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1997 C-FARE Annual Report

The following list of accomplishments and activities highlights the Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics' (C-FARE) recent efforts to increase the national presence of the agricultural economics profession.

Professional Priorities

In July, we released the results of the C-FARE-led priority setting process for the profession in a document entitled, Economics Research and Education Priorities for an Efficient and Sustainable Food System. The priorities represent a common voice for C-FARE and others in communicating the high priority areas to which agricultural economists can make major contributions. The information should be useful and helpful in informing decision making -- whether related to federal funding decisions such as possible revisions in annual requests for proposals by the National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program or the Fund for Rural America, or to the individual scientist as he or she contemplates future professional activities.

This initial set of priorities does not imply that all existing or additional resources should be directed in some lock-step fashion or that the priorities will be fixed over time. We have been and will continue to use the document as the basis for input to high-level Policy decisions that affect agricultural economics research, extension, and education programs.

Input to Policy Makers in Congress

C-FARE representatives have closely monitored the activities of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees as they worked to reauthorize the research title of the farm legislation. Our goals were to 1) provide an economic perspective on proposed changes in legislation, 2) inform Policy discussions by providing economic analysis and input, and 3) support legislation that would facilitate the development of performance measurement guidelines. The House and Senate versions of the research bill authorizes a study to develop performance measurement guidelines. This study, if implemented, will be led by the social sciences with significant leadership from agricultural economists.

Other Examples of C-FARE Involvement Include:

- Provided testimony to the House and Senate Agriculture Committees. The testimony included specific recommendations intended to improve the strength and efficiency of agricultural research from an economics perspective.
- Developed and widely circulated a letter explaining the strengths and weaknesses of rates-of-return analysis. This letter was developed in response to questions from Senate leaders about the appropriate use and interpretation of rates-of-return analyses. The letter was published in Choices and Agronomy News.
- Responded to Senator Lugar's list of research questions. Early in the year, Senator Lugar requested that leaders in the agricultural research community answer a set of questions about federally funded agricultural research. C-FARE responded, with input from the department heads, and is on record giving the social science perspective to these issues.

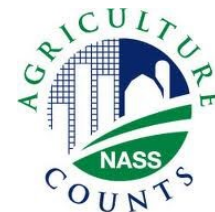
Input to Policy Makers in USDA

C-FARE seeks opportunities for input by the social sciences to high-level Policy decisions in USDA. For example, C-FARE:

- Nominated agricultural economists to serve on the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics Advisory Board. This Board advises the Secretary of Agriculture on a wide range of topics including the orientation of the competitive grants programs. A strong social science representative could influence USDA research, education and extension programs. We also submitted copies of the C-FARE priorities document to the Board for their use as they consider prioritization efforts around the country.
- Nominated agricultural economists as potential reviewers for the Fund for Rural America. The composition of review panels can have a profound impact on the types of proposals funded. This is especially true of interdisciplinary



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research programs like the Fund for Rural America. C-FARE, in cooperation with the agricultural economics department heads, submitted a list of 100 potential agricultural economics reviewers.

- Interacted regularly with USDA representatives responsible for the NRI. C-FARE tracked funding trends of the social sciences in the NRI and provided input to NRI leaders about potential social science contributions. Over the last several years, we have seen an increase in the number of proposals with a social science component accepted in divisions other than Markets, Trade and Rural Development. Much of this success can be attributed to C-FARE's efforts to include economics in the text of the request for proposals.

Outreach and Communications

Since C-FARE's inception, we have worked to better communicate the profession's accomplishments to other professional organizations, Policy makers, research groups, and the press. We have made significant in-roads and built many solid bridges. Our work with the Coalition on Funding Agricultural Research Missions (CoFARM) has increased the visibility of the agricultural economics profession among other agricultural disciplines while fostering collaboration, and providing many opportunities to educate leaders about the contributions of social science research. Other specific accomplishments include the following:

- Delivered an invited presentation at the Agricultural Research Institute's annual meeting summarizing the C-FARE-led prioritization process.
- Designed the AAEA/C-FARE press outreach strategy. In 1997, the number of press contacts was dramatically expanded, as were the number of briefs distributed to members of the press.
- Widely distributed the priorities document to national Policy makers in Congress and USDA, land grant administrators, and to members of the press.
- Provided names of agricultural economics experts to provide analysis to Congress, USDA, trade associations, and private industry.

Keys to Ag Growth and Profitability in Agriculture in a Post-Subsidy World

Each year C-FARE organizes a national symposium on an important economic issue. This year our symposium evaluated the Keys to Agricultural Growth and Profitability in a Post-Subsidy World. About 60 influential Policy makers and analysts representing USDA, Congress, the state and land grant universities, and professional associations attended the day and a half symposium held in Washington, DC. The following "keys" were discussed:

1. The New World Trade Order
2. New roles for Government
3. New Ways of Doing Business, and
4. Pushing the Knowledge Envelope.

We have already received many requests for a summary document, which will be widely distributed in 1998.

Input to Budget Processes

C-FARE uses a variety of channels to provide input to budget processes. For example, C-FARE:

- Recommended funding levels for major research agencies through participation in CoFARM.
- Wrote letters to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees explaining the high rates-of-return to agricultural research and urging increased funding.
- Submitted testimony to the House Appropriations Committee requesting full funding for USDA research agencies.
- Provided input to NASULGC's Strategic Planning Committee on funding levels and priorities for USDA research, education, and extension.

Congressional Science Fellowship Program

C-FARE is working with the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences (AAAS) to develop an agricultural economics congressional science fellowship program. The program would provide the opportunity for accomplished and socially aware scientists to participate in and contribute to the public Policy making processes within the U.S. Congress. The American Agricultural Economics Association Foundation awarded C-FARE \$10,000 towards this effort.

For more information about C-FARE, please contact Tracy Irwin Hewitt, Executive Director, 5657 N. 8th Street, Arlington, VA, Tel: 703-524-2145, Fax: 703-524-2335; itracy@aol.com

The Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics (C-FARE) is a non-profit organization created in 1993 to strengthen the national presence of the agricultural economics profession and to enhance its effectiveness. C-FARE is actively working to: 1) Prioritize and publicize key economic issues within the research, extension and resident instruction agendas; 2) Help agricultural economists contribute more effectively to public and private sector decisions; 3) Establish linkages with organizations and institutions for the benefit of the entire profession; and 4) collaborate with other disciplines on issues of mutual concern.

In pursuit of these goals, C-FARE will periodically conduct priority setting exercises for input into funding processes, develop nonpartisan issue papers to enhance the Policy dialogue, and hold Policy briefings on key economic issues.

For information regarding this website, please email Caron Gala at C-FARE.

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