



Agriculture

Economics

Food

Environment

Research

- Home
- About
- DC Updates
- Publications
- Events
- Education/Outreach Programs
- Blue Ribbon Expert Panels
- Resources

The Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics 2000 Annual Report

Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics (C-FARE) continues to bring the latest insights and ideas from food, agricultural, and resource economists to the Washington, D.C. Policy arena. C-FARE is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works to strengthen the national presence of the agricultural economics profession. Accomplishments during 2000 include the following.

Input to Policy Makers

Testimony to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees

The level of federal funding for agricultural research has remained stagnant over the past decade. In the FY 2000 Appropriations bill there was a total of \$80.1 billion for Federal R&D allocated to cover all agencies. USDA received only \$1.8 billion or 2% of the Federal R&D dollars. This year, once again C-FARE worked with the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) to send letters to Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture recommending increased funding for agricultural research, specifically for the social sciences. The letters highlighted amounts for ERS, NASS, NRCS and CSREES along with arguments about the importance of each program area. The letter is available on the C-FARE web site.

Letter to Highlight Importance of Funding Levels of NRI

The FY 2001 Agriculture Appropriations bill funded the National Research Initiative (NRI) at a decreased level of \$106,000,000 (this is down from last year's level of \$119,300,000). There was also a different approach to the funding this time. In the past, Congress specified the breakdown of funds for each program area. This year the allocation of funds to each program is left up to the discretion of the NRI officials, with \$20,788,000 being specially mandated for the President's Food Safety Initiative. The result was that the funding for the NRI in FY 2001 is lower by the same percentage in each program and there is a food safety clause in the Markets and Trade division of the NRI. A letter was sent to Dr. colien Heffernan of CSREES expressing the necessity for social science research in the NRI and also to the Department Heads so they could send similar letters.

Integrated Activities Section 406 Grant

Section 406 of the Agricultural, Research, Extension and Education Reform Act (AREERA) grants CSREES specific authority for joint research-extension programs. This could allow the opportunity to expand the role of economics and other social sciences as CSREES seeks input from those who conduct and use research and extension programs. Two statements were submitted to CSREES on behalf of C-FARE to explain the important role economics should play. Dr. Peter Barry (University of Illinois) and Dr. Charles Abdalla (Penn State University), both submitted statements that are available on C-FARE's website.

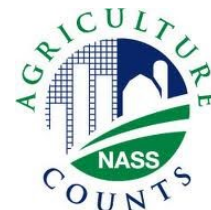
Briefing for Capitol Hill Staff

C-FARE held a two-hour briefing on "The Economics of Biotechnology and Labeling". The briefing was a success, with about 30 Hill Staffers in attendance. Staffers represented both the majority and minority parties of the House and Senate and worked for Members from various committees. The speakers included: Sue Pitman from IFIC who discussed what consumers are saying about biotechnology, Elise Golan, from CSREES and Julie Caswell from the University of Massachusetts, looked at the Credibility of the System at Stake - Who Bears the Cost and Benefits of Labeling - Public and Private Sector Labeling, Cathryn Mattson from Best Foods looked at the Cost of Labeling to Industry. Bill Lesser from Cornell University served as the moderator and presented a summary statement. A copy of the agenda and Dr. Lesser's statement is available on C-FARE's website.

Meetings with Dr. Jerry Skees and Congressional Staff



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Dr. Jerry Skees (University of Kentucky, C-FARE Board Member) and Wagester met with staff from Congresswoman Anne Northup's and Congressman Nick Smith's offices, as well as the Science Committee staff members. These meetings were courtesy visits to keep staff up to speed on research issues being looked at by agricultural economists.

Briefings with Dr. Phil Pardy

Tamara Wagester and Dr. Phil Pardy (IFPRI) met with several key Hill and Agency Staff to discuss Dr. Pardy's new book, "Paying for Agricultural Productivity." This book looks at several developed countries and how they fund their agricultural research programs.

