

# White to try not to cut funds for research of agriculture

By SCOTT SUTHERLAND  
Assistant City Editor

Gov. Mark White assured the Texas A&M Board of Regents and A&M System agriculture officials Wednesday that he would try to avoid cutting agriculture research funds despite the state's budget crunch.

White received an in-depth briefing on the problems of Texas agriculture from leaders of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, the Texas Forest Service, and the Agricultural Experiment Station.

White said the briefing was uplifting and encouraging in the face of falling oil prices that are threatening the state with a large budget shortfall.

"We aren't abandoning the old economy, we're building a new one," he said. "I am uplifted by the prospects of the new economy we're building, and I have plans to find new money for work that is going on here."

A&M agriculture experts said the University is playing a vital role in developing new technology for Texas. Last year A&M conducted over \$65 million in agricultural research.

A&M agriculture officials told White that high technology farming can increase the state's share of the agriculture market.

Dr. Neville Clarke, director of the Agricultural Experiment Station, said A&M research gains are enabling farmers to add value to their crops — meaning they could produce at the same levels but increase their income.

He said Texas could increase its value-added percentage by establishing its own processing plants rather than exporting raw products to New Mexico and Louisiana thereby shipping dollars out of Texas.

In addition, he said, marketing programs that increase the salability of previously discarded products can contribute to raising the farmer's income. The average added-value of Texas farm products falls well below the national average.

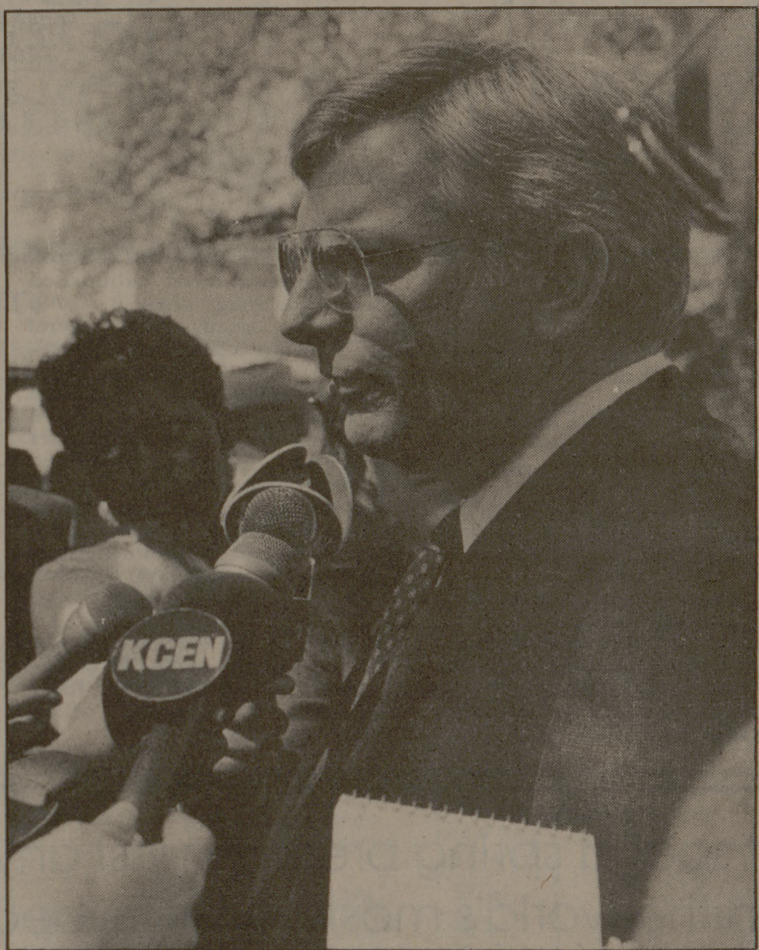


Photo by SCOTT SUTHERLAND

Gov. Mark White speaks to reporters outside the Texas A&M Memorial Student Center Wednesday.

Along with increasing profitability, Clarke said the extension service and A&M researchers are seeking to reduce some of the internal problems that Texas farmers must cope with.

Clarke identified dwindling natural resources, high production costs that are a by-product of high energy costs and weather extremes as the biggest internal barriers to Texas farmers.

Extension agents, he said, are seeking to reduce the risk that these barriers impose by imple-

menting programs like A&M's biotechnology program.

Through biotechnology, A&M has increased farm productivity by increasing disease resistance and nutritional quality of farm products.

Dr. Perry Adkisson, System Deputy Chancellor, outlined the research at A&M and emphasized the University's role in bringing Texas agriculture to the forefront. Texas ranks second to California in agriculture production.

# White's staff reviewing agencies' planned cuts

Associated Press

AUSTIN — Gov. Mark White's staff continued reviewing state agency budget-trimming plans Wednesday, while one of the largest agencies said it could make only about half the 13 percent spending cuts the governor requested.

