



## INTRODUCTION

### A HISTORICAL NOTE ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE FOUNDATION

The purpose of “The Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics” was set forth in a letter from the Bancitaly Corporation to the Regents of the University of California (UC) dated February 10, 1928.

“The activities of the FOUNDATION shall be embraced by the great field of Agricultural Economics, and relate to such subjects as:

- a) The economic consequences of increased production which result from improved seed grains, improved nursery stock, improved livestock, improved machinery, and improved methods of farming;
- b) The economic consequences of overproduction arising from unusually favored seasons or unusually unfavorable seasons as to weather and other conditions in producing nations;
- c) The relations between conditions existing in the farming industry and the general economic conditions prevailing in the nation and internationally;
- d) The acquiring of such knowledge concerning soil qualities and climatic and other conditions in any or all parts of the State of California, and of such knowledge concerning existing or prospective supply and demand conditions for the various agricultural products of the state, as will enable the appropriate representatives of the Foundation to advise the farmers of California as to wise plantings, sowings, breeding, etc., in relation to areas and kinds;
- e) The methods and problems of disposing of farm products on terms or conditions giving maximum degree of satisfaction to producers;
- f) Any economic questions which concern the individual farmer and the members of his family, and affect their living conditions, and so on.

However it should be understood that the activities of the Foundation are to be regarded as chiefly:

- a) Those of research, with purpose to find the facts and conditions that will promise or threaten to affect the economic status of California agriculturalists; and
- b) Those of formulating ways and means of enabling the agriculturalists of California to profit from the existence of favorable facts and conditions, and/or protect themselves as well as possible from adverse facts and conditions.



It seemed appropriate to ask how well the Foundation met its charges. There are three dominant themes in the six items:

THEME I: “The Production Side of California Agriculture”

Items (a) consequences of productivity growth; (b) consequences of shocks, plus and minus variability; and (d) advise on choices of products and volume of production.

THEME II: “Profitable Marketing of California Production”

Item (e) methods and problems in disposing of products profitably.

THEME III: “California Farmers in a Global Context”

Items (c) national and international impacts; (f) facts and conditions that impact agriculturalists and help them design policies and programs that manage external events—positive events such as good markets, policy, and marketing structure and negative events such as environmental constraints, pesticides, water and air quality, and waste disposal; resource competition for land and water.

Three papers were commissioned and presented at the symposium. The authors have revised those papers with the marketing paper divided into two parts. The revised papers follow in a slightly different order because the early pages of the first marketing paper by Julian Alston and Richard Sexton do a very nice job of setting the dynamic context for the Foundation in terms of changes in California agriculture, the professions of economics and agricultural economics; and the University of California. The remainder of the first paper focuses on market studies. The second paper by Sexton and Alston narrows the focus to collective action. The supply side of California agriculture is addressed in the third paper by Dan Sumner. The fourth paper by Gordon Rausser focuses on the welfare of California agriculturalists in the broader context of the state, the nation, and the world.

The section closes with a set of comments from four distinguished Giannini Foundation alumni who received their doctoral degrees from the University of California.

#### EVALUATIONS – HOW WELL DID WE DO?

- Giannini Foundation Contributions to Agricultural Marketing Studies  
*Julian M. Alston and Richard J. Sexton*
- The Giannini Foundation and the Economics of Collective Action in the Marketing of California Farm Products  
*Richard J. Sexton and Julian M. Alston*
- Economics and Agricultural Supply in California: The Activities and Role of the Giannini Foundation  
*Daniel A. Sumner*
- The Giannini Foundation and the Welfare of California Agriculturists in a Changing State, Nation, and World  
*Gordon C. Rausser*
- Alumni Discussion  
*C. Richard Shumway, Nicole Ballenger, Richard E. Just, and Peter Thor*