

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
WESTERN ASSOCIATION
OF AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION DIRECTORS

November 26, 1979
Sheraton Park Hotel
Washington, D.C.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Executive Committee Members	- R. J. Miller (ID)
	- D. D. Johnson (CO)
	- J. P. Jordan (CO)
	- C. E. Clark (UT)
	- H. F. Heady (CA)
	- J. A. Asleson (MT)
	- M. T. Buchanan (OWDAL)
Other Attendees	- L. W. Dewhirst (AZ)
	- C. E. Hess (CA)
	- D. E. Schlegel (CA)
	- H. F. McHugh (CO)
	- W. P. Leon Guerrero (GU)
	- N. P. Kefford (HI)
	- R. A. Young (NV)
	- K. J. Lessman (NM)
	- J. R. Davis (OR)
	- L. L. Boyd (WA)
	- J. E. Moak (OWDAL)
	- J. V. Drew (AK)
	- C. I. Harris (SEA-CR)
	- B. R. Eddleman (IR-6)

1.0 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Miller at 4:30 pm.

2.0 Information Items

2.1 Relationship of DAL's and Regional Directors Associations to NASULGC

Director Jordan had the Colorado State Attorney General review the By-laws of the Experiment Station Section and the Western Directors Association. The Attorney General rendered the opinion that the relationship between the regional associations and NASULGC is voluntary and non-binding, not obligatory. The regional association by-laws are clear that the Directors-at-Large are only responsible to their respective regional associations.

Some modification of the Section By-laws may be desirable to emphasize the voluntary nature of the relationship. ESCOP will look into this. No modification of the regional association by-laws seems necessary at this time. If future problems arise, the regional associations may wish to investigate incorporation.

2.2 Western Region Integrated Pest Management Program

WRCC-34 met in early October and put in place the six commodity subcommittees. Gary McIntyre at CSU is the coordinator hired with the funds provided by the WDA, SEA-AR, and ESCS. Western Extension Directors will be meeting at Land Grant to consider whether to contribute funds to the regional effort. SEA has given permission for Extension to use their federal IPM dollars to support this effort.

The four administrative advisors of the regional IPM programs have requested matching funds from SEA, but the funding prospects are not known at this time. SEA proposed that the regions hold large conferences on IPM. WRCC-34 responded that such conferences would be more useful after the state-of-the-art has been defined, rather than trying to hold them now.

2.3 Spring WDA Meeting Plans

The meeting will be March 25-28, 1980, at the Comstock Hotel, Reno, Nevada. Chairman-Elect Johnson has arranged a joint half-day session with Resident Instruction Directors. Instead of an evening banquet, there will be a joint luncheon banquet with Resident Instruction on Wednesday of that week. There was consensus that there should be a joint cocktail party with Resident Instruction on Tuesday evening. Johnson requested Directors let him know of possible speakers or agenda items.

2.4 Budget Thrust for International Trade

Director Dewhirst presented a request by Jimmie Hillman, and others involved in the WDA-sponsored International Trade Symposium several years ago, for greater emphasis in the FY 1982 budget on international trade. Eddleman indicated that there are only a few people working in this area and that it fits in well in the Special Grants program; it would come under the "food and agricultural policy" section of Special Grants.

2.5 IR-6

Eddleman indicated that the objectives of IR-6 had been rewritten and requested time on the spring meeting agenda to review them with the Directors.

3.0 Action Items

3.1 Membership Request from Alaska

Director Drew noted that Alaska had received a request from ASCUFRO asking for clarification of their regional identification. Currently, Alaska is in the North Central Region for SEA-AR and the Experiment Station, but in the Western Region for Extension, FS and ASCUFRO. Drew consulted with Earl Glover (SEA-AR) and with SEA-CR about the problems that might be encountered if the Experiment Station shifted to the Western Region. Glover indicated that SEA-AR might consider

reassigning responsibility for Alaska to the Western Region if all the other alignments are changed. The only real difficulty is the assignment of regional funds to Alaska, and SEA-CR recommended that this be done at the beginning of the next fiscal year, October 1, 1980. Director Drew requested that the Alaska Experiment Station be allowed to join the Western Directors Association.

