

Organized Symposia

TITLE: Issues in Precision Agriculture and Risk Management (Moderator: Roland Roberts, University of Tennessee).

Organizer: Sayed Saghaian, University of Kentucky.

Participants: J. Lowenberg-DeBoer, D. Lambert, and T. Griffin, Purdue University; G. Malzer, University of Minnesota; C. Dillon, S. Saghaian, and J. Salim, University of Kentucky; J. Larson, R. Roberts, and B. English, University of Tennessee; and T. Sharp, Jackson State Community College.

The purpose of this symposium was to examine the potential of precision agriculture in reducing risk, which included three points: (i) site-specific N management results in different N rates from expected profit maximization and can lower risk; (ii) management zone delineation can reduce risk, and optimal path of nutrient application can reduce error; and (iii) the willingness to pay for variable rate technology (VRT) in cotton production is influenced by the impacts of VRT on risk. In conclusion, although profitability is important, the fact that precision agriculture offers the potential to reduce risk should also be considered.

TITLE: Bridging the Gap between 1890 and 1862 Institutions' Agricultural Economics Programs (Moderator Christopher Davis, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture).

Organizers: Committee on the Opportunities and Status of Blacks in Agricultural Economics (COSBAE).

Participants: Christopher Davis, Keithly Jones, and Doris Newton, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

There is a need for serious dialogue on the state of Agricultural Economics Programs in 1890 institutions and the matriculation of minorities, especially African Americans, to graduate programs. The 1890 and 1862 land grant institutions are pivotal role players and primary producers of agricultural economics professionals. In the past, the number of students matriculating from 1890 institutions' agricultural economics programs and continuing in graduate programs has been very small. The small number of African Americans and other minorities with terminal degrees in agricultural economics and the high level of underrepresentation of minorities in academic and research professions must be reversed.

TITLE: Potential Impacts of the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement and the U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement on Southern Agriculture (Moderator: Stanley Fletcher, University of Georgia).

Organizers: Flynn Adcock and Parr Rosson, Texas A&M University.

Participants: Parr Rosson, John Robinson, and Flynn Adcock, Texas A&M University; Alvaro Durand-Morat and Eric Wailes, University of Arkansas; and Won Koo, North Dakota State University.

This symposium examined the potential impacts of DR-CAFTA and AFTA on Southern agriculture. Attention was focused on market opportunities and competitive challenges, and the case of rice was highlighted. Increased export opportunities exist in Central America for high-value beef cuts, cotton, feed grains, and rice. Opportunities in Australia exist mainly for consumer-oriented foods. Australia gains additional access to the U.S. beef market

providing manufacturing-grade beef that is combined with higher-fat-content U.S. beef for ground meat. Central America will have increased access to the United States for sugar and beef, though additional exports of melons are constrained by infrastructure.

Title: Policy Implication of Federal Budget Deficits for Agriculture and Rural Communities (Moderator: John Anderson, Mississippi State University).

Organizer: James Novak, Auburn University, and Larry Sanders, Oklahoma State University.

Participants: Larry Sanders, Oklahoma State University; James L. Novak, Auburn University; and Michael Woods, Oklahoma State University.

The latest budget deficit prediction for 2004 is \$422 billion. Deficits are not necessarily harmful, but the timing, size, and political climate surrounding this deficit has led to discussions of possible cuts in government funding for agriculture and related programs. This symposium offered a historic perspective and current implications of budgetary deficits' impact on funding for agriculture and rural community programs. The audience joined the presenters in discussing the deficit situation and its implication for agriculture.

TITLE: The Doha Development Agenda and Southern Agriculture (Moderator: Darren Hudson, Mississippi State University).

Organizers: Parr Rosson and Flynn Adcock, Texas A&M University.

Participants: Parr Rosson, Texas A&M University; Larry Sanders, University of Oklahoma; Jaime Malaga, Texas Tech University; and Lynn Kennedy, Louisiana State University.

This symposium examined the progress of the Doha Development Agenda in the WTO,

including the current status of the negotiations, potential distributional impacts, and perspectives from the Latin America. Success in Doha will lead to slowly opening world markets whereas failure will spur protectionism. Results are mixed on impacts, and there is no obvious evidence that trade agreements have adversely affected farms by size. There is some inference that agribusiness may have done better than farms. Latin America is not homogeneous in terms of trade interests, and only Brazil and Argentina have strong WTO agenda interests.

TITLE: The Relationship between Food Safety Issues and Producer Structure: A Strawberry Example (Moderator: Dixie Watts Reaves, Virginia Tech, Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics).

Organizer: Roger A. Hinson, Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, Louisiana State University AgCenter.

Participants: Richard N. Weldon and Allen F. Wysocki, University of Florida; Roger A. Hinson, Louisiana State University AgCenter; Dixie Watts Reaves, Virginia Tech.