White urged all state agencies and universities to trim spending by 13 percent to help cover the projected \$1.3 billion budget shortfall brought on by falling oil prices. Under the Texas Constitution, White lacks the actual power to require such cuts.

Marlin W. Johnson, commissioner of the Department of Human Services, submitted a spending reduction plan he said will save \$125.9 million over the next 18 months.

A full 13 percent cut would trim \$245 million, Johnson said, adding, "We cannot reach that level of reduction without carving away critical, life-sustaining services to people, primarily fragile elderly and vulnerable children."

Compounding problems is that some cuts in state spending also would bring reductions in matching funds supplied by the federal government, officials said.

Although a hiring freeze is being imposed for non-essential vacant jobs, Johnson said no layoffs are being considered.

"For the sake of perspective, it can be noted that even if the entire staff of the department were to be abolished tomorrow, the 'savings' over the remainder of this biennium — including salaries, travel, rent, utilities and other staff-related costs — would not meet our \$245 million objective," Johnson wrote to White.

Cutting further would "raise the spectre of denying life-sustaining services for destitute and infirm elderly people and needy children," Johnson said.

William Hamilton, White's budget director, said he expected to have a preliminary total Thursday on spending cuts proposed by the agencies and universities.

# A&M to receive teacher producer honors

By JO ANN ABLE  
Reporter

The Texas A&M College of Education will be named the number one producer in the nation of math and science teachers, according to a national report on the condition of education.

A survey conducted by the National Center for Statistics, to be published next month, lists A&M as the institution with the most education majors in math and science. The publication is part of a national report on the condition of education.

"They don't make a big deal of it," says the dean of the College of Education. "They just list the numbers; but it's a big deal for us."

Dr. Dean C. Corrigan, dean of the College of Education, says A&M's enrollment in the math and science teaching majors has increased steadily over the past 10 years. But A&M's success is in sharp contrast to national averages.

During the same 10 year period, colleges across the country have experienced a 73 percent decrease in the number of math education majors and a 64 percent decrease in the

*"To me it's not just being first in terms of numbers. It's being first in the quality which is what I think we are demonstrating (at A&M)."*

— Dr. Dean C. Corrigan, dean of the College of Education.

number of students studying to become science teachers.

A shortage of math and science teachers is the number one problem in today's schools. In Texas the shortage has reached a crisis stage, he says.

He says part of A&M's success is related to the nature of the institution in general. A&M has been traditionally oriented around science, math and agriculture, he says.

"So the general orientation of the environment has been directed toward those particular subject fields," Corrigan says.

"In addition to that we now have over \$300,000 worth of scholarship aid to attract outstanding students into the fields of math and science," he says.

Corrigan says the Mathematics/Science Teaching Scholar Loan Program, established in 1983, recruits high caliber students by offering "forgivable" loans for teaching math and science after graduation. Each year the student teaches, a percentage of the loan is forgiven, or credited against the amount owed.

"Students in the math/science program get school aid, but it's kind of in the Aggie way of doing things," he explains. "It's really a loan. They don't get the aid until they teach."

Corrigan says the program attracts not only outstanding students but highlights math and science in general. The number of students studying to be science teachers has increased from 82 to 329 in a three-year period, he says.

"To me it's not just being first in terms of numbers," Corrigan says. "It's being first in the quality which is what I think we are demonstrating."

Students must have a minimum 2.25 grade-point ratio to be admitted into the college, Corrigan says. The department also requires a math and English exam in the sophomore year, an exit exam and a 2.5 minimum GPR for graduation.

A&M has kept these high standards even though the state has reduced its demand on teacher qualifications, Corrigan says.

He says two years ago 1,233 math and science teachers were hired in the state and 528 of them were unlicensed to teach those subjects. Emergency teaching certificates were issued and teachers in other fields were brought in to cover the shortage, he says.

"And I think that's the worst thing that the schools can do," Corrigan says. "It just demeans the whole profession."

The solution to the problem of teacher shortages can be solved by offering higher salaries, he says.

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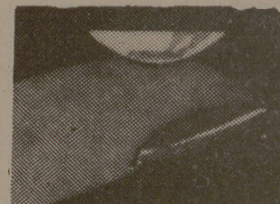
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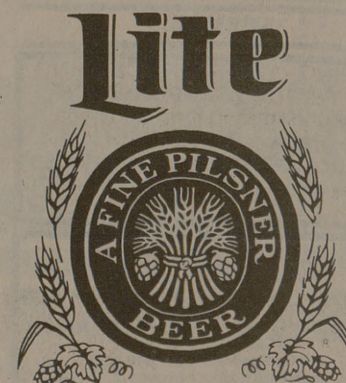


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