It was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously, to welcome the Alaska State Agricultural Experiment Station as the fourteenth member of the Western Directors Association effective 10/1/80. Davis recommended that admission be contingent upon an invitation to hold the summer 1981 WDA meeting in Alaska, and an invitation was duly extended.

3.2 Biennial Review of DAL

Chairman Miller reminded Directors that it was time to conduct the biennial review of the role and performance of the DAL. He suggested that the role, function, and location of the Administrative Analyst be reviewed as well, and requested information from Buchanan and Moak that might assist such a review.

Miller appointed a committee consisting of Directors Jordan (Chairman), Kendrick and Miller to conduct the reviews.

3.3 Additional Furniture for Washington, D.C. Office

DAL Buchanan indicated that the second office in the suite would be useful as a conference meeting room, but that a conference table and chairs would need to be purchased. Funds for such purchases were not included in the FY 1980 DAL budget.

It was moved, seconded, and approved, to use funds from the Western Directors account (perhaps from the "unexpended balance for special needs" item) to purchase a conference table and chairs for the WDA office in Washington, D.C.

3.4 OECD Agricultural Research Administrators Conference

By negotiation with USDA, DAL Buchanan had managed to reserve one of the five U.S. positions to the OECD agricultural research administrators conference in Paris for the Chairman of ESCOP. However, neither the current ESCOP Chairman (Jordan) nor the incoming Chairman (Little) are able to attend. In order to reinforce the principle that a representative of the SAES should attend, Buchanan requested he be allowed to attend on behalf of ESCOP.

It was moved, seconded, and approved, that DAL Buchanan attend the OECD agricultural research administrators conference in Paris on behalf of ESCOP. It was further recommended that Director Jordan investigate whether the other three regions would share the cost of the travel.

3.5 Administrative Advisor Reassignment

Director Furtick requested he be relieved of his assignment as Administrative Advisor to W-82 Processes Affecting Pesticides and Other Organics in Soil and Water Systems.

It was moved, seconded, and approved, that Director N. P. Kefford (HI) replace Director Furtick as Administrative Advisor of W-82.

3.6 ESCS-University Collaboration

Chairman Miller reviewed a draft from John Stovall (Appendix A) concerning the development of a process for identifying research problems in agricultural economics and defining the roles of ESCS and the universities. Eddleman and Jordan noted that in the past, ESCS has operated through the Agricultural Economics department chairmen on an ad hoc basis, and that these contacts have often bypassed the Directors. ESCS is recommending that a major planning effort involving the universities be initiated, bypassing the established Regional and National Planning System.

It was moved, seconded, and approved, that Chairman Miller indicate to John Stovall that the Western Directors would be pleased to participate in a planning process for agricultural economics research; that the WDA would prefer to utilize the mechanism of the existing Regional and National Planning System (our Western Region RPG-6); that the planning effort should include some elements of home and family economics; that if ESCS does not choose to use the existing Planning System, we would like the Western Region participant on the Steering and Policy Review Committee to come from the membership of the Western Regional Planning Committee.

4.0 Passing of the Gavel

Chairman Miller passed on the gavel of office to incoming Chairman Donal Johnson.

It was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously, to express the Western Directors' deepest appreciation to Ray Miller for his excellent service during the past two years.

5.0 Adjournment

Chairman Johnson adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

A Process of Identifying Emerging Social and
Economic Issues and Implied Research Needs

(An Opportunity for ESCS-University Collaboration on
Clarification of Respective Interests and Roles)

Purpose

This paper deals with two problems identified at the August 23-24 meeting on improving ESCS-university linkages:

- (1) Inadequate process for problem identification in agricultural economics research
- (2) Lack of understanding and differing perceptions about the respective roles (missions) of ESCS and university departments of agricultural economics with respect to such issues as:
 - a. The relative importance of research problems.
 - b. The clientele for which research is designed to benefit.
 - c. Conducting research on local, regional or national issues.

