
Farm Foundation

Increasing Understanding of Public Problems and Policies

1992

- PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION IN THE 1990s
- AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICYMAKING:
ISSUES, ACTORS, STRATEGIES
- THE RURAL SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE
- DOMESTIC CONSEQUENCES OF EVOLVING INTERNATIONAL
TRADE POLICY

Subjects Discussed at Previous Conferences

- 1975 The U.S. Economic System • Energy and Transportation • World Food Issues • Domestic Food and Farm Policy • Public Policy Education in Perspective
- 1976 The U.S. Political Economy • Food and Agricultural Policy • Impacts of Judicial and Regulatory Decision Making • Energy Policy
- 1977 Federal Policy Process • U.S. Energy Policy • World Food—U.S. Policy Choices • 1977 Food and Agriculture Legislation • Agent Training and Leadership Development
- 1978 Food and Nutrition Policy • Policy Options for Small Farms • International Agricultural Trade • The Land-Grant System and Public Policy
- 1979 Controlling Inflation: Alternative Approaches, Impacts and Implications • Policy Legislative Process
- 1980 Dispersed vs. Concentrated Agriculture • Ethics of Public Policy • Productivity • Rural Transportation • Energy Policy Issues • Policy Issues and Educational Approaches
- 1981 Government Programs and Individual Decisions • Public Support of Research and Extension • Agriculture in the 1980s • Methodology of Public Policy Education
- 1982 Domestic Economic Policy • Federal Government Role in Resource Management • Trade Policy • Financing Government Under Tight Budgets • Food Policy
- 1983 Economic Transition • Land Ownership Issues and Policy Education Approaches • The U.S. Food and Agricultural System in the International Setting • The Policy Education Process
- 1984 Federal Deficit • Providing Public Services in an Era of Declining Taxpayer Support • Water Policy • Distribution Issues in Food & Agricultural Policy • Methodology Workshops • Emerging Politics of Food & Agriculture
- 1985 The Changing Face of America • The Changing Face of Agriculture • Status of 1985 Agricultural and Food Legislation • Tax Policy Revision • Developing Policy Education Programs on Controversial Issues
- 1986 Balancing the Federal Budget • Effects of Agricultural and Trade Policies on the Competitiveness of U.S. Agriculture • Human Stress and Adjustment in Agriculture • The Food Security Act of 1985 and Public Policy Education for the Future
- 1987 Socioeconomics of Rural America • Rural Revitalization • U.S. Agriculture in the International Arena • Role of Values, Beliefs and Myths in Establishing Policy • Policy Education and the Policy Process
- 1988 Policy Choices for Revitalizing Rural America • Priority Issues for a New Farm Bill • Opportunities for Joint Public Policy Education • Emerging Issues in Agricultural and Food Policy • Emerging Resource Issues • International Agricultural Relations
- 1989 The Global Environment for the U.S. Economy in the 1990s • Family Policy • Rural Development Policy • Public Policy Education • Water Quality Policy
- 1990 An Evolving Public Policy Education • Safe Food and Water: Risks and Tradeoffs • Balancing Environmental and Social Concerns with Economic Interests in Agriculture • Structural Change in Food Industries and Public Policy Issues • Toward a New Europe
- 1991 Global Competitiveness, Productivity and Social Impacts • Public Policy Education Methods • Policy for Environment and Economic Development • Rural Resource Development and Work Force Productivity

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FOREWORD

This publication reports the major discussions of the 42nd National Public Policy Education Conference held September 20-23, 1992 in Burlington, Vermont. The 158 participants represented most states, the United States Department of Agriculture and other public agencies.

The conference is held to improve the policy education efforts of those extension workers responsible for public affairs programs. This, in turn, should help citizens faced with solving local and national problems make more intelligent and responsible decisions.

Specific objectives were: 1) to provide timely and useful information on public issues; 2) to explore different approaches to conducting public policy educational programs; and 3) to share ideas and experiences in policy education.

