the vice-president and for reallocation to the counties.

Of course, the deans of the three campuses had an expansion of both resources and responsibilities as a result of Extension reorganization. But at the same time, I also said to our four regional county Extension administrators, directors, as they were called, that I'm going to delegate to you the same kinds of authorities as I delegated to the deans. Namely, I'm going to give you a budget. I'm going to allocate a budget to you based on your proposals and our assessment. I'm going to allocate certain decision-making that you will have with regard to personnel, again subject to statewide guidelines, and you're going to have responsibility for programs. You can call on the deans, you can call on whomever you wish to help you. But you're going to have to start making decisions and making evaluation of the effectiveness of your programs. Don't depend on the vice president to do that for you, because it's just not going to work that way.

So we had a very significant decentralization of functions out of the office of the vice president. Generally, what we were trying to do was to move programmatic functions out to where the programs were, keeping the vice president's office largely in an oversight and administrative capacity. And that's still the way it is set up. There have been a number of changes.

04-00:53:56
Geraci: That had to be a huge, tough change, because the programmatic part I could see people getting excited about. But you're also controlling the pocketbook now.

04-00:54:09
Farrell: That's right.

04-00:54:09
Geraci: People don't like giving up budget.

04-00:54:12
Farrell: Very definitely. Very definitely.

04-00:54:17
Geraci: So as you're decentralizing, in one sense you're also centralizing.

04-00:54:21
Farrell: That's right.

04-00:54:22
Geraci: The administrative functions, at least.

04-00:54:25
Farrell: Yes, that's right. We were centralizing in Oakland or in the vice president's office, in particular oversight functions. I would mention only one other thing that comes to mind at the moment, and that is, I think, our relationships with the president's office. Development of the linkage to the president himself, and the Regents, of course, is a vital function for the vice president for agriculture and natural resources. My predecessor had done a very good job in that respect. He was well respected by the president. He was seemingly well-known and well respected by the Regents at the time that I got there. I basically just tried to continue what he had been doing. Very few people outside of the office of the vice president know how much time is required to serve the president and the Regents. The Regents are critical, and since they're always turning over, keeping them in a position where they understand what agriculture is about and what the division is about is a major challenge.

04-00:55:50
Geraci: And considering the governor does have at least a position, whether he's there or not. But at least has a position. That also keeps the state government fully informed.

04-00:56:01
Farrell: That's right. That linkage is definitely important. So that was more or less the cloth that I chose to work with. Now, as to its results, well, of course, people will differ on what the results were.

04-00:56:20
Geraci: I think this is a good point for us to stop on this tape and pick up from that point.

Begin Audio File 5

05-00:00:00
Geraci: Today is Thursday, October 30, 2008. This is our third interview with Ken Farrell. This is Victor W. Geraci, interviewer. Ken, when we left off, we were talking about your reorganization processes, and one of the things we were talking about was how you were centralizing and decentralizing in this reorganization. And one of the things that you dealt with was the programmatic issues, and you were in a decentralization process there, moving things out to the three campuses. What about duplication of services?

05-00:00:50
Farrell: There is duplication of some services among the campuses. Generally speaking, over the course of the century or more that the system has been working here in California, the three campuses have, in a global way, sort of

sorted out their, to use an economics term, comparative advantages. Currently, as we look at the programs that exist on the three campuses, Davis is the primary campus for agricultural issues. Production issues, marketing questions, technology. That's where most of the research is. That's where the majority of Extension specialists are. Berkeley, while it was once the only agricultural college, has over time moved away from research and Extension related to production aspects of agriculture and more into the areas of natural resources, natural resource use, and environmental economics. Riverside, by virtue of its location, has for many years, and is still focused on scientific and educational aspects of dry land agriculture. Farming in the desert, so to speak, or operating in the desert. So there is a rough specialization that has occurred among these three campuses that has reduced a lot of would-be duplication.

05-00:02:43
Geraci: Almost a natural evolutionary process.

05-00:02:47
Farrell: Exactly. But there still may be some duplication. Now, there is also some duplication between research that is done on the campus and research done in our field stations. We have ten field stations located up and down the state that are involved in applied types of research. But generally speaking, that duplication is not excessive. It's more of a complementary relationship. Researchers at the field station are generally carrying out their research with the involvement of one or more professors or graduate post-docs from the campuses. So there's a linkage there. While I'm sure I could go through and identify examples of duplication, it is not a major or serious problem. Things have sorted themselves out naturally, as you said.

05-00:03:58
Geraci: And it seems in the case of agriculture, that natural sorting process is also dependent—there again, goes back to geography and climate.

05-00:04:05
Farrell: Exactly.

05-00:04:07
Geraci: A field station is only going to be able to field-test the things that will grow in that area.

05-00:04:11
Farrell: That's precisely why we have them. To sample. To have scientific facilities available across the state to reflect the great diversity in soils and the microclimates of the state, the cropping patterns and the like. And they do, I think, a very important job of adapting technology that might be produced on a campus to conditions in the local area.

05-00:04:44
Geraci: We have the three campuses, then. What about the other campuses within the system? Do they have any connection to this?

05-00:04:53
Farrell: They have a linkage to the division through the natural reserve system. I have not mentioned the NRS, as it was called. It is a collection of some twenty-odd parcels of land that have been granted to the University over years for the purpose of preserving the natural resources and the natural beauty of the land. But secondly, for the purpose of research and education. And the NRS, which was in my office, but no longer is, provides overall coordination and linkage, if you will, with the campuses and these natural reserves. The natural reserves vary from something very small out in the wilderness to very large reserves, for example, near the city of Santa Barbara and UC Santa Barbara. There are several thousand acre reserves that the University is responsible for managing.

Most of the non ag campuses have some kind of a natural reserve program and many of them are involved in management and conducting research or education at these reserves. So the answer to your question is the major linkage was from the non ag campuses to the division through the natural reserve system. Now, since I left, the natural reserve system, I believe, has been taken out of the division and assigned to the provost or the senior academic vice president.

05-00:07:22
Geraci: Interesting. We can talk about that later, too. But any other things that were going on? These are major infrastructure changes in ANR that you're overseeing at this point.

05-00:07:39
Farrell: Yes. There were many program changes going on. Let me just mention one that's very important. The emergence of molecular biology as a major thrust on virtually all of the campuses. This came about as a result of basic fundamental research that occurred, much of it at universities, some right here at Berkeley and at Davis and at Irvine and UCLA. This has had, and will have in the future, a major effect on research and Extension indirectly, because we're basically creating another potential agricultural revolution. We will eventually be at the point where we will have particular crops for particular purposes. Some for agriculture, some for medicine, some for god knows what. We're basically reshaping the whole future of modern agriculture through this biological revolution. That's a terribly important thing to note that has been occurring on the campuses, and some of it, in the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

05-00:09:41
Geraci: I think that's the reason I was asking. I mean, as we get into stem cell research, we get into new hybridization gene studies, all these things that are going on in pure science, the application for agriculture is very important.

05-00:09:52
Farrell: Absolutely. And that is where the experiment station and the division have a very crucial role to play. Now, when you do that with limited resources, it

means you have to give up something else. And what you are giving up are going to be things that will be close to the heart of some of our traditional supporters. And they're not going to like that. They're not going to be willing to admit that investing and doubling the investment in molecular biology will be, in the long run, an advantage of agriculture. They want something that's going to produce profits tomorrow. So that struggle is going to continue. The vice president will continue to have a real struggle in allocating resource among all of these uses.

05-00:10:48
Geraci: Because you have your three main campuses who really demand your resources, but the research that's going on at the other, now, seven campuses does have an effect on what you need to be doing.

05-00:11:00
Farrell: Absolutely. That's a good point.

05-00:11:04
Geraci: Maybe we need to clone some more money.

05-00:11:08
Farrell: Oh, if it that were possible. One other profound change that is working its way through the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources is the extent of programs which now deal with problems at the agricultural and natural resource interface: water, water use, water quality. Agriculture is the prime user of water, by far, in this state. But we know the future demand for water is going to be much greater in the urban centers. And how that water gets allocated, how we improve the efficiency of water systems and the delivery of water is an issue that is at what I call the rural/urban interface. This type of issue has got to have much larger attention in the future than we've been able to give it in the past. In the Central Valley, for example, air quality is a major issue. Water quality as a result of pesticide seepage is a major issue. These issues have got to be co-joined and they've got to be looked at as multiple use resources. Agriculture cannot expect to have a monopoly on the use of these resources into perpetuity. They're going to have to compete with other uses. So research that will make those choices more effective, will open up new choices, will require scientists both in agriculture and scientists out of other disciplines. So the need for collaborative research across disciplines and across institutions, I think, is a major challenge of our time, particularly when you lay on top of this the fact that total amounts of funding are not going to be adequate to do everything.

05-00:13:33
Geraci: This process that you're talking about here really does start with your entrance in the late 1980s. We are already beginning to realize—in the case of California, it's always been strange to me. Water has always been our Achilles tendon. This is a state highly dependent on the distribution of water.

05-00:13:53
Farrell: That's right. But we've always been able to muddle through, pardon the pun, water problems. But we're now approaching the point where we're going to have to consider seriously some much more extensive solutions and alternatives than we have in the past. We've always been able to find a little bit more water and squeeze it through to take care of it in the short-term. But long-term, we've got a major problem we're going to have to deal with.

05-00:14:32
Geraci: And it seems that during this time that you're doing all this reorganization, also, I can see Berkeley as a campus evolving. This really does get into your cooperative multi-interdisciplinary type approach and the Berkeley campus seems to be the one that's centered on that.

05-00:14:53
Farrell: Yes. Not solely, but they are a very good example of what I'm talking about. As we've noted, they, over time, have evolved in a way that has basically taken them out or away from commercial production agriculture, more into the interface issues of agriculture and the environment or natural resources and the environment. That's the natural evolution. It's also natural in the sense that on the Berkeley campus, there are many other departments that are potentially contributors to the Division of Ag programs. And that, too, I think is evolving but will probably need to go much further in the future. I've said nothing about public/private relationships, but I think it's almost inescapable that for some types of research, that we're going to have to depend more and more on private sector dollars to get the job done.

Now, how you develop a public/private partnership that gets the job done, and yet protects the quality of academic life and academic integrity requires some attention. As you may know, there was a firestorm on the Berkeley campus a few years ago when the dean of the college of agriculture entered into a long-term agreement with Novartis, a pharmaceutical company in Switzerland, whereby they would support research in biology in the college of agriculture. Immediately, there was a group of faculty who were concerned that this was going to lead to the subversion of academic freedom and subversion of their rights as individual researchers. So it became a very controversial issue. But what's needed is a way to find and develop these partnerships such that you can provide the necessary academic protection and still provide benefit to the private sector investor.

05-00:17:35
Geraci: Maybe we should expand a little bit on the Novartis incident, because it is major. And at the same time, we have also forestry's battle with public/private. The wine industry seems to have answered by producing its own private research. It's almost taken, I'd say, a great percentage of what Davis used to do away to the private sector.

05-00:17:59
Farrell: Yes. Applied field research, certainly.

05-00:18:03
Geraci: Field, yes, absolutely. So what about the Novartis? What were the key issues there?

05-00:18:09
Farrell: Well, the key issue was, Berkeley had built this talent, this scientific pool of resources over time that were perfectly capable of doing some extended basic research on molecular biology. But there was just not enough money from the public sector. So they began to look around and said, "What about pharmaceutical companies?" Long-term, there's probably much that they will benefit from this kind of research. Now, the major concerns on campus were whether the contract provided adequate protections. The tradition has been on the campus that if you conduct research with public money, you make the results publicly available to everyone. Was that practice going to be continued or was Novartis going to become the sole, at least initially, the sole repository of this knowledge? If a sale were made of the technology to Novartis, how long was it going to have sole claim to the technology? Would Novartis serve on any of the departmental bodies that make decisions concerning research? In other words, were they going to internalize themselves in the department? So those issues all rose to the forefront and it got pretty nasty.

Now, they ultimately did sign a contract with Novartis. Fortunately, probably, from the standpoint of public relations, at least, the contract was never fully consummated and the issue temporarily went away. Now it's back again, not involving the field of agriculture, but it's back again on the Berkeley campus. Very same set of issues.

05-00:20:51
Geraci: With BP. Because at the heart of this is the patent and who owns the patent and is the patent public?

05-00:21:00
Farrell: Exactly.

05-00:21:01
Geraci: Because we are a public institution, so therefore—

05-00:21:03
Farrell: That's exactly right.