The purpose of this paper is to outline a process for dealing with both these problems simultaneously since they are clearly interrelated. The proposal is to initiate a major effort to identify emerging issues and economic research needs, and to design that process in such a way that information can be generated and conclusions drawn about roles and role perceptions of institutions and organizations conducting agricultural economics research.

Background of Issues

Problem identification

One of the suggestions made at the ESCS-university linkage meeting was that a process be developed for collectively and systematically identifying important problems in agricultural economics on which future research should focus.

Although individual researchers and individual research organizations give considerable attention to emerging issues and to research that will be needed to address them, there is no systematic process to coordinate these efforts among institutions and individuals nor to see how much agreement or disagreement there is on what should be the future research agenda.

There are many planning efforts underway but none address the total spectrum of agricultural economics research as a unit. The USDA-land grant universities, under the auspices of ARPAC, had a system of regional and national research planning committees to identify research needs in all areas of agriculture, including economics. In addition to other shortcomings, the classification system used does not breakout economic problems per se and consequently, it is not possible to compare planned research with research needs for economics as a whole. This planning system is now sponsored by the Joint Council on Food and Agriculture and it is not yet clear what, if any, changes will be made.

A major project is underway to identify research needs in animal agriculture, sponsored by 4 animal science related professional societies, the USDA and Michigan State University. It stemmed from some initiatives by the animal science professional societies to identify research priorities and needs. The project will culminate in a conference on "Animal Agriculture: Human Needs in 21st Century" to be held in May 1980.

Another example of an attempt to identify research needs was the recent study on World Food and Nutrition, the Potential Contributions of Research under the auspices of the National Academy of Science. That study, completed in 1977, reviewed the world food situation in relation to prospect for supply and recommended actions the U.S. agricultural research establishment should

take to contribute toward the solution of these problems. The process used in this study was to set up 14 study teams (most with sub-parts) to address assigned topics and make recommendations. These reports were then consolidated by a Steering Committee.

Other efforts to identify research needs that are relevant to this proposal include one undertaken by the Forest Service and forestry research organizations in universities, and the so-called "Kansas City" Conference in 1975 to assess research to meet U.S. and world food needs. The forestry research review and planning effort involved (1) a symposium to review research policy (spring of 1977), (2) four regional working conferences designed to identify user problems and (3) a national working conference which provided the basis for developing regional and national research plans. The Kansas City Conference was an attempt to get a consensus from a broad cross section of interest groups as to the relative priorities of research to meet world food needs.

Thus it appears that despite the fact that a large amount of research planning has been done, the "problem identification" issue has not been treated adequately for agricultural economics as a whole and that there is an unexploited opportunity for collective action by the agricultural economics community to fill that gap.

Role and Role Perception

There was general agreement among participants in the ESCS-university linkage discussions that there is considerable misunderstanding about similarities and differences in the role of ESCS and the departments of agricultural economics in the land grant universities--both on the part of individuals in ESCS as well as individuals in universities. More important perhaps, it was the view of some that this lack of understanding was a barrier to improving the linkages between ESCS and universities.

Several stereotype descriptions that have been asserted from time to time in an attempt to differentiate the role of each, although not necessarily true, illustrate perceptions:

- o "ESCS works on national problems and universities work on local and regional problems."
- o "Universities work on micro problems and ESCS macro problems."
- o "Universities should conduct basic and methodological research and ESCS should conduct applied research."
- o "ESCS serves national policymaker clientele and universities serve farmers and state policymakers."

There is a need to clarify roles and dispel misconceptions so that it will be less difficult to identify areas of mutual interest where cooperative research stands a better chance of success.

Recommendation

To address these two problem areas it is recommended that a major effort be undertaken to identify the most important economic research thrusts needed to address the major social and economic issues of the 1980's. The effort could be described by the following characteristics:

- o All major subject matter areas of agricultural economics included.
- o "The decade ahead" is the time frame.
- o A broad cross section of agricultural economics research community would be invited to participate in the process.
- o Other disciplines, as appropriate, would also have input.
- o A steering and policy review committee would guide the effort.
- o End products would include: (1) An economic research agenda for agriculture and rural America, (2) an analysis of interest and plans

of the various organizations that conduct research, (3) an assessment of gaps and overlaps between indicated needs and plans, and (4) suggested followup and coordinating activities.