The Farm Foundation, following its policy of close cooperation with the state extension services, financed the instructional staff for, and the transportation of one individual from each extension service to, this conference, which is planned by the National Public Policy Education Committee. The Foundation also financed publication and distribution of these proceedings, which are made available to state and county extension personnel, teachers, students and others interested in increasing understanding of public policy issues.

Ira L. Ellis, Chairman
National Public Policy
Education Committee

Walter J. Armbruster, Managing Director
Farm Foundation

January, 1993

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Abstracts

PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION IN THE 1990s

TO INFORM THEIR DISCRETION: POLICY EDUCATION AND DEMOCRATIC POLITICS

*Michael Briand
The Kettering Foundation*

Public policy education fails to attend to the importance of a healthy practice of democratic politics. Not only can politics not be abolished, it must be embraced if we are to have effective public policies that enjoy widespread public support. The implication for public policy *education* is that such education must teach *politics* as well as *policy*. But what sort of politics should we have? Not the sort of politics that prevails today, but a collaborative, problem-solving approach that places the responsibility for making choices squarely on the public. The challenge for public policy educators is to supplement their teaching with a practical educational experience that teaches citizens how to build a practice of politics that is both democratic *and* deliberative.

ISSUES, ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES

*Verne W. House
Clemson University*

Public policy educators can rely on the alternatives-consequences approach to insure objectivity in education in the same way researchers rely on the scientific method to insure objectivity in research. Skillful use of the approach requires understanding of the social functions of science, education and politics and the ability to relate these functions to public policy education. It also proscribes the educator from advocating adoption of any particular solution. The policy educator's goal is to increase public understanding, not to seek a particular policy outcome. Some find this definition constraining; the author asserts that it is empowering—and necessary.

THE CASE FOR ADVOCACY IN EXTENSION PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION

*James Hite
Clemson University*

The classic, formal, nominally objective public policy education model is a useful disciplinary device, but it straitjackets public policy educators and provides respectable cover for timidity and political cowardice. An intellectually honest policy educator who has carefully studied an issue is entitled to an informed opinion, and it strains credibility to pretend he or she does not. Audiences have a right to know that opinion; and, pedagogically, presentations in which an educator defends a point of view are more likely to engage rather than bore an audience.

LIMITS OF PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION

*James C. Barron
Washington State University*

Are extension policy educators as unbiased as they claim or think themselves to be? What constitutes neutrality? Is the issue *education* versus *advocacy* or, as Alan Hahn suggests, *balance* versus *bias*? Does the selection of the target audience influence income? Do policy educators have a responsibility to include a broader set of interests and seek out and involve audiences that have no process through which to register their interests and preferences? Have centralized decision making and government professionals taken the American citizen out of the policy process? These are questions all public policy educators should ask themselves.

AN EXTENSION LAY LEADER'S REACTION TO THE MORNING PROGRAM

*Mary Grezaffi
National Extension Committee*

Two programs illustrate the success of public policy education in coalition building and fostering public confidence: Agromedicine: The South Carolina Experience, established in 1984, combines the resources of the land grant and medical campuses to promote agriculture and consumer health and safety. The founders stress maintaining objectivity. A 1991 Louisiana act calls for a review—by the Louisiana State University Agriculture Center and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry—of any actions by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) affecting farming.

The act was born out of a coalition of diverse entities from state and federal government and the private sector and calls for appointment of a liaison between DEQ and the agriculture industry. These two programs illustrate that public policy education is essential to the long-term viability of production agriculture.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICYMAKING: ISSUES, ACTORS, STRATEGIES

AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE 1990s: CHANGING SETTING AND CHARACTERISTICS

*Jeffrey A. Zinn
Congressional Research Service
Library of Congress*

National agricultural policy will be increasingly influenced by environmental factors and interest during the rest of this century. Reasons for increased influence include changes in Congressional structure and make-up; funding constraints caused by the growing federal budget deficit; the imposition of more special places where land owner actions are limited because of designated values such as endangered species habitat or wetlands; changes in the three key groupings of players in the Congressional arena (commodity coalition, conservation coalition and Congressional members and staff); and possible changes at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The paper concludes with both specific predictions and general observations about anticipated changes.