05-00:21:05
Geraci: Now, was this during your tenure?

05-00:21:07
Farrell: No, it was just after.

05-00:21:10
Geraci: That's what I was trying to get at. Yes.

05-00:21:11
Farrell: Yes. It started. The issue was being discussed, but it was after my tenure.

05-00:21:16
Geraci: So you escaped that one?

05-00:21:18
Farrell: I escaped that one.

05-00:21:19
Geraci: But there is one other issue that does involve in some ways something similar. I look back on this instance I'm going to talk about as being my one major failure in my nine years as vice-president. At the time of the budget crisis, which roughly went from ’91 to ’93, we were really getting budget reductions out of Sacramento. The president and the chancellors decided that, "Look, we have to show that we're prepared to meet our responsibilities in adjusting to these reduced budgets. So we need to seek out every opportunity we can to reduce duplication among campuses, to consolidate and cooperate and coordinate and do all these wonderful things." And the president said to me, "You know, you've got three campuses involving agriculture. Are you sure we can justify all of that?" And I said, "Well, I think so." He said, "Well, I'd like you to take a look at that possibility."

So over the course of the next few months, my associate vice president and I began to talk with people and do some looking around. I came to the conclusion that we could consolidate parts of the agricultural experiment station that were located on Berkeley, Davis, and Riverside campuses that would further the evolution of the comparative advantage that we spoke of earlier, where Davis does certain things and Berkeley does certain things. The idea was to identify the resources on Berkeley campuses that were residual agricultural. The sources that were residual still focused on agriculture as opposed to natural resource and environmental questions. On the resources that were primarily focused on agriculture, we would move them—not eliminate them, but rather move them from Berkeley to Davis. Well, I took this plan to the chancellor at Berkeley, Chang-Lin Tien at the time, and had several conversations with him. I finally convinced him that in the interest of the University as a whole, this probably made sense, even though from the standpoint of the Berkeley campus, it would be a hard sell for him and for me. Well, to make a long story short, when we went public with this proposal, there was an explosion on the Berkeley campus. It just flew apart. "You can't have the Office of the President moving people and resources around like that." Well, the answer to that, of course, is there's one experiment station by law and by practice, and the president can allocate resources whatever way he chooses. "Well, it can't be done. It will wreck the Berkeley campus." "Well, you're getting out of agriculture anyway, so why fight it?" "But we'll lose

those resources." What they were hoping was that when those people retired, positions could then be converted to other programs.

I don't want to belabor the issue, but it's the one issue, in my whole career, that I laid out there that I think was premature. Not irrelevant and not erroneous, necessarily, but premature. Eventually the president saved me by saying, "Well, we're going to withdraw the proposal, but we'll give a couple positions to Berkeley and a couple to Davis to kind of sweeten the taste."

05-00:26:05
Geraci: To amend things at that point. That's interesting, though. It was a matter of timing, then, more than anything else?

05-00:26:16
Farrell: It was. But timing was certainly an important part of that. I think today it would be greeted somewhat differently. But the other part of it, of course, I think was the fact that Berkeley has de facto done what I was trying to do, but it was done by attrition and by the natural course of evolution of the campus.

05-00:26:46
Geraci: Right. Well, the major battle there is that no department ever wants to give up a line, because that's a shrinking, a retrenching. So you always fight to the dear death for the line.

05-00:27:00
Farrell: That's right. So that took an awful lot of my time in the last year of my tenure.

05-00:27:12
Geraci: Now, one thing you mentioned is you have all the experiment stations, you have the three main campuses, you have the other campuses doing different things like this or programs. How do you, as the person in charge, help these people bring their information together? What's the networking process? What's the process to share this amongst the group?

05-00:27:37
Farrell: Well, the division had, at the time that I was vice president, what we called a program planning and budgeting office. Or maybe it was program planning and coordination. But in any case, what we were trying to do through that office was, through an ongoing and special annual process, to try, first of all, to set priorities. To see if we can get some agreement as to what our long-term priorities are, and then, each year, what is it we're going to establish as priorities for the year ahead. And then we would try then to bring together a description and information on existing programs and how they fit or didn't fit what we were proposing for next year. In other words, there was a process that directly involves the scientists led from my office out of Oakland that attempted to bring these questions into focus in a coordinated, cooperative way. Not always successfully, but we tried. And then likewise on the campus. While all this was going on in my office, on the campuses there was a similar process whereby the deans were drawing up their own campus long range

plans, and then they would develop an annual plan, and integrate that with the chancellor's overall plan for the campus and our overall plan for the division. So there was a lot of effort of that type that's exerted within the University, and still is.

05-00:29:32
Geraci: At the ground level, how are they bringing their issues to you?

05-00:29:28
Farrell: This entire process involved ground level participation. For example, Reg Gomes, my predecessor, one of the things he did in. collaboration with the prior president, was to establish a permanent commission, or council I guess he calls it. The president's council on agriculture, which the president of the university himself chairs and involves leaders from around the state, such as John DeLuca, head of Farm Bureau, and other leaders of agriculture and related industries. They come together to talk about issues and priorities. Each of the campuses and each of the counties have similar processes going. So there is pretty decent connection and cooperation with external clients. Not always successful, but they work at it.

05-00:30:50
Geraci: It would seem, then, if I had one of the means to characterize the nine years that you were in the position is you began to bring the system into a collaborative model.

05-00:31:00
Farrell: I hope that would be one of the features, yes. I certainly worked at it.

05-00:31:09
Geraci: Well, it's like everything else. You plant the seed, at least. Let's be agricultural.

05-00:31:15
Farrell: That's right.

05-00:31:14
Geraci: You planted the seed and then hopefully this thing will grow and become much more of a—

05-00:31:21
Farrell: I hope so. And I see it as continuing to evolve in those directions in significant and important ways, both in Extension and on the research side. I see the character of Extension changing fairly dramatically over the last ten years in California. Much more connected with the multiple audiences that it has to serve if it's going to survive. Much less an inward looking protective kind of organization. It's assuming more effective leadership roles, is what it comes down to.

05-00:32:13
Geraci: Being a person that believes that nothing occurs in a vacuum. You've made a lot of reorganizational changes during this time period. You've definitely left a mark. Where were you getting your ideas? Who was mentoring you?

05-00:32:32
Farrell: Good question. Well, I would say that various individuals and institutions along the process of my development had shaped this. I mentioned in one of our previous discussions that my first real understanding of Extension and how it functions in a department was garnered from my days at Iowa State as a graduate student. That concept stuck with me and fed an important part of the reorganization. When I was at USDA, the economic research service, there was an individual, more of a sociologist than he was an economist, who was a valued adviser. He was very savvy with regards to the importance of interpersonal relationships and the role of institutions in helping people to function usefully. Anyway, he always had a number of very good thoughts and ideas, particularly on the question of how you link an economist to the office of the secretary. We were very worried about that. And I think some of those principles stuck with me.

The answer to your question is I think it partially is the result of a few people who have explicitly provided input, useful input to me, and institutional development experiences that I've had along the way.

05-00:34:20
Geraci: Could some of it also have been the pragmatic trial and error of being on the spot at the time? I mean, many of the times our choices are not our first choice, but what's probably most efficient or expedient at the time.

05-00:34:33
Farrell: That's true. I feel very fortunate in the sense that I came along to the position as vice president at the very time that agriculture has sort of reached a crescendo, the top of the ladder, so to speak, and that I was able to grapple with those questions. Now, had I been ten years earlier, I would have missed all of that.

05-00:35:03
Geraci: Been a much different administration, wouldn't it?

05-00:35:06
Farrell: A much different administration. So I feel very fortunate in that respect. Likewise, when I first espoused the idea in 1977 and formed the National Center for Food and Agricultural Policy, it was a teachable moment. It was a moment in which people were worrying about food and agricultural policy. They were worried about the objectivity of what was being done in government. It's always suspect. And they were worried about the ineffectiveness of the universities, and the fact that resources were being pumped into policy analysis, but it wasn't being integrated and brought together and focused on the questions that were important at a particular time.

And I was fortunate enough to have five million dollars to play with that question for five years.

05-00:36:24
Geraci: That seems to be a crucial point for the formation of Ken Farrell. As you said, you were fortunate enough to have the opportunity to at least reflect, think, and really go, "What does it take to make this work?"

05-00:36:38
Farrell: Yes. I feel very fortunate in that respect.

05-00:36:45
Geraci: It's not often that people get that opportunity.

05-00:36:47
Farrell: That's right. It does not occur every day.

05-00:36:52
Geraci: Yes. We could only wish it would occur every day. So within these reorganizational process, we've talked about a lot of things going on. Let's see if we can summarize this towards the end of this particular tape. What are the things that Ken Farrell is most proud of that he did? This is an agricultural transition era in your reorganization that left a lasting impact.

05-00:37:26
Farrell: The thing I am most proud of is the decision to decentralize cooperative Extension to their subject matter departments on the campuses.

05-00:37:40
Geraci: That has a huge effect.

05-00:37:42
Farrell: Absolutely. And one that will endure. I think they're beyond the point now where they will ever go back to the older system. And I am absolutely convinced that that decision will, in the long run, improve the quality of Extension programs and improve the effectiveness with which the university uses its resources in agriculture.

05-00:38:16
Geraci: And anything else then we could—

05-00:38:21
Farrell: Well, I would say if I were to single out one thing, that would be it. The other would be the encouragement and the support which I lent to the linkage between agriculture, natural resources, and the environment in research and in Extension. I can't point to specific examples, except maybe, if you recall, Big Green, which was a major environmental initiative several years ago. This was an instance in which I chose to make an example of how the division might contribute to public education related to a major public policy question. We would do this through research, rather applied kinds of research. And I

was going to have that done in the ag econ department at Berkeley. We would get Extension involved by taking the results of that research, and other information, out to a series of meetings around the state to talk about this issue. Not for or against, but talk about the issue.

Well, two things happened. I'm not sure of the order of this. But I believe that some of the agricultural advisory committee groups or chairs around the state—there are dozens of them that relate to the deans, the regional directors, the county directors. All of them have advisory committees. Anyway, there was a group out of the Central Valley near the Fresno Area that wrote to the president and said, "Are you aware that Farrell is cranking up this effort to focus on Big Green? We think that is very inappropriate. You know where we stand on this. We want no part of it," or words to that effect. Not unrelated, I think, to that was the later representation by the National Resource Defense Council to the Office of the President. The programmatic or legislative head came to see the president and said, "We understand that you have this educational effort out of agriculture focusing on Big Green. And, of course, we support Big Green 100% and what we'd like to do is to offer our help. And we wondered if you would be amenable to having somebody from NRDC serve on the planning committee, or serve on the committee that performs the educational program?" The President said, "Absolutely not. No way. We're not going to be identified with you or any other person or any other group on a matter like this. This is the function of the University." Well, it got to be very controversial. We did it, but I must say that we toned things down to the point where it was really not particularly effective.

But I do think that that was a good lesson for those in the University who observed it. That you can bring agriculture to bear on some of these important issues if you've got knowledge and resources and good people to do the research. You can be very useful. You can focus on public policy issues without taking sides, so to speak.

05-00:42:42
Geraci: You know what's amazing about what you just said is that in a nation which has spent the last hundred years, in essence, deagriculturalizing itself, if that's even such a word, moving from that rural to urban. Less than one percent of our population is really involved in agriculture. And all of a sudden saying that we went too far. Agriculture needs to be part of many of these policy discussions.

05-00:43:09
Farrell: Absolutely. I have said many a time that it is in the interest of California agriculture to sit down and collaborate, if possible, with interest groups that you are now opposed to. It is in the long run interest of agriculture to find these linkages with natural resource groups, with those that are defending the use of water, with environmentalists. Long run, you are dependent on having an understanding with those people. And you've got to realize that things that

the University does that enhance that are in your long run interest. But, I'll tell you, a lot of people don't really—

05-00:44:08
Geraci: It seems that at least within your term, then, you were grappling with agriculture, farmers. The people who have been doing the research tend to just go in upon themselves and they become almost isolated from the general society.

05-00:44:26
Farrell: Very true. Sadly true.

05-00:44:30
Geraci: Even the fact that you spoke earlier about starting to become much more political as far as policy. Looking at more than just state, but looking to the federal. Looking at national committees, looking at congressional committees, looking at influencing presidencies. And so would you consider that to be a shift in policy within ANR during your time?

