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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

"Food Industry Productivity in the Decade Ahead -- A Systems Perspective," the theme for the 24th annual meeting and subject of this proceedings issue, provides excellent thoughts for the future. Of particular interest to FDRS members are some of the challenges and issues raised by our keynoter, Al Evans. A systems approach to improvements in the produce industry, the impacts of modular containers, the status of electronic scanning for perishable items, and developments in electronic marketing represent a sampling of the topics presented.

The program committee under the leadership of Doug Richardson is to be commended for their efforts. His committee included Paul Canavan, Charlie Coale, Wes Kriebel, Gordon Flynn, Jarvis Cain, John Bouma and Wes Ball.

With over 70 percent of the consumer's food dollar allocated for marketing costs, the time would ordinarily be right for drawing attention to the need for marketing research. Pressures to reduce the Federal budget deficit by cutting Government spending will limit any possibility of additional Federal funding. Until we can effectively demonstrate the multiplier effect of benefits to the economy resulting from marketing research, and convince the legislatures, we will have to look to other funding sources. Increased funding will not be accomplished by attacking production research. Carefully designed research projects aimed at solving important immediate problems will likely be most successful in getting industry fundings support. Of course, the problems have to be broad enough to be beyond the scope of an individual firm, to justify either industry association, foundation, or public funding.

This year promises to be a very busy and exciting year for the Society. Part of the reason is that we **will** be celebrating our 25th anniversary at the annual meeting. Food Distribution Research conferences date back to **May 1960** when a group of educators, Government researchers, and food industry people met to discuss their mutual problems. The open, frank discussion sparked the enthusiasm of everyone involved and have been a hallmark of every meeting since.

The 25th anniversary affords an opportunity to pause and reflect on what FDRS has accomplished, and at the same time to begin to chart the course for the next 25. To begin this process, we need your ideas and suggestions. One of the unique strengths of the Society is the opportunity to bring together interdisciplinary interests--from the food industry, academia, and the Government, to address distribution and marketing problems.

The 25th annual meeting of the Society will be held October 14-17, 1984, at the Ramada Renaissance Hotel, near the airport in Atlanta, Georgia. Your program suggestions and participation is needed now because the program planning is underway. Contact Stan Fletcher, myself, or any member of the Board of Directors with your suggestions, and do it now.

During this year, we plan to continue efforts begun last year to access systematic productivity ideas with a survey of key industry firms. We will also be working to strengthen the involvement in the Society of food distribution related educational

programs. Maintaining and strengthening ties to other associations and industry groups is a priority issue for this administration in order to improve communication, understanding, and cooperation. I welcome your suggestions and ideas as we plan for the coming years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Harold S. Ricker".

Harold S. Ricker
President