Briefings with Dr. Frank Casey and Dr. Scott Swinton

Dr. Frank Casey (Defenders of Wildlife) and Dr. Scott Swinton (Michigan State University) met with several key Hill Staff to discuss the book that they edited, "Flexible Incentives for the Adoption of Environmental Technology in Agriculture." This book was derived from a Symposium that was held two years ago in Florida and it looks at issues that may be addressed in the upcoming 2002 Farm Bill's Conservation Title. Staffers requested a follow-up meeting for the 107th Congress.

Statements to Farm Broadcasters

Wagester attended a regional meeting of the American Farm Broadcasters Association to participate in a panel discussion of what various agricultural interest groups do in Washington, D.C. Each panelist made comments about what their group does and their current areas of concern.

National Academy of Sciences Board on Agriculture Statement on Biotechnology

The Board on Agriculture is conducting a study to examine whether public sector research has influenced the size of farm operations. A workshop was conducted to provide input to the committee on the role of biotechnology research and downstream activities in serving and meeting the needs of agricultural producers, including farmers representing small operations and minority groups. Wagester compiled information from several sources and submitted written testimony.

Partnerships with Other Disciplines

CoFARM

The Coalition on Funding Agricultural Research Missions (CoFARM) is a broadly based coalition united by a commitment to advance and sustain investment in our nation's fundamental and applied agricultural research. C-FARE remained active in CoFARM in 2000. The CoFARM Steering Committee has also been working on the concept of a One-Voice Coalition. The aim is to unite the agricultural community to increase the level of federal research funds for agriculture. Several other groups have expressed similar interest and are working with similar concepts. This includes Joe Coffey who is working on a National C-FARE initiative. Overall, agriculture is setting their sights on doubling federal research funds within the next five years.

CoFARM continues to remain very active with Congressional Science Fellows from the member societies by inviting them to meetings, lunches and sending notices of upcoming briefings conducted by society organizations.

National Rural Network

C-FARE joined the National Rural Network (NRN) that represents the breadth of non-governmental organizations whose constituencies comprise an emergent new rural reality. The mission of the National Rural Network (NRN) is to create awareness and understanding of those public policies that enhance the viability of Rural America. C-FARE recently became a member of this group and will be able to bring economic viewpoints to a group that is more directly involved with the agribusiness sector.

Washington Agriculture Roundtable

C-FARE recently became a member of the Washington Agriculture Roundtable. This is a group of prominent Washington, D.C. insiders that meet once a month for lunch to discuss current issues of importance in the Agriculture Community. Each month there is a guest speaker that focuses on a particular topic.

Attended the USDA Economists Meeting

C-FARE continues to attend USDA's Economists Group's Issues 2000 Seminar Series meetings.

Internal/Professional Activities

ESCOPE Planning Meeting

C-FARE has been active in the ESCOP planning meeting of social scientists. The aim of this meeting is to assess the potential of a significant federal budget initiative dealing with the crisis affecting farms and rural communities. Barry serves as part of the planning committee and the group continues to meet.

Workshops at the AAEA Annual Meeting

C-FARE organized a Pre-conference at the AAEA Annual Meeting that addressed grant writing, a free session addressing the 2002 Farm Bill and an Organized Symposium addressing the Policy implications of biotechnology. A brochure was put together from the information presented at the grant writing preconference.

Economics Priority Setting Process

The Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics (C-FARE) is leading a structured process to identify priorities and related initiatives for the profession for the next several years.

In 1997, priorities were outlined in *Economics Research and Education Priorities for an Efficient and Sustainable Food System* (C-FARE, 1997). These priorities were designed to reflect important socio-economic problems and opportunities, while setting targets toward which limited resources for research and education can be applied. The 1997 priorities have been utilized in many venues, but now it is time to update these priorities to communicate the importance of agricultural economics research and education. Dr. Gene Nelson (Texas A&M) has worked closely with Department heads to seek input for an updated list of priorities. Then, in November, the C-FARE Board sponsored a luncheon in the fall with key players in the Washington, D.C. agricultural, food, and resource community. The process of soliciting input will continue with the goal of finalizing the priorities later this year.

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

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