05-00:45:00
Farrell: Incrementally, that is occurring. It doesn't occur in any kind of a quantum move. That is, you don't say today that, "Tomorrow when I come to work, I'm going to be a public policy specialist and I am going to do this," but you do, over time, shift the focus and shift the attention to those kinds of issues." And I think that the division has been doing exactly that. Some get left behind. Some gripe about what's being done. Others are anxious and excited to try it. But I think overall and on the margin, it's moving that way.

05-00:45:54
Geraci: Has the university, as part of that process, had input into our five year cycle of agricultural planning that we have at the federal level?

05-00:46:08
Farrell: At one time, the university did. The university used to be much more active after World War II. But the time of the New Deal, a large part of that that related to agriculture came out of the brains of maybe a dozen different people located around the country, some from the University of California Berkeley. I see much less of that now. I think that what's happened is that agriculture has developed its own interest groups and their own ways of putting pressure on this, that, and the other person that they want to have do their will. So the whole process has changed. I think that, as I maybe alluded to, when I formed the National Center for Food and Agricultural Policy, one of the reasons I did that was because I felt there was a failure at the universities. Universities were not directing their attention to relevant, timely, public policy questions. They were more interested in seeing that the graduate student got a PhD thesis published and in the journal than they were in contributing to the policy process. And I felt that the pieces that they did do were so microcosmic in scale that there was a need to aggregate these things into meaningful structures that could focus on relevant policy questions. So I think that

universities have generally not done a particularly good job in dealing with federal public policy as related to agriculture.

05-00:48:20

Geraci: It seems to me in reflection, just listening to our discussion, that with the New Deal, up and through World War II, maybe just after, these ag programs were involved in the policymaking and yet in those post-World War II years where agriculture's becoming much more industrialized, it is becoming big business. That they lost focus on on that. And then it's not until the late eighties and into the nineties that you begin realizing again, "We need to get involved."

05-00:49:00

Farrell: They lost focus in the sense that they had it before World War II. You're quite right. But I think what they gained, was that as they became industrialized and looking more and more like industrial organizations, they formed other interest groups, commodity organizations. They became very specialized. And each of these more specialized—a lot of them commodity focused, peanut growers, rice growers, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera—began to promote their own relatively narrow fractional interest in public policy. So there was a babble of voices that became a part of the policy process rather than the more pronounced and more unified voices that were there prior to the war.

05-00:49:59

Geraci: Could that have been the fault of the University not being the one to bring them together?

05-00:50:01

Farrell: I think it's partially that, and partially it's just the natural growth of interest groups as they develop and change. These specialized, highly productive agri-business groups knew that they could enhance their welfare by lobbying, and that became an important part of the process.

05-00:50:28

Geraci: It almost seems business policy pressure versus overall agricultural.

Okay. I think for today we have just about done our job for this time and we'll talk again later.

05-00:50:47

Farrell: All right. Thank you very much.

Interview 4: November 18, 2008
Begin Audio File 6

06-00:00:12
Geraci: Today is November 18, 2008, and we are in the Walnut Creek, California home of Doctor Kenneth Farrell. This interview, number four with Doctor Farrell, as part of the Agricultural Natural Resources: Taking It to the People oral history project, is being conducted by Victor W. Geraci, associate director of UC Berkeley's Regional Oral History Office. Okay. And first of all, welcome back for another interview and I think when we left off with out last interview we were pretty much getting towards the end of your career at UC system and ANR, and I think I'd like to start today with, as you were finishing in that last part of your career, what had you left in place? What were your successes or things that you were even looking towards the future going, successor's going to have to deal with this. So let's kind of pick up there.

06-00:01:04
Farrell: Well I think the single most obvious, and perhaps the most important, was the integration of cooperative Extension specialists into their subject matter departments on the campuses and along with that the decentralization of programs from the office of the vice president to the campuses. I believe that that was a major change and it took several years for it to blossom and show benefits but I believe long term, it was an important contribution to the evolution of Extension and taking information and science to the people.

06-00:02:01
Geraci: To the local campus. And I presume that was not an easy transition.

06-00:02:08
Farrell: No, it was not. I had extensive consultation beforehand, of course, with the deans or the council of deans and directors that I worked with regularly on their views on this matter. I had considerable discussion with each of the chancellors. I had, at the end, of course, substantial discussion with the president and my colleagues, the other vice presidents. I did not put the concept up for a vote, so to speak. I knew, obviously, that people do not like that kind of change. Extension had been organized and operated for nearly fifty years in a particular way with particular procedures and specific kinds of culture and organization that drove it. And change, I knew, would not come easily. So what we did was to have a small gathering of the principal administrative officers of DA&R when I announced the plan and, from there on, things moved very quickly in terms of finalizing the reorganization plan.

The essence of it, of course, was the decentralization of functions from the office of the president. Over the years, the office of the president, which once held a considerable number of programs in the office of the president itself, had decentralized. Administrative functions had been decentralized, many of them, from the headquarters of the office of the president to the chancellors on the campuses. So the move which we made in Extension was consistent with

the long term plan and president Gardener's desire to share responsibility and authority with the chancellors and to operate as a community of universities, if you will, which seemed to be the thing that we should have done in Extension as well, or in DANR I should say.

Now I believe I mentioned in one of our earlier interviews that I felt that, having been an Extension specialist, that one of the problems the Extension system confronted at that time in the sixties and seventies was being able to recruit the highest caliber talent to the specialist role. Specialists were appointed on a separate scale and received different treatment than the regular academic faculty. And I felt that, while that had been working quite well in California overall for many years, that elsewhere in the country this arrangement was practically unheard of. In most places, Extension was integrated along with teaching and research, and to the triangular arrangements, the three-leg stool as they call it, of the land-grant college.

06-00:06:17
Geraci: Now, when you say "three-leg stool?"

06-00:06:19
Farrell: Research, Extension, and teaching. Those are the three primary elements of colleges of agriculture. So the need was to get the one leg of this stool, Extension, in a more cooperative, collaborative arrangement with, particularly, the research side, but also teaching. It meant that the chancellors and the deans of the colleges of agriculture on the three campuses plus the department chairs had to be receptive to this concept. If they were not receptive or they failed to understand the meaning of Extension and the obligations that they were assuming in this reorganization, namely that of taking programmatic and administrative responsibilities related to Extension to integrate them into the faculty then the system would fail.

Well, acceptance was, as you would expect on the part of the department chairs, uneven, but, overall, quite positive. Not only did they look forward to having the additional resources which I was transferring with the bodies and the programs, they looked forward genuinely, in many cases, to actually putting Extension and research and teaching programs into a unified whole. As a matter of fact in many cases, the Extension specialist—even before I reorganized—was located, physically, in the department, and in many cases working effectively with researchers. So, in those cases, the reorganization simply solidified what was already existing.

The specialists themselves were mixed in their reactions. Some, those who were already working closely with their research counterparts, saw this as an opportunity to move ahead. They saw advantages for them professionally. There were some, however, who felt that they were losing their autonomy—they were losing their connections to the other parts of Extension and that their work would be impeded. It would all be judged on the basis of what they

had published recently, not on what they were doing in their Extension programs, necessarily.

So there was considerable opposition, but not huge, but selective opposition. No organized opposition, but, individually, people were expressing their concerns. Specialists were expressing concerns. The county Extension, the arm of county Extension, was of a mixed opinion as well. They—and I think this was the most widespread and most substantive concern about the reorganization—they were fearful that this reorganization of moving the specialists into the department for programmatic and administrative purposes would result in the specialist paying more attention or being drawn into the orbit of, so to speak, the departments and not into that of Extension. In other words, they felt there would be a deterioration of service to the county programs on the part of specialists. Again, there was not organized opposition, but once it became known that we were going to reorganize, once it became known in the counties, they, of course, did contact their supporters and there was some representation from local agricultural supporters.

06-00:11:04
Geraci: Now when you say, "supporters," I would presume, maybe, the farmers bureau—

06-00:11:08
Farrell: The farmers, producers, farm bureau, et cetera. They expressed some concern to the president and to the regions but, again, it was not major. So it took, I would say, about a year to really pull this reorganization off, that is to say, to have the resources transferred, to have the individuals begin to work with their programmatic counterparts in the department. It took about a year before we effectively moved in the direction that I wanted to take the program. Perhaps, for specialists, one of the largest changes was that, instead of specialists reporting on their programs to people based in the office of the president, they now reported to the department chairs and that took some smoothing over before it began to be effective.

06-00:12:21
Geraci: Well, there's unknown expectations of what my performance is.

06-00:12:25
Farrell: Exactly. Unknown expectations of what the department, which has been traditionally focused on research and teaching, whether the department is really going to accept—understand and accept—the Extension function and to make it an effective de facto part of the department. Not just in name or in administrative structure, but programmatically. And that has, of course, taken substantial amounts of time for that to evolve. I think that some of the old-timers continue to be apprehensive, or negative would be a better way to put it, about the reorganization. By and large it's accepted and the younger people coming into the profession appreciate, I think, the opportunity which they now have to be involved jointly with their counterparts, their colleagues, in

research in both field research and research on the campus and to occasionally be involved in the teaching function. So I think for the younger generation of specialists, most of whom hold PhDs and very specialized PhDs at that—for them this has been a professional transition that I think they very much have approved of.

06-00:14:01
Geraci: Now, the time frame on this?

06-00:14:05
Farrell: I came in 1987 and, let's see, it was about '89 when this was consummated. We started, perhaps, a year before that, but it was about '89 when this was fully consummated. And, coincidentally, that was the year of the beginning of a major budget crisis at the University. I don't think the two were related [laughter], but their being coincidental did not make it any easier to make this kind of reorganization. So I would say that that is one of the most enduring and the most substantive, programmatically, of the various things that I did during the period that I was there.

06-00:15:02
Geraci: Now it seems that in doing this the big challenge for you was the unevenness in the beginning of acceptance and trying to get everything, you know, more equalized or on a level playing field for everyone. Now this is only affecting what campuses when we—

06-00:15:22
Farrell: Berkeley, Davis, and Riverside.

06-00:15:25
Geraci: So the Berkeley, Davis, and Riverside.

06-00:15:27
Farrell: Correct. Now, accompanying that reorganization were several other changes which I made. While they were important for operational purposes, I think they're probably of less importance viewed from the long term. For example, I believe I mentioned that one of the observations I had when I first came to the campus to the office of the president was the extreme fragmentation of budgeting and financial matters and planning within the office of the vice president. We had a director of experiment station who had his own budget and was going his own way. We had a director of Extension who had his own budget and was going another way, or, at least, not necessarily the same direction.

So it was very difficult to feel that I had any real understanding and command of the resources of the division because of the fragmentation. I took away the functions of budget for each of the directors, the director of Extension and the director of the experiment station. I hired an individual and appointed her as assistant vice president for budget and we began to gradually get the resources

better focused and more manageable, if you will. And we were more accountable for what the resources were.

06-00:17:17
Geraci: Now that's one aspect that we haven't talked quite about, yet, is that as you're decentralizing the vice president's office at this point, that leads to—I mean, there had to have been personnel issues within the president's office to deal with, and there's also the issue that you're an ag economist. Your background is there. So you're bring in this business sense.

06-00:17:45
Farrell: Yes. That's true. [laughter] I think that being an economist was both an advantage and a disadvantage. It was an advantage in the sense that you're referring to. That is to say, I came with a viewpoint of the economic organization of the division. The way the finances were handled and the way budgeting and planning were conducted were very important to me as an economist, given my interest in the financial end as well as the programmatic end. The concern, of course, was that economists are generalists, and what do you know about molecular biology? [laughter] Or words to that effect. But, overall, I felt that I had quite good rapport with Extension. Of course I had started my career in Extension so I was a known quantity, to some extent, by people in Extension.

So that was, I would say, the major institutional change that I brought about during the nine years and the one that is still having a lasting impact and effect, generally positive. Now, in addition, there were other matters to be concerned with. One was the old matter of affirmative action, which I previously mentioned. I resolved that, I think, by appointing a director of affirmative action from outside the organization and had that individual report, with a small staff, directly to the assistant vice president for administration which gave the whole program, the affirmative action program, greater visibility and greater significance. So I think that that structure which basically is intact today has proven itself to be effective, and the individual who became the director of affirmative action has been highly successful, professionally, within the division. So that's a problem solved and—well, not solved. [laughter] That's an organizational issue resolved that I think has been of some significance.