Beneficial impacts of produce may be offset by consumers' food safety concerns. Retailers increasingly signal safety by asking suppliers for assurances of regulatory conformance and of voluntary use of good agricultural practices, with external certifications. Strawberry, the example, has been linked (sometimes inaccurately) with illness related to field handling and as receiving large applications of crop protection products. Price and volume impacts on large and small strawberry producers were evaluated under combinations of voluntary certifications and illness outbreaks. Research results are mixed about consumer food safety concern when responding in a choice context. Small strawberry growers need lower-cost certifications of credence attributes, which could potentially be accomplished through the cooperative business model.

TITLE: Foreign Animal Disease Outbreaks and Country of Origin Labeling: Implications for Producers, Consumers, and the Rest of Us (Moderator: John D. Anderson, Mississippi State University).

Organizers: R. Curt Lacy, University of Georgia; and John D. Anderson, Mississippi State University.

Participants: David Anderson, Texas A&M University; R. Curt Lacy, University of Georgia; Wendy Umberger, Colorado State University; and Keith Coble and John D. Anderson, Mississippi State University.

The objective of this symposium was to examine the implications of changing government regulations in the livestock industry. The session began with an overview of foreign animal disease outbreaks in North America. Impacts on producers and consumers resulting from the National Animal Identification System and Country of Origin Labeling were then examined. An assessment of policy issues related to market disruptions concluded the program. Beef cattle producers will potentially benefit more from a National Animal Identification System than Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling. More research is needed on methods to assist producers financially in the event of a foreign animal disease outbreak.

TITLE: Peanut Sector Adjustment to a New Policy Regime (Moderator: Linwood Hoffman, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture).

Organizers: Erik Dohlman, Linwood Hoffman, and Edwin Young, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Participants: Erik Dohlman, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Floyd Gaibler, Deputy Undersecretary of Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Nathan Smith, University of Georgia; and Kim B. Anderson, Oklahoma State University.

The 2002 Farm Act substantially overhauled the U.S. peanut program, reducing price support and income stability for many peanut farmers and making production and marketing decisions more complex. The transition to the new program and issues related to price discovery have also complicated policy implementation and affected downstream segments of the peanut industry. Adjustment issues and research needs are discussed.

TITLE: Production and Marketing Risk Management in Aquaculture (Moderator: Terry R. Hanson, Mississippi State University).

Organizers: Terry R. Hanson and John D. Anderson, Dept. of Ag. Econ., Mississippi State University.

Participants: Terry R. Hanson, John D. Anderson, Keith Coble, Saleem Shaik, Darren Hudson, and Tian Xia, Mississippi State University.

The objective of this symposium was to discuss current and potential methods of reducing production and marketing risks in U.S. aquaculture industries. The emergence of both diverse short- and long-term risk-reduction methods may provide aquaculture operations with more stability as world competition and trade impact these industries. The session began with a review of recent governmental assistance programs to the U.S. catfish industry. In 2003, the Drought Relief program occurred, which provided catfish producers with feed rebates, and in 2004, the Foreign Agriculture Service's Trade Adjustment Assistance Program provided monetary relief and technical training to producers facing price reductions caused by increased aquacultural imports. Procedures and challenges involved in developing an insurance product for aquaculture species was the subject of the second presentation. This Risk Management Agency and Mississippi State University partnership has developed a pathway for investigating the feasibility of aquacultural insurance products. First, risks

that producers want to insure in aquaculture are identified. Second, insurability conditions and aquaculture risks are examined for their compatibility. Finally, the challenges and issues involved in developing an insurance policy design need to be addressed, with specific reference to integrating public–private approaches, insurance, and policy elements. The third presentation focused on commercial-scale catfish operations and their contract terms and attributes provided by processors/buyers of their fish. Contract attributes and the unique production characteristics of catfish culture combine to affect producer marketing risks. Fine-tuning these attributes may reduce marketing risks and allow smooth flow of catfish products from the pond to the consumer. The final presentation discussed the potential benefit from forward-feed contracting by catfish producers as a means to reduce risks associated with catfish feed price movements.

TITLE: Obesity, Food Labeling and Food Policy: Issues/Impacts For Southern Agriculture (Moderator: James Novak, Auburn University).

Organizers: Larry D. Sanders, Oklahoma State University; James Novak, Auburn University; and Janie Simms Hipp, University of Arkansas.

Presenters: Agus Hudoyo and Eric Scorsone, University of Kentucky; Janie Simms Hipp, University of Arkansas; Patricia A. Duffy, Sareen Gropper, Jean Weese, B. Doug White, Evelyn Crayton, and James Novak, Auburn University; and Larry Sanders, Oklahoma State University.

Obesity may be the fastest-growing health and policy concern in the United States. The list of reasons given for the problem includes lifestyle choices, culture, education, and food and agricultural policy. Participants discussed the implications of food policy and its role in the obesity debate. The question of obesity has broad economic and public policy implications for Southern agriculture, including those for commodity programs, legal liability (McDonalds' lawsuit), and food assistance programs. This symposium was an attempt to reach a consensus on feasible alternative policy solutions to the obesity issue.