RIGHT VERSUS RIGHT—FINDING COMMON GROUND

*John Campbell
Ag Processing, Inc.*

Agricultural and environmental advocates make equally compelling claims regarding the righteousness of their cause. North America was developed under pro-development public policies. In a short period of American history, environmental policies have become an equal and opposite public policy force.

Agricultural advocacy is stuck in a period when rural population and legislative representation equaled or exceeded urban and suburban population and representation. General farm organizations are spread too thin. Specific commodity organizations are focused on issues of less and less importance. Farm advocates have generally let the environmental challenge go unanswered. Strategies for the future include leveraging changes in the social contract between agriculture and society into greater benefits for the farm sector.

**AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICYMAKING:
ISSUES, ACTORS AND STRATEGIES—STATE
GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE**

*Karen Armstrong-Cummings
Kentucky Natural Resources and Environmental
Protection Cabinet*

Major international debates continue in environmental and agricultural arenas. All facets of resource management expand the issues, providing opportunities for both conflict and consensus. The actors have increased substantially in two shifts. First, as support grows more localized, environmental concerns no longer reside only with national groups. Second, governmental action has shifted from national efforts, with local governments now providing the forums. These changes provide an opportunity for bringing communities together through local strategies. Officials have the opportunity, and a real responsibility, to implement proven mechanisms.

**INNOVATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY EDUCATION
THROUGH COALITIONS: THE GROUNDWATER POLICY
EDUCATION PROJECT**

*Charles W. Abdalla
Pennsylvania State University*

The Groundwater Policy Education Project's goal was to strengthen state and local public decision makers' abilities to formulate policies for managing groundwater resources. A package of educational resources was created and utilized in projects conducted by coalitions in seven states. Several projects achieved significant outcomes related to changes in the policy process and issues. Characteristics of projects found to be associated with such outcomes included: an appropriate scale; coalition diversity; effective project leadership; and attention to process issues. The results suggest that while they require significant effort to build and maintain, coalitions can, under certain conditions, improve environmental policymaking.

**INITIATING A COALITION FOR GROUNDWATER POLICY
EDUCATION: OBSERVATIONS AND LESSONS FROM A
RURAL IOWA COUNTY**

*Steve Padgitt
Iowa State University*

A coalition approach to public policy education in rural Iowa at the local level is described. Efforts to organize and implement the proj-

ect among organizations with disparate interests and sometimes marginal interest in groundwater were met with modest success. Implications for conducting public policy at the grassroots level by initiating a coalition of organizations are discussed. Although there are benefits to coalitions, they may require high organizational maintenance inputs. As a result, the coalition approach may be problematic in rural settings, especially if the coalition is narrowly defined to a single policy issue.

GROUNDWATER POLICY EDUCATION PROJECT: NORTH CAROLINA

*Leon E. Danielson
North Carolina State University*

The North Carolina pilot project of the Groundwater Policy Education Project was designed to improve state and local groundwater decision-making quality. It included a two-day, state-level conference for state and local elected and appointed officials, environmental interests, consulting firms and the general public; and a county-level, coalition-building education and public policy development project with a multi-disciplinary citizens groups in Gaston County, North Carolina. Close adherence to the principles of public policy education and coalition building produced increased knowledge, improvement in coalition-building skills, feelings of empowerment, increased willingness to listen to divergent points of view and other similar benefits.

EMERGING RURAL FARM-NONFARM CONFLICTS: WHOSE PREFERENCES COUNT?