I can take relatively little personal credit, but I think during the years in which I was vice president, I created an atmosphere which encouraged innovation among programmers, researchers as well as Extension people, which said, "The world is changing, and we're going to have to change, so I encourage you to deal with emerging issues as you see them from your vantage point. We will not always be an agricultural organization. We're going to be more of a general community organization where we have offices, meaning we will be dealing with not only agriculture or farmers, producers, but with community organizations of one kind or another, particularly those concerned with

environmental issues, with those concerned about water and other natural resource issues. With people in the communities who are concerned about poverty, food quality, and food safety. All of these are elements that eventually will form the content of our programs in the future, and it is up to us to selectively, where we have subject matter strength, to develop these programs, to broaden our programs."

So I think I created an environment encouraging those changes. If one traced the evolution of programs over that ten-year period, one would see significant shifts in the emphasis and direction of some of the programs of the division at that time. We did, for example, become more active on agriculture and environmental issues. We became more active in various ways on agriculture and natural resource use questions. Water, soils, water quality, all of those became more prominent features of the program over those ten years, and I will at least take the credit for having provided a framework and a concept of the evolution of agricultural Extension and research on this broader canvas.

06-00:23:26
Geraci: Taking that as a scenario, there had to be some negotiations with these outside groups. You have the environmental groups that you mentioned. We have the farmers groups, we have the agri-business, the large corporate structure, how are they accepting these changes? These are major changes for them also.

06-00:23:49
Farrell: Well, taking them in reverse order, agri-business really didn't concern itself much with the changes of the type that I'm talking about. Agri-business had already developed to the point where they were providing themselves, in their own organizations, specialties that ten years or twenty years previously were Extension. What I'm saying is, they were moving away steadily from Extension as a source of the kind of information that they needed. They were hiring their own specialists. Many of them were MBA types and their approach was quite different than it had been twenty years previous.

06-00:24:45
Geraci: But it's the ag colleges that are giving them these people that they needed.

06-00:24:49
Farrell: That's right. The contribution of teaching and research in the training of PhDs was huge and that's a fundamentally important point. The managerial capabilities that industry was acquiring were the products of the land-grant universities in many respects. The traditional farm organizations—here I'm speaking of the California Farm Bureau Federation—were either lukewarm or in opposition to the shift in emphasis that I spoke of. They feared that we were basically abandoning agriculture, and that theme became fairly prominent—not just during the ten years that I was there, but over the course of decades. Beginning in the seventies, there was a feeling on the part of farm organizations that the land-grant college was straying far afield from its

purpose. And, so, there was ambivalence. Some support, but generally ambivalence about movement in the directions that we were going.

In a few in a few instances, there was outright opposition. For example, during the time that I was vice president, the secretary of natural resources in Sacramento created a natural resource environmental work group to which agriculture, the university, myself in particular, specifically, were invited to participate. I saw this as something consistent with my belief that agriculture was going to have to learn to work with these groups and we were going to have to jointly cooperate and collaborate to solve problems. I agreed to serve on this steering committee. Well, some farm interest groups in the central valley heard of this development and demanded to see the president to basically object to my serving on such a task force or study group, and basically reiterated the theme that the college of agriculture was there to serve agriculture. That means farming. And he's moving away from what it was designed to do. Well, needless to say, the president didn't have much sympathy with that view.

So that's an example of the kind of opposition that I encountered, not unexpectedly. After all, California agriculture is one of the most important industries of the state. It was then, it still is. It's a huge business operation and they have, over the years, had a very productive relationship with the University of California and, naturally, if something is done to threaten that, there is going to be concern.

06-00:28:47
Geraci: But it's tied into the demographics of the state had also changed drastically.

06-00:28:52
Farrell: The demographics of the state and the priorities of the state, of the government, of the legislature, of the people had changed. The environmental issues were inescapable. They couldn't be avoided. The question of water and other natural resource use, very fundamental. So the priorities, if you will—public priorities for research and education—were shifting and we needed to shift along with it.

Just as an aside, one of the great strengths, historically speaking, of the land-grant system has been the fact that it works closely with its clients. That is, it has always been an organization that meets regularly with its clients, so to speak, through advisory committees, through participation in local community affairs. The linkage between the land-grant college and agriculture and institutions has been very close and very effective. It's been, I think, a marvel in many ways to see how well it has functioned.

And what was happening, you see, was that the traditional bounds, traditional strengths—connections, I guess is the right word—the traditional connections between the clientele and the college of agriculture were being strained and

pulled because of changes in the surrounding environment and the world. And how to function in this world where those boundaries and connections are not the same as they once were was the issue. That was a major issue.

Perhaps an example that is illustrative of the change of direction of the college—of DANR—was in the ballot initiative called the “big green”, the purpose of which was to develop much more stringent environmental regulation. We became involved and the question arose, what’s the implication of this for agriculture? So we did some research in the University, I felt objective research, but the mere fact that we were involved in that research raised questions and raised the hackles of some of our traditional supporters.

It also was a very good object lesson, because it pointed out the importance of being a neutral party to such policy differences. It isn’t our role to advance policy, it’s our role to inform those who are making decisions of the consequences of policy A versus policy B, et cetera. But it was illustrative of how extreme the views were on both sides of the coin. Agriculture was convinced that it would drive them out of business for some commodities and some aspects of agricultural operations. The environmental movement was equally convinced that the use of certain chemicals in such and such location in such a way was going to result in severe harm to the environment and public health. Each group had its elements of truth that they were presenting, but it was an extreme position on both sides. It illustrated a role for the university, being able to help each of these groups move forward in an objective way with the best evidence that we could muster and to find some common connections rather than just the disparities.

So there were a number of examples like that. Water is the lifeblood of California and, particularly, California agriculture. We have a very renowned water resources center located at that time at Riverside, headed by a man by the name of Henry Vaux, Jr. who later became my associate vice president. They’ve done a wonderful job in the policy arena in trying to mitigate or to arbitrate among the numerous factions that are involved and have claims upon water in California. So there is a very important role for the university to play in these interstices, if you will, between agriculture, natural resources, and the environment.

06-00:35:03
Geraci: And how do you stay out of the politics of it, because the individual researchers, the programs—I mean, I’m a scientist researching these facts, and I find what I think is the answer, and how do you present that—it seems like this is not an easy task.

06-00:35:22
Farrell: No. It’s a very difficult task, and you never fully succeed. There’s always going to be someone who will not accept your conclusions, who will question

some of your assumptions or the method of analysis. If you're doing anything that involves public policy choices of any significance, you will find that there will, on the fringes, be dissenters of various types. You can't please everyone with policy analysis. But, the fact is the University is the repository of, and has access to, huge amounts of information, analysis, and brainpower that most single organizations otherwise would never have access to. You incrementally bring this talent, information, and these data to bear on the issues. You push back this frontier of ignorance a bit at a time. But, over the long term, it makes a huge difference in terms of how our policies are shaped and developed and put in place.

06-00:36:42
Geraci: I guess an issue deeply imbedded in that would be the issue is who's going to fund this type of research because, as you put it, pushing these frontiers of ignorance away, I really like that reference, yet who's funding?

06-00:37:00
Farrell: Well, the answer is it can only be funded adequately from public sources. It's unrealistic to think that private sector money is going to foster or is going to underwrite a major part of such kinds of analysis and research. The private sector does support and is anxious to support, in many cases, research conducted at the college or at the University that is related directly to their sphere of interest. For example, the current issues at Berkeley arising from funding from private sector sources. But, in terms of research which is dealing with controversial policy issues, national or state policy issues, it's really only public funds that are going to be adequate to support it.

06-00:38:19
Geraci: And I see this as a direct problem, especially, as you mentioned, you come in in the early nineties, from the early nineties forward, less and less state money, in particular, and federal money is being given for this type of pure research so that you can present policy makers with the facts that they need.

06-00:38:39
Farrell: It is a significant and potentially very serious problem. What has been happening is that, as you said, public funding from the state and public or formula kinds of funding from the federal government have both declined. Now, fortunately, federal government funding through competitive grants has increased. A significant part of the monies that come, for example, through the USDA now comes as competitive grants, not as formula funds. The University of California has highly talented people and so we generally do quite well in competition with other universities in receiving money from the competitive grants sources.

Another source is, of course, public or non-profit foundations of one type or another or private support that comes to the University without earmarks. As you know, the University of California ranks third or fourth nationally in terms of its endowment, so there is some private money that is available for

non-earmarked purposes that sustains this kind of research. But the fact is, the budgetary heat is on and given the prospects for our budget, state and federal, the University's going to have a tough time maintaining the flow of public money through traditional channels.

06-00:40:49
Geraci: I mean, this seems to almost be the scenario of a blessing and a curse, and I guess even in the affecting—how it affects personnel, if you don't have the funds you need, how do you draw this exceptional personnel that's going to be competitive in this grant process?

06-00:41:10
Farrell: That's right. It's a serious situation affecting higher education across the country, and by no means is it limited to California. I think that if we were to come back fifty years from now and look at the landscape as it relates to the current land-grant university system and the colleges of agriculture, we would find a vastly different structure in place in part reflecting the kinds of pressures we were just referring to.

06-00:41:48
Geraci: So money's the issue. [laughter]

06-00:41:52
Farrell: Money drives structure and program.

06-00:41:59
Geraci: Well, it does drive the entire—and a controlling factor in many places.

06-00:42:07
Farrell: I would just add that while there is, today, and has been for several or a couple decades, serious concern about the public financing of the universities. If you look at the United States in comparison to virtually any other country of the world, we are very richly endowed in public support of universities. Canada, from whence I came, has a good university system, but their research program and their Extension program are miniscule compared to ours. They have wonderful programs, teaching programs, education programs, and train very competent people, but, agriculture for example, lags immensely compared to the United States in terms of the assistance that comes from their universities. Same in Europe. And, of course, in many parts of Eastern Europe and Africa, the whole idea of taking science to the people is a foreign, unknown concept.

The system that we have in the United States is one of the most important institutional developments that has occurred in the Western world in the last two centuries. However, it's beginning be a bit frayed around the edges! One of its great strengths has been the fact that its been adaptive and flexible and able to innovate and move with the tides. I'm sure it will again.

06-00:44:06
Geraci: I think this is probably a good point to segue into another set of questions, and that's the University of California in our ANR system, are we exceptional? Because we keep hearing about these wonderful things we have done, are these in a vacuum? Is it just occurring here? Is it just a response to local need? And how good of a job have we done exporting that?

06-00:44:34
Farrell: No, we're not unique in the sense that this is the only place that this is occurring. I think that innovation, which is driven by the scientific method, by the results of research, is a phenomenon that's embedded in American culture and American society. It occurs not only in universities but in private organizations themselves. So it's a part of our culture.

Now, the unique aspect of the University of California, apart from its multi-campus structure, is that we have been able, by virtue of being one of the richest—finance, money, and climate and culture—to attract clusters of the very best and brightest in the scientific field. We don't have Nobel laureates of the magnitude that there is at Berkeley at every campus, but we do have clusters of outstanding academics that have come to the University of California, in part because of the opportunity to innovate, to experiment, to take risk. So I think that we're unique in cultivating that academic, innovative spirit that has driven the California economy and has helped to drive the economy elsewhere in the country.

It occurs other places, too. For example, the area around Chicago—the University of Chicago, the University of Illinois, the Fermi Laboratory, is another hugely productive cluster of institutions. Similarly, on the east coast on the northeast—Harvard, Yale, MIT, that cluster. So it's broad, it's imbued in the American culture, but California is unique in the way that we've put that talent together.

06-00:47:27
Geraci: And more of a public system.

06-00:47:31
Farrell: Yes. An important point. There is no other public system, research and education system, anywhere in the world that is even close to the magnitude of the University of California. We have done this in a way that has engendered public support, public acceptance, and collaboration between the university and the private sector. So we're certainly unique in the way we've gone about this.

06-00:48:15
Geraci: So maybe out of uniqueness, then, is the fact that we've been able to assemble a great group of minds and people.

06-00:48:22
Farrell: Fundamentally, that is the unique aspect of what the University of California is about.

06-00:48:36
Geraci: As we're finishing up on this tape, let's go back to talking about the things that you have accomplished in your tenure there. We're looking at some major reorganizational changes, how did these play out in specific cases? Do you have any specific case scenarios that show how this—

06-00:49:04
Farrell: At the University of California?

06-00:49:04
Geraci: Yeah, at the University of California.

06-00:49:09
Farrell: Well, the best example is the one that I mentioned at the outset. I think the best case study, so to speak, is that of the decentralization of Cooperative Extension. I don't think there have been any studies made, but if there were I think you could document that there have been significant changes in the caliber of personnel, in the types of personnel that have been hired, in the breadth of the programs that are now functioning, and in the specialization with which those programs are conducted. I think all of that would be observable, quantitatively speaking, and one could see, I think, a significant change.

