ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

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The discussion centered around a dichotomy of: The general public expecting too much from their Government and Government's response to the wrong pressures.

Example:

(1) Over-ambitious enforcement of certain laws without the consideration of cost-benefit.

(2) Duplication - Sixteen agencies provide food assistance to consumers.

(3) Investing too many dollar resources on reacting to popular but shallow issues. Direct marketing - Is it really productive, efficient and effective? - Food Safety - How many overdose units in test laboratory animals? What is safety 300 or 400% of expected daily intake? Consumer Cooperatives - How practical? How efficient? How funded? How to be managed?

(4) Failure to protect and encourage innovations. No patent protection. The government has little interest in supporting needed research in food distribution.

(5) Research Needs: The most pressing problem in food distribution is the need for a complete analysis of the total food distribution system with emphasis on: Costs and returns for typical distribution functions, storage, warehousing, transportation and retail capital, labor, operating costs, maintenance and inventory. Realistic future projections of housing patterns, energy costs and consumer needs and wants. Developing several alternative systems of distribution and educational programs to support the research.

(6) What are the options for the 1980's? Uncertainty, more complexity, constraints on capital, energy and therefore, growth. Quality of work force. Economic restructure.

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