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Last Updated: 05/23/2023



Hatch Act Centennial, 1987

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

For a century, we Americans and people around the world have benefitted tremendously from the agricultural research and training provided by our national system of agricultural experiment stations at our State land-grant colleges. This system was initiated by the Hatch Act, which President Grover Cleveland signed into law on March 2, 1887. In celebrating the Centennial of this legislation, we pay much-deserved tribute to our agricultural researchers of the present and to the generations of dedicated scientists who preceded them in this essential work.

Americans promoted agricultural education from the start. Private societies achieved much progress, and farmers, stimulated by nearly limitless opportunity, eagerly took advantage of new scientific knowledge. Public support for agricultural research grew because the results were so obviously beneficial. In the early and mid-19th century, specialized schools of agriculture appeared. The United States Department of Agriculture was founded in 1862; one of its missions was to acquire and diffuse agricultural information. The Morrill Act, which President Abraham Lincoln signed into law in 1862, provided for the creation of land-grant agricultural colleges in most States.

Despite these welcome developments, a generation later much remained to be done. It was then that William Henry Hatch, a Congressman from Missouri, proposed agricultural experiment stations for research and training. Today we know that the adoption of the Hatch Act of 1887 was one of the most significant steps ever taken in American agriculture.

It is no exaggeration to say that the wealth of technical knowledge developed at these stations has enabled America's farmers to revolutionize the practice of agriculture and bettered life for millions of people the world over. The existence of these institutions and the abilities of the scientists trained there ensure that future generations will continue to enjoy the benefits of agricultural research.

In recognition of the vital role of State agricultural experiment stations in American agriculture, the Congress, by House Joint Resolution 3, has designated March 2, 1987, as the Centennial of the signing of the Hatch Act of 1887 and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 2, 1987, as the Centennial of the signing of the Hatch Act of 1887, and I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eleventh.

Ronald Reagan