06-00:50:10
Geraci: It seems to me that, while you're making these changes, these changes are also inherent in the greater society in the context of what's going on in America and the world. The eighties and into the early nineties, we are decentralizing most of our institutions as a general rule. Now, I guess the question that we'd have to ask as we get into the 2010 era, did that serve us well?

06-00:50:40
Farrell: I think so. Now I'm thinking not so much of agriculture but other parts of the economy. We may have gone too far in decentralization and found that in order to make progress and to have coordination among interconnected parts of whatever system we're talking about, more centralization is sometimes needed. But, overall, the decentralization of the educational system and the decentralization of the University of California to the ten campuses, with more and more autonomy going to those campuses has yielded a positive result in the sense that its made the University more accessible. I think that decentralization has helped to diversify the faculty, the programs, and the nature of outreach programs, all of it, or much of it, to the benefit of the state of California. So, on balance, I believe that decentralization has been a positive force.

06-00:52:28
Geraci: It seems that you're navigating this fine line between decentralizing and centralizing, you're giving up much of what your central institution that you're in charge of does yet how do you keep these satellite areas in—I don't want to say control, but in balance, and working in cooperation with each other?

06-00:52:52
Farrell: Well, that, of course, is an ongoing constant challenge. In our case what we did was to form a council of deans and directors who met once a month with me. These were the deans from the campuses and the directors of various research, Extension, and other entities. Our major purpose was to talk about the issues as seen from the perspective of the campus or the perspective of a field station director. What was it that was important to people in those communities?

So we had a communications system—that's partially the answer to your question. We had a communications system that was open and, overall, worked fairly well, that made it possible for me to be reasonably abreast. Not, perhaps, as intimately as I would otherwise have been with the old structure, but reasonably knowledgeable, and since we controlled the allocation of the dollars, people couldn't ignore us completely. [laughter]

The other thing was that we set up, and here, I think, Reg Gomes took it further than I did, we set up a planning system basically coming out of the office of the vice president but with regional and campus elements. In other words, the campuses and the regions were asked to develop their own long-range planning program which was then, if you will, amalgamated and melded together to form a division program. Reg's work in that connection, and Henry Vaux, Jr., my associate, took it far beyond where I left it. That's been a positive factor.

Let me make two more observations: it's just a natural institutional event that there will be competition and struggle between the central headquarters and the satellite or regional offices. It doesn't matter whether it's private industry or a public decentralized university. The campuses develop in a culture in which they believe there is insufficient autonomy. If the president or headquarters would simply let go of this function or that function, they could do a better job! So that's partially the nature of decentralized organizations.

The other element, I think, that makes it possible for the president's office to have any influence on such a diverse system as the University of California is the fact that there are some things that campuses just can't do or can't do very well. It would not make sense, for example, for each of our campuses to go to Sacramento or to Washington with their own budget request and program plans. It would be chaos. There would not be a University of California for very long. So that function is one that is best done by a central office. On the

other hand, carrying out an Extension program in the central valley of California is probably best handled in the central valley of California, not at Berkeley or in the office of the president. Over time, you find the comparative advantages of these different entities and you build upon it.

06-00:57:58

Geraci: But it is walking a fine line.

06-00:58:00

Farrell: It's always walking a fine line. I used to attend council of chancellor meetings regularly with the president and the vice presidents. I can't remember many meetings where this fine line was not very evident. [laughter]

06-00:58:29

Geraci: We're right at the end of this tape, so let's go ahead and stop here.

Interview 5: December 9, 2008
Begin Audio File 7

Geraci: Today is December 9, 2008, and we are in the Walnut Creek, California home of Dr. Kenneth Farrell. This interview, number five with Dr. Farrell, is part of the agricultural and natural resources project, Taking it to the People, and is being conducted by Victor Geraci, associate director of the UC Berkeley's Regional Oral History Office. Dr. Farrell, over the course of our four interviews, we have covered pretty much your entire background, your training, your various fields, your family, educational things, your research, and the roles and the programs you instituted in the University of California. In this final interview, I would like to kind of finalize any of those things that you feel we maybe have missed, but to push it on to what you see as happening after you've left, pretty much, the ANR position and your retirement. I think first off, let's talk a little bit about in your last year or so, when you realized, I'm leaving. How did you make preparations? What's the process for picking someone? Considering above all, you know the programs you've established, you know where they're going, you know the areas where work needs to be done and the areas where you've been successful and things could probably throttle back a little bit. So let's talk a little bit first about that process.

07-00:01:38
Farrell: Well, the process of finding my successor basically operated from the president's office. President Peltason, at that time, appointed a search committee, which is the standard procedure. The search committee did the usual thing of canvassing leaders in institutions in the country to identify potential candidates. I played very little direct role in that process except when it came to the point of evaluating possible candidates. I did discuss with the president my views, with respect to the ability of those individuals and how they would fit into the DANR culture. So my input was indirect and relatively limited. As it turned out, the president of University of Illinois—where Reg Gomes was dean at the time—and Jack Peltason were good friends from the days that Peltason was a dean at Illinois. So they had a good deal of direct, close personal conversation. On my part, I spent those last few months trying to be sure that I was not leaving any major issue uncovered. That is to say, not necessarily solved, but that somebody was aware of the issue and we were doing something to address that issue in a way that would be helpful to the incoming vice-president. There were a few instances were Reg and I talked to each other by phone to get acquainted. I had known him for several years, but not in the context of the job in California. So we did develop a series of email communications, in which he had some questions and I attempted to outline what I saw as the issues that would be confronting him when he stepped into the office. So it was a relatively smooth transition. And the search itself, I thought went quite well. It wasn't long or drawn out. It was quite an effective process.

Geraci: I think what's important here is the fact that you spent the time to really take a look at identifying issues, so that your predecessor could hit the ground running. What were some of the issues that you identified?

07-00:04:40

Farrell: Well, at the time, some of the big issues were those related to the allocation of resources among the campuses. I had felt that the process by which we were allocating resources was really not what it should be, in order to maintain flexibility in the use of those resources. In other words, we had become victims of our own longstanding habits and formula in allocating budget. We needed to find ways to free it up. And so I stressed the importance of his establishing, at the very outset, very close and strong relationships with the chancellors on the three campuses and the deans of agriculture on those campuses, to get their views on the status of the division and what their principal needs were at that time, and as they saw it, going into the future. There were also some internal matters to the office, minor restructuring, some minor personnel issues that I briefed him on. We also talked about advisory committees and how important that was going to be to him in establishing his reputation and rapport with the outside community. So there was not a large number of crises that had to be dealt with, but rather, ongoing sets of issues that I knew would require his attention. Extension had been largely reorganized, and was largely functioning reasonably well, so that was not a major issue. The principal issue that existed then and exists today is that resources are becoming increasingly limited to DANR. Budgets, public budgets, simply are not increasing at the rate that they once were, or at a rate that makes it possible to fund much of the high priority ermerging research and Extension work that is needed. So the principal issue was planning and priority setting, and a mechanism for allocating resources to square with your priorities.

Geraci: It's interesting because in the interview with Reg, that's the one thing he makes as a statement, as coming in, his biggest challenge was, how do I reorganize to make the best use of the limited resources? Because the resources are going down at that point. And he had a tradition from his past; he had done this once before. So it seemed that made him a very strong candidate, in that he knew how to make the painful cuts.

07-00:08:04

Farrell: He did. He and I both served on a national budget committee for the colleges of agriculture of the Land Grant universities. And we got a taste, I think, in the process, of the nature of [chuckles] competition out there for scarce federal dollars. So yes, he had a very suitable, appropriate background for the task that was ahead of him.

Geraci: Now, when you talk about limited resources, what years are we talking about?

07-00:08:37
Farrell: In my case, I'm talking about the years from '90 to '92, when the fiscal crisis occurred.

Geraci: So this is the great fiscal— California—

07-00:08:47
Farrell: Right, right.

Geraci: But there's a national fiscal crisis at that time.

07-00:08:51
Farrell: The same thing was happening. At the national level, there had been a gradual attrition for about ten years in the amounts of money being funneled to agriculture. More and more of the federal research dollars were being allocated to National Science Foundation, to NIH, organizations that were not focusing on agriculture, so that the agriculture share was declining. In fact, the inflation adjusted budget for agriculture was actually declining throughout most of the nineties. But in California, the critical period was '90 to '92, when we had the major shortfall in Sacramento.

Geraci: And that shortfall affected the entire UC system.

07-00:09:42
Farrell: Yes. It was not limited to agriculture, by any means. In fact, President Gardner took great pain to ensure that the cuts were not disproportional in agriculture.

Geraci: {inaudible}

07-00:09:58
Farrell: Yes. Everyone had to feel the pain. And he managed the process, I thought, quite well.

Geraci: So as you're leaving, then, and Reg is coming in, it seems that the big challenge is, how are we going to fund the programs that we have ongoing? And making the hard decisions on possibly, where can we make the reductions?

07-00:10:20
Farrell: That's right.

Geraci: Now, did you and Reg meet on any specific programs that you were looking at that could possibly— And it's never a situation where you believe a program is bad, it's knowing that you have limited resources; you have to make choices.

07-00:10:34

Farrell: At the time of the transition, there were a number of special programs that had been put in place over the years. For example, we had at Davis, a center for cooperatives. We had at Davis, a center for this or a center for that. And while all of them were doing interesting and useful work, some were really not on the cusp of the major programmatic priorities of the time. So we did have some discussions about how he might be able to reorganize or consolidate or reshape those programs, and in the process of doing that, save some dollars and some personnel slots. But by and large, we didn't have other specific programs that we mulled over. It turned out that Reg did exactly the right thing, and produced with the help of my associate vice-president a useful strategic plan.

Geraci: And who is this?

07-00:11:55

Farrell: Henry Vaux, Jr. Henry took charge of a very effective and intensive program planning effort involving the staff at headquarters, but also, and most importantly, faculty and staff from around the campuses and from the field. They put together a very good long-range plan that laid out a set of long-term priorities that were the guidelines or were the basis on which Reg operated in subsequent years. So he handled the whole process very well.

Geraci: And I know complicating this issue, this was UC-wide, we have the golden parachutes or the VERIPs going on; we have actually a reduction in salaries for staff; we have furloughs, as they're called, going on. How did this affect—

07-00:13:00

Farrell: The voluntary early retirement incentive programs (VERIP), occurred early during the budget crisis of '90-'92. One of the means of managing the crisis that the president and his associates devised was this so-called VERIP program. And it was simply a means of enticing some senior people into retirement earlier than they would have normally gone into retirement. The difficulty with that and the major impact of that was that it was not programmatically developed, it was not on the basis of program priorities. It was largely on the basis of age and seniority. So because some programs had grown—for example, entomology and plant pathology, to cite two departments in agriculture—they had built up a staff over many years. And it so happened in '90-'92 that a disproportionate share of their faculty was in the VERIP targeted age. So the result was huge gaps in the faculty and in the programs of those two departments. And because we could not hire new staff, and could rehire people who left on VERIP only for short periods of time, it basically left these programs stranded for a period of three to five years. And during those three to five years, the entire focus of those departments changed. In fact, at Berkeley, they were merged and disappeared. So it had a major impact on the staffing and on the professional character of each of the campuses and each of the colleges of agriculture. Same was true in Extension. Again, the impacts of VERIP came through the age and seniority factor. We

had senior advisers and senior county directors who suddenly were no longer available. As a result, that left major program holes in Extension, as well as research. Now, one of the things that we had been doing, and accelerated during this period in Extension, was to engage in more cross-county programming. In other words, an adviser who previously served, let us say, Fresno County now became responsible for Fresno and Tulare County, or circumstances similar to that. That had been an ongoing trend, but it was greatly accelerated by the holes created by the VERIP program. The result was a major refocusing of programs in the division, as a result of the aftermath of VERIP.

Geraci: Did this help drive some of the decisions, then, for what programs to constrict or merge?

07-00:16:50

Farrell: Definitely. Some were hard hit, to the point where they were no longer viable. It gave us an opportunity to consolidate these programs. We did not have, and we are not going to have, sufficient resources to rebuild these programs as they were; so let's think about ways of merging, consolidating, coordinating more effectively, what we have. Yes, it had a major effect. And it was a major managerial challenge for everyone in the office of the president and the chancellors to manage that process.

Geraci: And even if the hiring freeze were lifted at that point, it can take two years to make an academic search and bring someone in. So you were looking at a loss that could go up to five years, easily.

