



agriculture and home economies, which are easier to handle than more controversial issues.

College research has been reluctant to enter into controversy because it is not used to arguing, he said. Today, they teach a farmer how to fertilize and what the best fertilizer are, rather than studying the benefits of county consolidation, he said.

Another factor that has affected research is the interest in having technical findings communicated, Evans said.

Information on fertilizer is pushed by companies who produce and benefit from the research, the stores that sell it and the farmers who will ultimately use it, he explained.

On the other hand, improvement of county roads does not enjoy such widespread interest. The taxpayer is not interested in it because he feels that it will add to his tax burden. At the same time however, the taxpayer is paying for more agriculture oriented research which benefits him less, Evans explained.

Evans mentioned tax assessment as a major farm problem. He said that per capita, with all counties averaged together, \$7.41 is assessed on agricultural property for every \$1 on non-agricultural property.

He said that the tax is aimed at land

and capital, which the farmer needs to operate.

According to Adams, research projects are planned about a year in advance with specific priorities in mind. These priorities are set by extension service employees and volunteers throughout the state, who meet and decide what is most important for their county, district and the state, he said.

Since many of the rural community development appropriations are earmarked in Washington, the states are given the decision whether to accept the funds and do the research or turn it down, he explained.

What Evans wants to see organized is what he called Citizen Non-Credit Higher Education. This concept of community education would help give background information on social and economic issues concerning them. It would also be a way to act upon the rural community problems that have been ignored up to now.

The best way to educate citizens is through the land grant college system which already has the necessary connections at the grassroots level, he said.

In that framework, students and faculty with specific expertise could meet

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Over the years land grant colleges have lost the impetus to respond to people and the needs of the rural community, said Bert Evans, economist and cooperative extension specialist at UNL from 1961 to 1972.

Although included in the Smith-Lever and Hatch Acts, which established the research areas of land grant colleges, research in community development has only been minimal, according to Evans. This includes problems with housing, improving farm income, causes and possible remedies of poverty among rural people, health and rural education, he said.

Both John Adams, director of the Cooperative Extension Service, and Howard Ottoson, director of the Agriculture Experiment Station at UNL, agree that there has not been enough research in rural community development in the past but gave different reasons for it.

Adams said that limited funds and a relatively small staff have accounted for the lack of research while Ottoson said that it is a comparatively new area of interest.

According to Evans, part of the reason is that there is a lack of understanding of minority interests. Research has tended to ignore old people, the small farmer and community problems while emphasizing farm technology.

Leaning back in his office chair, Evans said that land grant college research focuses on technical problems of



Bert Evans