*Luanne Lohr
and
Lynn R. Harvey
Michigan State University*

Conflicts over land use arise because individuals expressing different preferences claim property rights to the same good associated with the land. Suburbanization of agricultural areas has brought individuals from nonfarm backgrounds into contact with the rural farm environment, often for the first time. In responding to the subsequent conflicts, state governments have tended to affirm farmers' preferences with right-to-farm laws. Local governments have begun to support nonfarmers' preferences through restrictive zoning ordinances, particularly targeting intensive livestock operations. Public policy educators may facilitate conflict resolution by insuring the preferences of all relevant parties are considered in the context of community goals.

WETLANDS AND ENDANGERED SPECIES: EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS OF EXTENSION EDUCATORS

*Verne W. House and Michalann Greenway
Clemson University*

Our nationwide survey of U.S. extension educators revealed their expectations and needs for the public policy issues of wetlands and endangered species. Wetlands and endangered species issues will continue to be hot topics during the next two to three years, evolving around financial and legal aspects and basic values such as property rights. Extension educators expect to be involved in wetlands and endangered species issues and the survey revealed a high level of demand for assistance.

RESOURCE ISSUES AND OPTIONS—RIO: A COORDINATED APPROACH TO EDUCATION ON NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES

*David A. Cleaves
USDA Forest Service
Southern Experiment Station*

*A. Scott Reed
Oregon State University
Forestry Extension Program*

A new large-scale public education program in forest resources rests upon the issue of endangered species but focuses on root causes of concern over resource management alternatives. An approach to more coordinated and comprehensive outreach from the university is described. Recommendations are made regarding development and cultivation of process skills in extension educators and desired administrative behavior. Future challenges include involvement of non-extension faculty; encouraging extension faculty to work outside of their comfort zones; and creating appropriate relationships with other units already dealing with related issues. We believe the general strategy described could be institutionalized in colleges of forestry, natural resources and agriculture. Specific issues such as endangered species would be handled within this framework.

PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION FOR WETLANDS ISSUES

*Leigh Taylor Johnson
University of California Cooperative Extension*

Public policy education, the National Issues Forum and mediation techniques were used to educate about wetlands issues. The Univer-

sity of California Cooperative Extension “Ladder for Policy” was used to assist groups in identifying goals and alternatives, examining consequences and making choices. National Issues Forum background research, education and deliberative discussion methods strengthened early steps of the policy ladder. Mediation human relations techniques were used to establish and maintain a constructive atmosphere. These techniques were applied in projects dealing with San Diego Bay water quality issues and agriculture and coastal non-point pollution in San Diego County.

THE RURAL SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

REINVESTING IN THE SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE OF COMMUNITIES

Lynn R. Harvey
Michigan State University

Slowing growth in state and local government revenues has forced policymakers to adopt a variety of strategies to balance strained budgets. The tight budget conditions of many states and local units have resulted in human and capital infrastructure investments declining while consumption-oriented investments increase. The change in investment strategies brought about by declining fiscal capacity comes about at a time when the demand for human service programs are increasing. Public policy educators have the opportunity to assist state and local decision makers design strategies to cope with the deteriorating financial condition of public budgets through public official training; promote collaboration of human service agencies for delivery of programs; and assist citizens through public policy education to understand key fiscal issues.

THE STATE OF THE RURAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

George R. McDowell
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

As one examines the health care system in the United States and in rural America, it is very easy to make seemingly outrageous statements and use expletives that may subsequently need to be deleted. That is because the U.S. health care system is simply outrageous. It is outrageous in the way those with vested interests promulgate a set of myths about it. It is outrageous in what it costs us as Americans by comparison to health care systems in many other countries. It is also outrageous in the amount of waste, and in the excessive cost of administering the system.

There is a problem in deciding just how we should frame the public policy question being examined. For example, is the issue to be discussed a question of the disparity between the health care available to rural people as compared to the rest of the society? In this context we might examine alternatives for rural people that would seek to bring the services available to them more into line with the general societal norm. Alternatively, is the issue one in which the care available to rural citizens is simply further evidence of dysfunction within the entire system? Under this framing of the question, the care in rural areas is simply additional variance within the system and the promising alternatives for rural people may be the same as for everyone else in a system needing massive system-wide change.