07-00:17:53

Farrell: Easily. At least two years for the search, and another two years for the individual to get on his or her feet in the department. And individuals these days do not come with just salary attachments. In most of the disciplines, you have to be prepared to provide substantial capital, in the form of laboratory space, lab equipment. So that when you hire, the cost is the salary plus the support. And the cost of the support has been escalating, is *still* escalating rapidly.

Geraci: How did all of this affect the students, the graduate students that you were working with within this system?

07-00:18:37

Farrell: It basically slowed down the process of building graduate programs. It also helped to encourage this use of private sector funds to supplement the reduced public support. In other words, to support graduate programs, the division, or the department chairs, drew more heavily on private sector support than they had previously. So there were those kinds of secondary effects, if you will.

Geraci: Did this almost have a Prop 13 effect, then? After Prop 13, the University's looking for much more public money because of its losses in educational

funds. This again turned them to the private sector. It was a Reaganomics approach.

07-00:19:44

Farrell: Yes. This definitely encouraged the development of public/private partnerships and relationships, to adequately fund research and Extension. A sizeable part—not as large, absolutely, as in research—but percentage-wise, there is a significant part of Extension that is now funded by private grants and contracts. So one of the net results of VERIP was to accelerate the development of those relationships. At the same time, it conveyed to the president, the vice-presidents, and the chancellors and the deans that you're not going to be able to continue to rely on the traditional sources of public support. To us it said, you can not expect the budget for agricultural research and Extension to suddenly turn around and start rising. The fact is, it's going down, in real terms. So to succeed, you are going to have to look to alternative sources. We became much more active in seeking competitive grants through the NIH and through the National Science Foundation. The University of California is one the most competitive institutions in the country, when it comes to competitive grant seeking. The division of agriculture is, by far, the largest agriculturally related entity in the country, when it comes to the use of competitive federal grants. So we changed the nature of the sourcing of funds, if you will. We began to think more in terms of relationships with EPA, and other federal agencies. So it changed the focus and changed the direction of fundraising, and consequently, our programs.

Geraci: In some ways, could that have also expedited the move towards your becoming involved in things that weren't considered traditionally agriculture? Because you're dealing now with many, many different agencies. You're starting to look at public health, you're starting to look at food in communities—food supply programs, the commodities programs. It's not the traditional farmer.

07-00:23:04

Farrell: Definitely. As I mentioned in one of our earlier interviews, one of my goals had been to strengthen our programs at the agriculture/urban interface, those that related to the use of natural resources, to water and the environment, for example. And the VERIP, in part because of the accidental way that the ax fell permitted us to bring in new blood with a different scientific background and different scientific interests, such that we were able to expand those efforts dealing with agriculture and the environment. It helped to accelerate the shift on the Berkeley campus in the college of agriculture, from traditional kinds of agricultural research to natural resource and environmental research. It's all part and parcel of that broad movement that occurred.

Geraci: Right. It's that serendipitous moment. This also had a silver lining to the climate.

07-00:24:24
Farrell: Absolutely. Because one of the footprints was that we were able to turn the corner and begin to bring in a new type of scientist—young, modern, recently trained scientists—who had quite different interests than those of their predecessors. There was some serendipity involved and it has had a lasting impact.

Geraci: So there was an opportunity. It was learning to look for the opportunity.

07-00:25:05
Farrell: Yes. It was progressing through adversity. [laughter]

Geraci: I guess to keep it at least somewhat chronological, or at least a theme, where at the end of this interview I want to talk about where things are going in the future, let's throw in the present economy now. We've talked about that '90-'92 recession. And it's obvious, we're in the year 2008, a new president coming in in 2009, and the national economy is really in trouble. What advice would you give to those confronting these issues?

07-00:25:51
Farrell: The first piece of advice, what I would give, would be batten down the hatches, because you haven't seen anything yet. Speaking of the California economy, we are in grave difficulty. Not just on a temporary basis. It isn't a case of there being just a temporary fall in revenue at the state government; it's a structural problem that we have in the state government. Deficits are not only huge in terms of their comparative magnitude, but likely to be a regularity, unless we have some fundamental change in the body politic and in our political processes. Translating that, it means for the University as a whole, a continued erosion of state support. At the end of World War II, the state was the prime source of funds for the University of California. Now that percentage has fallen dramatically. And it will continue to fall, in large part, because of the budget problem we're going to encounter on a long-term basis. For agriculture, the prospects for budget support from both Sacramento and from Washington, are even grimmer. We will see substantial reductions in both Extension and research funds from both Sacramento and Washington. And that's likely to require a gradual downsizing of the division. Extension, I think, is particularly vulnerable because its orientation is very applied. In fact, the applied research Extension does can very easily be picked up by the private sector. And it doesn't have quite the political clout that research has in the University. So I think both ag research and Extension are vulnerable, but Extension in particular. There are a lot of challenges that the current vice-president and his successor will face in refocusing and regrouping and reorganizing the division.

Geraci: Keeping an open mind, then. You approached it with, okay, let's use this opportunity to move forward, but just move forward in a different direction, with resources we can support. Programs, we can always adjust to limited resources that are coming in. What will this do, then, to the mission

statement? The whole topic of this whole series of interviews we're doing is Taking it to the People. And from the scenario you just put out, there'll be some major problems.

07-00:29:52

Farrell: There will certainly be some huge challenges. But I don't despair. To me, what this says is that the Land Grant university, the Land Grant college, the college of agriculture, are going to have to continue, as they have done in the past, to adapt to their environments. If there are not sufficient funds to do this, you avoid it; but you try to pick up on something else where there is an opportunity for funding. So the mission of the division, broadly defined, is still very relevant. In fact, I have argued that the mission of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources is at the center of many of the socioeconomic issues confronting the state of California, now and into the indefinite future—water, natural resources, air quality. You name it, agriculture is involved at those interfaces. The division can adapt to these changing circumstances. If there's less public money, we'll have to find ways for more effective public/private partnerships. We'll have to find ways for perhaps shifting some of the programs that we now have in Extension to a fee base. In other words, he who uses the program pays for the program. So there are many possible adaptations. But the mission remains valid and important, and can and will be retained. But the division, the apparatus that runs it is going to look much different than it does today. Information technology alone is going to change the face of how we convey our information and how we interact with the public.

Geraci: Could this then be, in another way, a needed transition? Every organization and every sector goes through these transitory periods, when moving from an old methodology to a new. The agrarian myth of Thomas Jefferson and the American farmer is still around. It hasn't quite died yet, although agriculture is something totally different than was perceived a hundred years ago. And we're still in maybe those last little pangs of transition here.

07-00:32:54

Farrell: Right. I think that's true. If you look at the history and the evolution of, let's say, agricultural research from the beginning of the Land Grant college in the late 1860s, you can see that there are very definitely cyclical patterns that have occurred over those 150 years. That is a reflection of the adjustment of the Land Grant university, the research component of the Land Grant university, to the needs of the country, to the needs of agriculture, and to the availability of resources. What is happening now is that agriculture is losing—has lost, in large part—its independence as a single, cohesive entity in our society. When you say agriculture today, you're talking about industrial-like farming located in the suburbs of an expanded city, with major problems related to air quality and water quality for the whole community Agriculture is being integrated into the remainder of the society. It's an important part in that society, but it's much more integrated, much less independent. If you're going to deal with the

problems of agriculture today, you no longer are going to be focusing only on production aspects. You're going to be focusing on environmental questions; you're going to be focusing on a variety of socioeconomic factors related to water distribution, air quality, et cetera. So very definitely, the division of agriculture, and agriculture itself, is evolving in the directions of a much more connected part of the overall society.

Geraci: In some ways, could not the Land Grant mission, in particular in California, have been its own nemesis? In the beginning, farmers were not the educated scientists, and they looked to the University for the knowledge they needed. Well, over this past hundred years, most farmers today attended the UC campuses, and they are educated. And they no longer need you as much.

07-00:35:56

Farrell: That's very true. And so they no longer need some types of programs, as they once did. That permits you to then adjust to what the real problems or the emerging problems are. So it's a continuum. We're operating in a continuum in which these issues, problems, societal needs are ever changing. The question is, how do we change our institutions and our programs in a way that keeps pace with this changing environment? I think that the division of agriculture in California, including Extension, have done a pretty fair job of adjusting to these forces. But the need for change is accelerating. There are some questions as to whether the Land Grant college structure is going to change sufficiently rapidly to keep pace with such changes, or whether there will have to be some major reorganization and regrouping of the Land Grant colleges themselves.

Geraci: As we have a well educated agricultural workforce, it seems to me that they will be assuming much of the applied research that was done by Extension. Back to your question of, maybe the applied research is an area where major change is necessary.

07-00:37:42

Farrell: Yes, definitely. That has been occurring at a fairly rapid rate in California over the last several decades. And it's going to continue. The idea that you now have a field station that's there solely for the purpose of testing the varieties of wheat, let us say, is no longer a priority issue in the university because it can be done, and is being done, in the private sector. There used to be a tremendous amount of effort spent by advisers in testing various chemicals and pesticides in the field. Well, that's no longer done. There are other agencies and other organizations that are quite capable of doing that. So gradually, those functions are being shifted out of Extension to the private sector or to other government agencies. I think that the question is whether we can use those resources that we're saving, so to speak, to identify them with or to direct them toward these cross-cutting issues that I speak of. For example, let's take the dairy industry. Well, the dairy industry doesn't really need Extension's help now in dairy nutrition. The managers of the dairy probably

know as much about animal nutrition as the professor. But what they do need help on is finding a way to dispose of solid waste. That is gradually becoming a major cost factor in the dairy industry. So our challenge is to find resources, people, and the dollars to initiate research, both basic and applied, that will help resolve that question to the advantage of both the dairy farmer and the environment.

Geraci: What about the role of the corporate research, R&D? The companies that are doing this— farmers are making private contracts with consultants or businesses to do this applied research.

07-00:40:07

Farrell: Yes. Nationally, if you look at the total investments in ag research, private sector investment in agricultural research is much more than in the public sector. I think the number is somewhere around 60 percent of the total research in the country is done by the private sector, 40 percent by the public sector. Those ratios have been going in diverging directions for many years, but there's no doubt about the public sector being an important component of the total research program. Now, it's important not only in the applied sense. As you have said and as I intimated previously, a large part of some of the applied research that the DANR was doing on animal testing or seed variety testing is now being done in the private sector. Also in recent years, the private sector has been increasingly becoming involved, either directly or indirectly, in supporting basic research. I mentioned the Novartis experience at Berkeley. That was a case of a company being prepared to invest in very basic research. There are other large corporations related to agriculture, such as many of those in the biotech field, that are also doing in their own laboratories very fundamental, basic kinds of research that a few years ago would only have been done at a university, or perhaps a government lab. So the private sector is now, and will in the future, be an increasingly important part of the total research effort.

Geraci: Doesn't this become problematic for the large versus the small farmer, the idea that corporate farms are having the research done, but not releasing the results to the public domain, whereas the University does it within the realm of public domain?

07-00:42:32

Farrell: It does raise that question. One of the strengths of the Land Grant college tradition is that it is a public institution, funded primarily with public resources, and the results of its research are publicly available to large and small. We have never really had what I would call a small farm program. What we've done is we've said we have a program of research that's focused on particular technologies, and it's up to the private sector as to how that gets used. The fact is that a good deal of the technology is advantageously used by the larger farm. There are those who say that one of the fields of growing importance for research and Extension should be a focused program on small

farms; on organic agriculture, which is adaptable to small farms. So, this is a possible enhanced role for Extension in the future. But here again, you have to find means of support for that kind of a venture. You can use public funds, of course; but you're going to have to have more collaborative arrangements with small farms and farm groups themselves.

Geraci: So we're looking at, again, the possibility of farm cooperatives becoming much more important. In the last round of the Farm Bill, the big argument was to freeze some of that money that was going to the large corporate farm, for small—

07-00:44:50

Farrell: Yes. In fact, there was some money freed up for exactly that purpose. And I think that's a very legitimate function for a public institution, to have a program that focuses on a particular part of the public that you're serving; not just to the public at large, but for particular segments. And of course, those programs would look much different if you were talking about small organic farms in Sonoma County versus what they do in Kern County.

Geraci: And I know in one of your roles—and you mentioned it—as you're passing the torch on to Reg Gomes, the role of the advisory committee to your position, that advisory committee is made up of a large group of corporate agriculture. Maybe we should talk a little bit about— What is the makeup of this senior advisory group to the vice-president's position?

