



The Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics 2001 Annual Report

The Council on Food, Agricultural, and Resource Economics (C-FARE) is a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening the national presence of the application of economics to food, agricultural and resource issues. Formed in 1987, C-FARE's governing board includes prominent applied economists representing a wide range of public and private sector interests. At the onset, C-FARE outlined four primary goals to complement the agricultural, natural resource and applied economics profession, these goals include:

1. To identify key economic issues, establish priorities, and seek support for applied economics research, extension, and academic instruction;
2. To help applied economists contribute more effectively to public and private sector decisions;
3. To work with other professional organizations to foster support for food, agricultural, and resource research;
4. To publicize applied economics contributions to solving important societal issues.

This annual report will summarize our activities for 2001 and how we worked to accomplish these goals through associations, accomplishments, and actions

Identifying Key Economic Issues

Symposiums

In 2001 C-FARE hosted two symposiums in Washington, DC addressing the questions surrounding the 2002 Farm Bill. Both events were well attended, with participants including Congressional Staff, USDA employees, members of agricultural interest groups, and several Embassy staff. Summary documents have been written from both events and are available on C-FARE's web site at www.cfare.org under the section for "Publications." Topics that are highlighted include, typology, land values, risk management, structural change, and Policy implications at the May 14, 2001 Symposium. The November 5, 2001 event looked at consumer views, a predicted 20 year agriculture consumption report, market information, strategic forces, environmental issues, WTO, and a Policy summary.

As a result of these events, C-FARE has had several calls requesting additional copies of the publications and also highlights drawn from the documents at events for other complementary disciplines.

Priorities

This year C-FARE worked diligently to update the document, which was first published in 1997, outlining the priorities for the profession. Several members of the profession, headed by Gene Nelson, worked together to organize thoughts and ideas to update this publication. The draft outline was presented to members at the AAEA Annual Meeting in August 2001, and to department heads at various points throughout the past two years for updates and feedback. To ensure increased usage outside of the profession, a professional writer has been hired to write the final draft.

Contributing to Public and Private Sector Decisions:

Legislative Input

During 2001, C-FARE continued to work towards greater support for research, extension and education through various measures. At the beginning of the Congressional Appropriations season, letters were sent to Members of Congress pointing to the need for increased agriculture research funds. This was done through three foci, (1) From C-FARE to the Members of the Appropriations Subcommittees on Agriculture addressing needed funding for the USDA Agencies that provide data to support economists. (2) In collaboration with the Coalition on Funding Agricultural Research Missions (CoFARM), and the

Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) highlighting the successes of past federally funded grants. (3) The most important way we communicated this need was by encouraging members of our profession to send letters highlighting their successes to their Members of Congress. This is the most important way because it allows the individual to be involved and Congress likes to see these encouraging words from their constituency in order to justify funding of the research programs.

As an addition to this input, C-FARE's Board of Directors began a new program of personal visits to the offices of key members of Congress to explain the need to increase agriculture research money, highlighting the need for continuation and expansion of USDA's complementary portfolio of research programs, which include competitive and formula funding, as well as all Department research programs. This action has received positive feedback from the many offices that have been visited. Those offices that received letters similar to those mentioned above from constituents appeared to have a finer understanding and stronger agreement with the need for these increased funds. Offices visited included, Senator Thad Cochran (MS), Congressman Tom Latham (IA), Congressman Frank Lucas (OK), Senator Mitch McConnell (KY), Congressman David Price (NC), Congressman Nick Smith (MI), Congressman Wes Watkins (OK), and the Congressional Research Service.

Agency Input

C-FARE Chair, Gene Nelson and Executive Director, Tamara Wagester visited government agencies to highlight the needs of applied economists in the field and also to ensure that C-FARE is meeting the professional needs of the agency's economists. Agencies visited included; USDA's ERS, CSREES, GIPSA, NASS, NRCS, and the USITC.

Public Comments and Testimony

In the Spring, the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council Board on Agriculture hosted a listening session entitled "Opportunities in Agriculture: A Vision for USDA's Food and Agricultural Research in the 21st Century. C-FARE's Executive Director Tamara Wagester delivered a statement highlighting the need for the ARMS data, a balanced funding portfolio approach and asking for a special recognition to research needs in areas outlined under the Agriculture Economics Priorities.