If I can refine our understanding of the rural health problem in just this limited way, I may have helped.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF HEALTH CARE PROTOTYPES AND DEVELOPING A PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION PROGRAM

*Marsha D. Fretwell, M.D.
Aging 2000, SJS Inc.*

*Marian S. Feeney
University of Rhode Island*

Health care is an issue that touches all of us. And many experts think our health care system is breaking down. Polls reveal most Americans are dissatisfied with the system, but are satisfied with their own personal health care. The American public is concerned. A 1991 Gallup poll found that 91 percent of Americans believe we face a national health care crisis, and 85 percent feel the system needs reform (Aging 2000, 1991b, pp. 3-1). Much of the literature indicates the need for a *health care system approach*. A review of literature identifies many specific issues, to name a few: managed competition, universal access, cost containment, preventive component, voucher to negotiate with insurer, tort reform for medical malpractice, administrative simplification, "kiddy care" program, private market approach, employer-based approach, and government-based approach. But few take a systems approach to studying our health care system. This paper discusses one such system. Aging 2000 began in November of 1989, when a group came together to study ways to improve health care in Rhode Island. The group focused on health care for the elderly. But the detailed analysis of care for the elderly can yield improvements for the system as a whole.

RURAL ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION: FUNDING AND ALLOCATION ISSUES

Bob F. Jones and Kevin T. McNamara

Education policy is a critical issue in the 1990s following a decade of discussion and reform throughout the nation. As rural leaders enter the debate in the 1990s, two concerns should be foremost in their minds. How can rural communities, experiencing declines in their population and tax base, secure funds to provide students with a competitive education? And, what can school administrators do to increase efficiency in the allocation of education resources? This paper examines funding and allocation issues, presents policy options for funding rural schools, and summarizes research that examines returns to school inputs in a production function framework.

DOMESTIC CONSEQUENCES OF EVOLVING INTERNATIONAL TRADE POLICY

HOW NAFTA WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES: REGIONAL IMPACTS

Daniel A. Sumner

Assistant Secretary for Economics, USDA

This paper outlines the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and discusses regional effects. The NAFTA negotiation establishes free trade among the United States, Canada and Mexico. It will reduce tariffs to zero for almost all products and improve access for services and investment. U.S. agricultural exports are expected to be \$2.0 billion higher than without NAFTA by the end of the transition. Livestock, meat and grains will account for much of the expansion. Cash receipts in agriculture will be about 3 percent higher. The NAFTA will benefit all regions of the American economy. The gains in rural areas will result from both increased demand for agricultural commodities and improved economic prospects outside agriculture.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE POLICY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR U.S. AGRICULTURE

*Larry D. Sanders
Oklahoma State University*

*Parr Rosson
Texas A&M University*

The time when farm producers and agribusinesses could ignore the world beyond the county line and hope for a profit is long past. Rapidly changing events such as changes in the geopolitical structure of regions are altering production, consumption and trade patterns. International trade policy is also evolving to reduce subsidies and barriers to trade and, in some cases, create artificial advantages in the global market.

Such actions have already brought challenges of maintaining profitability or basic survival to U.S. agriculture. Producers, agribusinesses and public service and support agencies (including land grant universities) will be put to the test over the next decade as the world around them forces change. Agriculture and its institutions will sustain themselves, but the forms they take are by no means certain. The purpose of this paper is to identify some of these challenges as well as opportunities available to the U.S. agricultural sector and related institutions.

SOCIAL INDICATORS, BASEBOOK, BASELINE AND INDICATOR MODEL

*Abner W. Womack
University of Missouri-Columbia*

This paper is about the implementation of a basebook, with social indicators plus a modeling and intellectual interface process for downstream projects (baseline) for rural communities. It is based on several meetings with researchers in the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI) plus Glenn Nelson's social indicator paper of September, 1991.

***Public Policy Education
in the 1990s***

