

## ■ Getting Your Money's Worth

How does the responsibility translate into results that benefit Americans? In the international trade arena, USDA research is an important tool for stimulating the Nation's economy. For example, the protocol developed for detecting corn seed bacterial disease early and accurately eliminates foreign quarantine barriers and rejected shipments—keeping markets open for U.S. farm products. Another example: U.S. rice establishes the quality standard for the most important small grain in the world. USDA research advances in agricultural biotechnology can help improve crop quality and yields of rice, as well as reduce losses from pest damage. This helps the United States build an agricultural system that is highly competitive in the global economy.

REE is also rising to the challenge of balancing agricultural production and the environment. For example, USDA agricultural research is behind Integrated Pest Management, a system that relies on a variety of natural techniques as alternatives to chemical pesticides in order to reduce health risks, sustain natural resources, and create new economic opportunities. USDA's goal is to have IPM in practice on 75 percent of U.S. agricultural acres by the year 2000. Another example closer to home for many consumers is the research behind the development of biodegradable 100-percent-cornstarch cutlery, which is stronger and better for the environment than petroleum-based plastic utensils.

In an effort to meet the challenge of providing a safe and secure food supply for all citizens, USDA researchers developed the first rapid test for identifying generic bacteria on meat. It has cut the old 3-day meat quality test to detect *E. coli* contamination down to 8 hours—a benefit for both industry and consumers. In another area, USDA is continuing research to understand the possible transfer of infectious diseases from animals to humans—mad cow disease, for example.

REE is delivering on its commitment to a healthy, well-nourished population with the production of a substance called Z-trim which can be used in many food products as a fat replacement that tastes good. Another example: soybeans with a reduced fat content that could eventually lead to a grocery shopping cart full of “smart heart” products.