07-00:46:00

Farrell: That is a legitimate question. [phone rings] When I was vice-president, I did not appoint an advisory commission to my office. I looked around the division, and I found that the deans at Davis, Berkeley and Riverside all had advisory committees. Many of the counties had Extension advisory committees. There are local groups of one kind or another up and down the state, in agriculture, that seek to relate to the University. So I thought, what I will try to do is to make myself available to participate in the affairs, selectively, of those existing organizations. Now, I would not do that again. Not that it had negative results, there were some real benefits in the sense that it gave me an exposure to a larger number of people and a greater diversity of interests than I would have with a single committee. But I think that the issues confronting agriculture now are broad in scale. That is to say, they're less and less localized issues; they're more and more statewide issues—water, environment, et cetera, et cetera; that a single committee would be advisable. President Atkinson and Reg Gomes made a very good move in establishing a statewide commission that is still operating. You must try to balance various interests that are out there, but some groups end up being excluded. I haven't looked at the constitution of Reg's commission that closely, but I think that he's got some environmental interests reflected on it; I know he's got natural resource interests reflected on it, in addition to the traditional agriculture. But I'm not sure on the size question; it's probably, as you had intimated,

probably still tipped in favor of the large operator. We need to get better representation of this growing interest in organic agriculture and small farm agriculture on these committees. A difficulty that you have as vice-president is finding organizations that you can tap for that purpose. It seems to me that that movement is still quite fragmented. And finding a natural leader from this fragmented set of interests that run the range from Sonoma to Imperial is tricky.

07-00:49:38

One other point on committees. I think committees are, for the functioning of a public institution, absolutely essential. There's no better way I know of, of getting public involvement and the expression of public views than through a committee structure of some kind. But there's also a risk for the vice-president that establishes these committees. The risk is that the committee begins to assume that it is not just an advisory committee, but is, de facto, a decision-making committee. That's when the line gets crossed. So it's easy to unconsciously let the committee assume roles other than advisory.

Geraci: Thus the title advisory.

07-00:50:53
Farrell: Thus the title advisory. But advisers sometimes become drivers.

Geraci: Well, I would think, as you were talking there, it has to be extremely difficult, in that California is one of the most varied agricultural regions. It includes just about everything and anything. A committee needs to be a small enough group that it can actually function, because committees that are too large do not function, yet represents all of this. That's a challenge, isn't it?

07-00:51:27
Farrell: That's absolutely right. The temptation is to say, well, we'll set up a number of subcommittees to deal with this. But that, too can become unmanageable, if you're not careful. President Atkinson and Reg did a pretty good job in this respect. If you keep the committee focused on the strategic, the visionary aspects of planning for the division and division priorities; if you can keep them focused on strategy questions, they can be very helpful. I look back on the days shortly after I came to Berkeley, when I was appointed by the dean to head up a committee looking at the need for a research field station in the Central Valley. And it was the committee that really drove the decision-making on that matter. So they're essential, and generally helpful; but not always.

Geraci: [laughs] Well, it's anything by committee, isn't it?

07-00:52:54
Farrell: That's right.

Geraci: Just getting a committee to come to consensus can be a very difficult task. But what you're saying, then, is that the larger vision for the future, the strategic vision, opposed to not letting them become involved in the nuts and bolts {inaudible}—

07-00:53:11
Farrell: The operational question.

Geraci: —operations. Because that's where it could really get—

07-00:53:16
Farrell: Right. Particularly with respect to personnel. I had one incident that I think illustrates this quite vividly. One of the provisions of VERIP was that individuals could be rehired for a specified period of time, usually up to a year. And that could be extended if there was programmatic need or justification. One of the persons that took the VERIP program was my regional director in the south central, the central San Joaquin Valley, the regional director of Extension. He had done a good job. And he probably would not have retired, had it not been for VERIP. At least he wouldn't have retired for a few years. But he took VERIP. And because that's the most important agricultural region in the state, production-wise—and he was doing a good job—I agreed to rehire him as a VERIP retiree, the understanding being that it would be for one year, while we searched for a successor. Well, there was a committee that he had organized, or was a part of his operation in the Central Valley, that decided that his employment needed to be extended beyond the first year; they wanted a second year or a third year. Well, I had to draw the line there. That's an illustration of where a committee begins to meddle in operational questions, for which they are very poorly equipped.

Geraci: They don't have all the information.

07-00:55:14
Farrell: Precisely. And it's difficult to provide all the information on personnel matters.

Geraci: That's what they always say, that's what they pay the leadership the big money for.

07-00:55:24
Farrell: That's right. [they laugh]

Geraci: To make those types of decisions. What we're going to do right here is I'm going to change tapes so we can continue. Narrators says it all here.

Begin Audio File 8

Geraci: Today is December 9, 2008. This is disk number two of interview with Dr. Kenneth Farrell, Victor W. Geraci, interviewer. When we left off on our last

tape, we were talking more about the administrative roles, the overall job that you had, which is consumed by budgets and allocation of resources. But let's talk a little bit now about the programmatic types of things. As you're leaving and now that you've been out for a while, what are some of the programmatic areas that you see, possibly, that ANR should be directing itself into? We've hinted at some of them. Let's try and be a little more specific.

08-00:01:00

Farrell: On the research side, I think that it is very clear that we need to invest more of our resources in the fields of biology, plant and animal. We are in the throes of a biological revolution in this country that has only begun to have effect in agriculture. And it seems to me that on the research side, we have a unique opportunity to contribute to the development and application of biology, through biotechnology, through genetic engineering, a whole variety of techniques that are encompassed in the field of biology. Clearly, that should be a major point of emphasis in the years and decades ahead.

Geraci: And there again, that's not something that can be done at the applied—

08-00:02:27

Farrell: No.

Geraci: This is pure, raw scientific research.

08-00:02:30

Farrell: That's right.

Geraci: When we're talking genetic engineering, you need a lab, you need scientists. This requires—

08-00:02:39

Farrell: Right. And it's very costly. The cost of a molecular biologist, if you include the lab and everything that goes with it, is beyond comprehension of administrators two or three decades ago. So it's going to be a very costly investment. And I think that we're probably going to be driven to depending on competitive grants from organizations such as NIH and private/public sector relationships, private/public sector contracts, in order to be able to mount a program of research at an adequate level. So that's clearly one area. When we look back a hundred years from now, at this period that we're in right now, I would be surprised if we do not conclude that we were on the cusp of what amounts to nothing more or nothing less than another revolution in agriculture. Agriculture will never look the same, it will not be organized the same as it is now, once this stream of technology comes into the forefront. I think that there are also major issues related to food safety that the University could be more active in. We do have both a research and Extension program in food safety. But here again, it's at a relatively small scale, and not really focused as well as it might be. I think that this is probably a good point to say that in the future, intercampus collaboration is going to be more and

more necessary, to carry out some of this research. In part, because of the cost of it, no one campus is going to have enough to do it all. And secondly, because there needs to be an interdisciplinary approach that you can sometimes get through intercampus collaboration of one kind or another. For example, food safety strikes me as being an area that is amenable—in fact, requires—a good deal of interdisciplinary research, whether it's nutrition or medical sciences, a variety of science is applicable to the broad question of food safety.

Geraci: I'd like to throw in there, too, that the cost of use of anthropologists, historians, taking a look at— America's changing the way that it eats. And that has made food safety a different issue than it was fifty or 100 years ago.

08-00:05:51

Farrell: Very good point. The knowledge of Americans, concerning diet and nutrition, and the dietary habits we have are definitely changing the face of what we call food safety.

Geraci: In our last scare, the idea that we could have spinach that's picked, cleaned, washed and packaged, and have it cause a safety hazard, while fifty years ago, you bought spinach and you cleaned it yourself.

08-00:06:27

Farrell: That's right. The whole culture of food is different today [chuckles] than it was fifty years ago. There are major issues out there, of course, of an environmental nature. There are dozens of different ones that need to be addressed through research and education. But I think that in California, because we are such a unique state geographically and climatically, and in terms of our soils, that there needs to be a University-led effort to provide for and develop means of conserving and enhancing the quality of resources such as we're speaking of. That will come more slowly, I think, than for example, the food safety or the biology emphasis, because it's less definable and there are fewer action groups that are focused on those issues. But I do think that the University has a role here, along with other public institutions, in looking at the state as a natural resource, if you will, and trying to develop policies, and where necessary, to bring the science to bear on issues that will preserve and enhance the quality of that natural environment.

Geraci: Speaking of issues such as water—clean water, I mean; water without all the natural salts that occur within the California climate; looking at pesticide uses and things like this, developing therein— It's back to your biological, biotech to develop new plants through genetic engineering that need less water, that can resist certain insects.

08-00:08:49

Farrell: Absolutely. That's an important component of it, yes.

Geraci: For the grape industry just a few years ago, in looking at Pierce's disease or Anaheim disease for vines, having to turn to the South American universities, who've actually been doing the biology. And that's where they turned.

08-00:09:14
Farrell: Interesting, yes. Well, they'll go where the science is being done. That's basically the way it operates.

Geraci: So {do you think?} that kind of brings it back a little bit {inaudible}—

08-00:09:23
Farrell: It does.

Geraci: —to this biotech need, {that's} really a cutting edge? If I could just kind of put in here, what about the relationship between, in this biotech area, the need of cooperation with venture capital and venture businesses? For academics, this is always problematic, but as you mentioned, this is a deep pocket.

08-00:09:50
Farrell: It's definitely a deep pocket. Well, I certainly wouldn't rule that out. I think the trick is going to be that of being able to develop contracts or contractual relationships with these organizations that are consistent with the roles of a public institution. Namely, that one individual firm or one individual organization or one narrow set of society is not going to be the sole beneficiary of the public investment that we're making. I think that it's possible to devise contracts that will still make it attractive to the investor and the capital venturist, but also provide adequate protection to the academic model.

Geraci: But the UC model has been that they must own the patent, because of the profits.

08-00:10:57
Farrell: That's right. However, the technology is frequently licensed for application in the field.

Geraci: And how many businesses want to pay for that technology?

08-00:11:03
Farrell: That's a very good question. But I think that it's inherent upon the University to make the results of that research available. But it's also the right of the investor to have, I think, an initial claim for a limited period of time, on the results of that research. So how you work that out, I don't know. But I think that we need to continue to experiment with that. I think the experience here at Berkeley, between Novartis and the BP thing that's now ongoing, that we'll learn some valuable lessons and concepts as to how to manage this. But to go back to your original question, I believe that there's no alternative to public/private relationships, public/private contracts, to deal with the scale and scope of the science that we're talking about.

Geraci: And taking into consideration, within the last two decades, two major economic turn backs that have, in some ways, decimated the resource ability of {inaudible}—

08-00:12:20
Farrell: That's right. Yes, if you factor that in, it makes it even more significant.

Geraci: So there's that {inaudible}. On the environmental issues, let's talk a little bit about them. What are the environmental issues for California agriculture?

08-00:12:37
Farrell: Well, I think they are, first of all, natural resource use. I'll take one example. Urban development or suburban development in California is largely based upon the whims and desires of local communities and local governments, not based upon any concept of highest value use of land. It's strictly local. It's not regional; it's certainly not statewide in scope. I think that communities are going to have to start paying much more attention to how their land and water resources are being used; how you can best locate new housing developments, for example; how you can reduce runoff from cities and all of the pesticides and poisons that go with it; how you can convince or entice agriculture to reduce its pollution of the water, the livestock sector in particular. So there's a set of issues which vary in detail and vary in intensity across the state; but there's a common thread that we're not planning intelligently for the use of our scarce resources, resources that are going to be increasingly scarce in the future.

Geraci: This idea of home rule, NIMBY, not in my backyard, is a very strong— And California's been fighting this is all the post-World War II years, as we've expanded. Some of our best farmland now contains parking lots, shopping centers.

08-00:15:09
Farrell: Absolutely.

Geraci: And in a hungry world, we have to be asking ourselves, what is the value {inaudible}?

08-00:15:14
Farrell: That's right. And we're not doing that. We're not doing that in any systematic way. We're looking at it through the prism of local communities. The board of supervisors says, we will approve this development because it will increase our revenue by X amount, and we need revenue. What they have not looked at are the opportunity costs that have come as a result of taking away another thousand acres of farmland. Because they don't feel that cost. That cost is borne externally to the group.

Geraci: And it's very complicated political, economic decision making, across {the line?}. What you're saying is, is that every group has made its decision

separate from the others; so that we've ended up with nothing that is coherent in the long run.

