

Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics 25(2):714–732
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Invited Paper Abstracts

WAEA PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

“Teaching Agricultural Economics.” Andrew P. Barkley (Kans. State Univ.).

The need for institutions of higher education to teach students of all ages how to think, synthesize competing ideas, and assimilate new information has become more critical and more urgent in the “New Economy.” Analytical ability and new knowledge in the economics of agriculture are increasingly important not only for the traditional university clientele of young adult residential learners, but also for productive women and men throughout their careers and lives. Teachers of agricultural economics must invest heavily in the acquisition of new skills and knowledge and institutional change to take full advantage of the huge opportunities and challenges of the New Economy. This paper considers how well our traditional institutions, programs, and teaching practices in agricultural economics meet the objectives of student learning in a new era.

WAEA FELLOWS ADDRESS

“The Economics of Rural Places and Agricultural Economics.” Emery N. Castle (Prof. Emeritus, Oreg. State Univ.).

Two developments have both broadened and deepened agricultural economics in an important way in recent decades. One has been international economics, including economic development and trade, the other the development and maturation of natural resource and environmental economics. Horizons were broadened, a different literature was read, new conceptual models came to the fore, more appropriate tools were fashioned and employed, and different talent was attracted into the field. Three conditions existed as both international economics and resource economics were emphasized within agricultural economics. These were: (1) a few people had been working on these subjects for some time before they assumed major proportions within agricultural economics; (2) distinctive conceptual approaches were developed for each that were different from what had been employed within agricultural economics to that time; and (3) both addressed an expressed

concern by the larger society. Rural area economics as it now is being practiced within agricultural economics was contrasted with international economics and resource economics on the basis of these three conditions.

SESSION: *The Economics of Resource and Environmental Conflicts.* Moderator: Bill Boggess (Oreg. State Univ.).

“Evaluating Environmental Conflict Resolution: What Constitutes Success?” Bonnie G. Colby (Univ. of Ariz.).

Hundreds of environmental disputes are in the process of litigation, negotiation, legislative consideration, or administrative rule-making in any given week in the United States. While some disputes are resolved expeditiously, many involve protracted and bitter struggles. Resolution of environmental conflicts represents a substantial investment by the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Economic evaluation of conflict resolution efforts is sorely needed, and yet presents major analytic challenges. This paper suggests strategies to provide useful economic analysis of environmental conflict resolution. The paper begins by examining criteria to evaluate efforts to resolve environmental conflicts, and reports preliminary results from a pilot study that applied these criteria to western U.S. water conflicts.

“Agencies and the Resolution of Water Resource Conflict.” Joel R. Hamilton (Univ. of Idaho).

Many local, regional, national, and international conflicts are really conflicts over access to and alternative uses for natural resources such as water. Conflict resolution has many dimensions, including a distinction between rights-, power-, and interest-based methods of resolution. Market-based solutions tend to cut across all three of these resolution models. Natural resource conflicts often involve a large number of agencies from the federal, state, and local levels, playing a variety of roles. Some agencies have the potential to, and may attempt to, play the role of conflict resolver. These ideas are illustrated with several case studies of interstate water conflicts and conflicts over endangered species recovery.

SESSION: *The Future Competitiveness of North American Agriculture*. Moderator: Ted C. Schroeder (Kans. State Univ.).

“A Portfolio of Threats to American Agriculture.” Steven C. Blank (Univ. of Calif., Davis).

This paper outlines some of the biggest economic issues threatening the long-term survival of American farming and ranching. In general, the threats are derived from the intersection of global and local scales of decision making. International economic development, personal finance decisions, and political, social, and environmental issues are all part of the portfolio of threats. At the top of the list of threats is the bottom line.

Profit margins are being squeezed, causing producers to diversify out of agriculture to earn sufficient returns to enable them to remain in agriculture as long as possible.

“Agriculture in Canada: Who Will Grow the Food?” Mel Lerohl and James Unterschultz (Univ. of Alberta).

Agricultural structure in Canada is becoming bi-modal, with more large farms and stable small-farm numbers. Small-farm incomes are primarily from off-farm sources, but large-farm incomes have been affected by recent price volatility and a shifting policy paradigm. Large farms are facing changes in scale, regional location, and financial structure.