In the Fall, two C-FARE board members delivered public statements to USDA's CSREES Listening Session in New Orleans, LA. Gene Nelson (C-FARE Chair) and Jon Brandt (C-FARE Co-Chair) highlighted the necessity for a more balanced approach to funding research that involves the social sciences. These statements will be summarized and reviewed for USDA recommendation.

Communicating Within Our Profession

Social Science Input

Several C-FARE Board members serve on the ESCOP Social Science Committee, including; Peter Barry, David Blandford, Jon Brandt, and Jerry Skees. The Committee has three main focus points including: (1) Biotechnology (2) Community Vitality and (3) Food Safety. This committee works to communicate social science aspects of these messages message within our disciplines and also to Congress.

Publicizing Economic Contributions

This year, C-FARE again sent letters nominating members of the profession for various USDA Secretary Advisory Board positions. We also recognized members of the profession who presented testimony to Congressional Committee's by adding a new section under our "Public Statements" link on our web site, entitled, "Other Related Testimony." Several members of the profession have commented on the usefulness of this addition due to the time minimization from searching Committee web sites for the testimony that may impact their mission areas.

Congressional Science Fellows

In 2001 the profession had our first Congressional Science Fellow, Dr. Gary Wells. This program was sponsored by the AAEA Association, AAEA Foundation, and Farm Foundation. C-FARE played an active role in working with Dr. Wells to organize events in the greater DC area, such as a briefing for Congressional Science Fellows and CRS staff. This briefing discussed the importance of the many agencies that agricultural economists work with, in the hopes of opening a stronger line of communication. Participating agencies included: ERS, USITC, NASS, CSREES, and GIPSA.

Newsletters

In 2001 C-FARE expanded our contribution to various newsletters. The Council began a new E-Newsletter entitled "The Council Caller" which is sent to members of the profession including academic department heads and agency administrators. The total list includes over 300 people in the applied economics profession. This E-Newsletter highlights the release of Federal RFPs and also focuses on other issues of concern to economists. The response has been overwhelming positive thus far, with new subscribers every month. The newsletter can also be accessed through our web site at www.cfare.org under the "Publications" link. C-FARE also continues to contribute input and updates to the profession through the AAEA newsletter, "The Exchange."

Grants Brochure

Copies of a brochure that was prepared from C-FARE's pre-conference on grant writing at the 2000 AAEA Annual Meeting was sent to Universities, along with a one-page summary of recent RFPs. The goal is that this will encourage more economists to apply for grants, which in turn may lead to a greater percentage of grants available for the social sciences. This brochure can also be accessed through our web site under the "Funding Opportunities" link where we also add new opportunities for grants.

Working With Other Professional Organizations

Congressional Receptions

C-FARE participated through CoFARM and the National Rural Network in hosting and attending receptions for staff of Congressional Offices. Well over 100 individuals, including key agricultural lobbyists, congressional staff, and Members of Congress, attended these receptions. Both receptions highlighted agricultural research and the positive contributions of agriculture to the community. The result of our involvement is greater visibility for the agricultural economic profession.

Research Coalitions

C-FARE continues to remain active with the Coalition on Funding Agricultural Research Missions (CoFARM). As part of this involvement, C-FARE is working with CoFARM to generate greater participation of the agriculture community and the general science community. Executive Director, Tamara Wagester is on the steering committee for the multi-science focus Congressional Visits Day (CVD) that will take place in March 2002. This event will be attended by roughly 300 scientists, with special activities outlined for the agriculture community.

In 2001 a new coalition formed to promote the need for increasing agricultural research funds, called the National Coalition for Agricultural Research (N-CFAR), which is headed by Joe Coffey. This group held their inaugural meeting in the late winter, where C-FARE was invited to attend and join. This group highlights the need for importance of stakeholder involvement and has worked over the past year to impact stakeholders and members of Congress.

As a result of the various forces in the agriculture community to increase research funding, we can see a better awareness through stakeholder testimony to Capitol Hill, as well as highlights pointing to the need for increased research funds in the USDA Secretary's 2001 Report Entitled, "Food and Agricultural Policy."

C-FARE Board of Directors

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

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