08-00:16:11
Farrell: That's right.

Geraci: And in a sense, especially in the North Bay Area's— Look at the movement in the sixties into the seventies, with the Williamson Act, conservation of land. We've known that we've been losing farmland at this voracious, almost {inaudible}—

08-00:16:29
Farrell: Absolutely. Some institutions are beginning to recognize that fact. For example, the Marin Land Trust is an example of citizens who've come together and said, we've got a limited amount of land in Marin County. How can we best use it? How can we best apply it for our benefit long term? And so you're getting some more reasoned development, as a result of this. And I think that kind of institution is needed. And the state government, is— well, both the state and the University, I think, are failing, in really addressing these issues on a statewide basis. It's not the University's role, I think, to worry too much about the southeast corner of Merced County. But it is our role to worry about the quality and availability and the use of our natural resources, on a statewide basis.

Geraci: And part of this will call for farmers, then, to be much more respectful and part of this expanding rural/urban interface. People in Tulare and Fresno, where there's cotton, have a rightful way to question the chemicals that are being sprayed on land that's right next to, adjacent to homes. And how do we deal with this?

08-00:18:00
Farrell: Farmers absolutely have to be a part of this decision-making process. No decision will stick that involves agriculture unless agriculture's been a part of this and has been a participant in at least— not necessarily a happy one or an agreeable one, but it's got to be part of the process, along with other interests. It is going to require farmers, farm managers and farm organizations to take on a much more diplomatic role than they have in the past. Rather than arguing to the last straw for narrow agricultural interests, they're going to have to find ways to blend their interests, to amalgamate their interests with others and come up with what will be, for many, a second best solution.

08-00:19:20
Farrell: And by the way, taking it back to the University, that's a role that I think the University, and cooperative Extension in particular, should be playing much more extensively. Why shouldn't cooperative Extension advisers, let's say in the Central Valley, develop a program focusing on, let's say, water quality and how do we improve it from an agricultural perspective? Why shouldn't we have a project like that? Rather than worrying about whether the dairy cow

down at the local dairy farm has got adequate nutrition? You see, I think we've got to change our mindsets or our viewpoints, the structure of the way we organize our organizations and our programs, that are more comprehensive than they ever have been in the past. We're now beginning to realize that everything we do is connected to something else. Nature is interconnected. It's not a detached entity of some kind; it is part and parcel of our life, and it's connected to everything that we do.

Geraci: It seems to me that for each new discovery and technological step forward, we create a new problem.

08-00:20:57
Farrell: It is called "progress".

Geraci: But that's the evolution of, then, where research and development needs to be adjusted.

08-00:21:02
Farrell: Right.

Geraci: Could farmers then take a lesson from organizations, as you said, like the Marin Trust, the Coastal Commission, {inaudible} long term state planning of agriculture?

08-00:21:18
Farrell: Definitely. There have been abortive attempts in Sacramento, during the period that I was vice-president, to begin to do some long-range land use planning. But it never got anywhere, because of failures of leadership and the disinterest or opposition of agriculture. Their fear is that if it is anything more than strictly local planning, in which they're the [laughs] final decision makers, that they're going to lose. And they might feel threatened by a UC program of that kind. Certainly they have felt threatened by state land use planning concepts.

Geraci: So farmers are somewhat paranoid, for some good reasons, over a past last hundred, 200 years, what has happened to agriculture. And because of that paranoia, they're afraid to participate in {inaudible}.

08-00:22:25
Farrell: Yes. And I think a good example of what agriculture stands to lose by not participating more effectively or more fully is in the Endangered Species Act. You've got declarations of—how would I put it?—declarations which, in essence, say that you must not disturb the habitat of selected insects or fish.

Geraci: Salamanders. {inaudible}.

08-00:22:57
Farrell: Salamanders, whatever. And you can see, obviously, that such regulation can certainly disrupt the land use patterns that the farmer has been using. Well,

why do we have that sort of restrictive covenant? Well, in part because it was enacted in Washington, with or by people that had no real knowledge of conditions at the local level. Agriculture loses if it is not involved intimately in that process of decision making.

Geraci: Could that just be inherent in the farm mentality or farm culture of, it is a matter of home rule? My farm, my land, nobody {inaudible}. No one's going to tell me what to do.

08-00:23:56

Farrell: There's no doubt about it being a deeply engrained part of the psyche of farmers in this country. But as you said a moment ago, even that is subject to change. It may take generations, and it may take a much different set of institutions to deal with such issues. Science and education tries to provide an understanding of the issue and provide alternatives, whether it be new science or a better social setting, to bring about gradual evolutionary change in society. We have got to move ahead, and that means change.

Geraci: {inaudible} [mic noise]. In all of our interviews, this theme has seemed to come through; and that would be that one of the roles of the University and ANR in the state of California is to ease the pains of the evolution of agriculture and the transitions that it has to go through to get to the next step.

08-00:25:46

Farrell: I agree with that. I think that's putting it very accurately. Now, I wouldn't express it as easing the pain, [Geraci laughs] but it is the role of the Division of Agriculture to provide the knowledge, the information, the education, the research and technology that will assist people in adjusting to change.

Geraci: Because it is all about transitional change.

08-00:26:21

Farrell: It is. I don't consider myself ancient, but if I just stop for a moment and look back at what agriculture was fifty years ago, even here in California, my God, I had *no idea* that it was going to change like it has. And it's irreversible.

Geraci: I was a ten-year-old boy fifty years ago, on a farm in California. And I {inaudible} recognize—

08-00:26:52

Farrell: I'm sure you don't.

Geraci: Change does not always come easily. That's what I meant by pain. Transitions from old ways to new ways, they're always wrought with some pitfalls and some angst on the part of— Where's it going? I'm not quite sure. You're outside your comfort levels.

08-00:27:17

Farrell: Yes. I understand what you're saying, and agree with it.

Geraci: I guess another area—we're talking about natural resource, we're talking about environmental—would be the pesticide issues. We've come a long way.

08-00:27:37

Farrell: Yes, we have come a long way. We need to continue to invest in research, whether it's through biological research that results in genetic characteristics of plants that resist insects, or whether it's through the invention of better types of chemicals that are less damaging, or just improved management. I think that we need to continue to have programs in the UC that have that kind of an objective of reducing, long term, the amount of so-called environmentally poisonous materials that go into our soil and animals. And again, the major hope is that the relief will come through biological substitutions.

Geraci: How do we make people that have not been dependent on agriculture realize— I can remember in the sixties, seventies, into the eighties, the new thing was integrated pest management, IPM. And we were going to reduce our uses. But today, when you say IPM, extremists see that as almost a four letter or dirty word, because that still means the use of chemicals. But how do I look a farmer straight in the eye and say, you're going to give up your entire crop this year because you can't spray?

08-00:29:28

Farrell: [laughs] You do it with great difficulty and trepidation, let me tell you.

Geraci: And fear of your life.

08-00:29:34

Farrell: And fear of your life. [Geraci laughs] No, I think that it's through an educational process that change is going to occur. First of all, the farmer has to understand the dangers that are inherent in the use of the material—the dangers to him, to his laborers, to his family, and to consumers, generally. He has to understand and be willing to accept that. Secondly, it seems to me that the University educator or scientist that's involved in this question needs to be sure that we are on a track of developing alternatives for this man that will lessen the pain that he feels in making that adjustment. So we need a research program and Extension program that is designed to produce those alternatives, and an education program to help the man understand the reason for this. But it's a slow, slow process. The strawberry industry is a good example of these issues.

Geraci: It can be catastrophic, in the long run.

08-00:31:08

Farrell: Yes, for that industry, as it is now in California, it could be catastrophic. In its place will come modified production systems.

Geraci: The brown moth controversy over the last year or so, in spraying for that, Malathion in the sixties and seventies, was considered to be a very safe product.

08-00:31:36
Farrell: I remember those days back when we were arguing about Mediterranean fruit flies. The whole city of San Jose, at one time, was sprayed with Malathion.

Geraci: I can remember communities being sprayed at night with DDT for mosquitoes.

08-00:32:01
Farrell: Well, public tolerance has changed. But also the nature of the chemical compounds we're using has changed.

Geraci: So it's the ongoing ques— I guess what I'm getting at is, this is another role that the University needs to be playing {inaudible}.

08-00:32:22
Farrell: I think that's one of our most *important* roles. We need to be able to provide information and be able to explain why we have change in society, not just focusing on production, but on environmental and other qualities that are important in society.

Geraci: I think you just actually named, probably, what the present transition is, is we're moving from a production centered research role to a role that's more interdisciplinary and environmental.

08-00:33:08
Farrell: No question about it. That's been the whole drift. That's been the drift, noticeably, since the seventies. Small, marginal, incremental change. Now it's beginning to accelerate. And it's going to be pervasive. We're going to see much more interest in and attempts to regulate, attempts to moderate or modify human behavior, as it relates to the environmental, natural resource, agriculture connection.

Geraci: And of course, that's all helped by the concerns now of global warming and all.

08-00:33:51
Farrell: Precisely.

Geraci: Yeah. So now is the time to be acting and doing that type of change.

08-00:33:56
Farrell: Precisely.

Geraci: Let's finish up with one last question. And I'll keep it very open and general. It's kind of a fill in, where you can throw in anything you want. I guess it

would be centered around what does ANR need to do to stay viable for the next hundred years in its role of bringing good agriculture and good farm practices and good food safety to the people of the state of California, if you had to just summarize it to me?

08-00:34:33
Farrell: At the most fundamental level, we need to be able to assure the public, citizens of the state, that we are a trustworthy source of information on issues that are important to them; that we are not just an ivory tower driven by individuals who are inwardly looking at their own immediate self interests; but an institution that is driven by its understanding of and its connection to the public. In other words, that we are externally oriented, not just internally oriented. At times, I've felt that parts of the University of California fell into this trap of being essentially isolated intellectual capitals, relevant only unto themselves. We have to convince people that we are an important part of society. Secondly, and the most importantly, is that we need to recruit the best staff we can find and to keep ourselves always on the cutting edge of science. I think that there will be a reformation or purging of College of Agriculture institutions, because they're going to become, to some extent, increasingly irrelevant. We don't want to see the University of California in that category. Investment in top flight scientists and educators is absolutely critical.

I believe that the land grant universities should play a major role in the many stages and phases of development because they are an important means of addressing societal issues at the nexus of food productions, environmental quality, natural resources and food safety. We need to expand our roles in that direction in both research and extension as rapidly and as far as possible in the years ahead.

Another principle that the division must continue to pursue, is that we are agents of change. We are agents of change in the sense that we bring new information and new ideas to people to permit them to understand and to deal with the issues they confront. We are not limited to particular policy positions but here to provide knowledge-based information to permit you to make choices among alternative solutions.

One of the legitimate criticisms of Extension is that it has tended to follow the leader rather than *be* the leader on emerging issues related to agriculture. The cross-cutting, interdisciplinary nature of emerging issues in which agriculture is a part, offers new, exciting opportunities for leadership in Extension as well as research

The division will continue to struggle in the larger University system to preserve its identity and the perception of social value. ANR is now a small component of a highly diverse University which has grown immensely in size in recent decades. The need for and value of agricultural research and extension is no longer as readily accepted by faculty, administrators, and

students, many of whom have little understanding of agriculture and rural American, as in earlier stages of University development. Leadership by the vice-president will be critical in addressing these perceptions.

I am optimistic that the division can continue to be a vital science and education resources within the University of California and in the future development of California agriculture. The challenges will be numerous; the benefits can continue to be large.

FIAT LUX.

Geraci: Very good. Dr. Farrell, thank you very much for telling us your story. This has been great. They've been five wonderful visits. Thank you very much.

08-00:42:12
Farrell: Thank you, Vince.

[End of Interview]

Vic Geraci is the Food and Wine Historian at ROHO. Upon completing his doctorate in American history from UC Santa Barbara in 1997 he served as an Associate Professor of History at Central Connecticut State University (1998-2003). Geraci's academic specialty in the California Wine Industry utilizes oral and public history methodologies honed through projects involving Sicilian Immigration, alcoholic centers, local history, environmental organizations, vintner associations, and over thirty years of secondary and university teaching and curriculum development in California. His viticulture and viniculture publications include the co-authored *Aged In Oak*, journal articles and reviews in the *Southern California Quarterly*, *Journal of Agricultural History*, *The Public Historian*, and *Journal of San Diego History*, and his book *Salud: The Story of the Santa Barbara Wine Industry* from the University of Nevada Press. Geraci also serves as the Associate Director of ROHO.