Process

The following process is suggested to implement this recommendation:

- (1) Discuss idea and get support, approval or endorsement, as appropriate from:
 - o ESCS management
 - o The Farm Foundation
 - o SEA/JPE
 - o SEA/CR
 - o AAEA Board
 - o Joint Council
 - o ESCOP and Regional associations of Experiment Station Directors
 - o Agricultural economics department heads of the four regions
- (2) Establish a Steering and Policy Review Committee with responsibility for appointing a "working committee" to plan the process and provide staff support, allocating necessary resources and reviewing plans and progress. The Steering and Policy Review Committee would consist of:
 - o Administrator of ESCS
 - o Managing Director of the Farm Foundation
 - o Administrator of SEA
 - o President of the American Agricultural Economics Association
 - o ^{be}Representatives from each of the four regional Experiment Station Director's Associations.
 - o Representative of Colleges of 1890

- (3) A "working committee," appointed by the Steering and Policy Review Committee would:
- o Refine the process.
 - o Delineate categories within agricultural economics appropriate for focusing on emerging issues and research needs. (Conventional categories such as (1) production agriculture, (2) marketing and processing, (3) natural resources, (4) food distribution and consumption, (5) rural development, (6) international agricultural development, and (7) international trade may or may not be appropriate for this purpose.)
 - o Commission a series of papers by some of our best scholars, giving them wide latitude to address any relevant aspects of research needs in agricultural economics. These papers may be assigned based on the categories defined above or the charge could be more open ended.
 - o Set up a study team for each research category with a charge to examine the various projections of social and economic variables through the decade of the '80's and to render a judgement as to the most important economic research problems that should be addressed by the agricultural economics community. They should further look at the extent to which research already underway or planned would contribute to the solution of these problems and what changes in direction would have to take place in order to adequately address the high priority needs. The study teams would use the commissioned papers as starting points and should consider the use of a survey instrument to elicit views of a broad cross section of the profession.

- (4) Membership of the "Working Committee" might be composed of representatives from some or all of the following organizations:
 - o ESCS
 - o SEA/JPE
 - o SEA/CR
 - o The Farm Foundation
 - o American Agricultural Economics Association Industry Committee
 - o American Agricultural Economics Association Committee on Professional Activities
 - o Regional agricultural economics professional associations
 - o Representative or designee of each of the 4 regional agricultural economics department heads groups or committees
- (5) The study teams would be composed of a cross section of prominent scholars in the respective fields and those in related fields or disciplines whose perspective would be valuable to the study team.
- (6) A conference on the "research agenda for the economics of agriculture and rural America" would be held to discuss the preliminary findings and conclusions of each study team and to get reactions from the various interest groups, research administrators, public officials and members of the general public.
- (7) Following the conference, the working committee. (with guidance from the Steering and Policy Review Committee) would synthesize, integrate and summarize the findings and recommendations in a report on research needs and priorities for agricultural economics.
- (8) Each land grant university, the ESCS and any other research institution or organization with an agricultural research capability will be

asked to carefully consider the report in light of their own mission, clientele needs, and resources and indicate how closely the report coincides with (or differs from) their own views of research needs and how their research plans can or will contribute to the various identified research problem areas. The working committee should formulate the request carefully in as much detail and in as much specificity as necessary to provide the maximum amount of information for drawing conclusions about each institution or agency's view of its role and mission vis a vis other institutions and organizations.

- (9) The working committee will next compile and synthesize the responses of the agencies and organizations and attempt to draw conclusions about:
- o The extent of agreement or disagreement in priorities.
 - o Implications about "natural divisions of labor."
 - o Gaps between research needs identified by the steering committee and plans and interest indicated by institutions and organizations.
 - o Coordination needed among institutions.
 - o Research areas with high potential for "joint ventures."
- (10) The Steering and Policy Review Committee will take followup action as appropriate.