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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

*S. Kenneth Oakleaf, Chairman
National Public Policy Education Committee*

This particular setting provides an outstanding environment for a conference. We have an excellent professional line-up to discuss policy issues related to energy, land use, food production, and foreign trade. Not only do we have the basis for a stimulating conference but some of the speakers as well as those of you who attended the recent Canadian and Brazilian meetings bring us an international flavor.

To those attending this conference for the first time, a special welcome to you. You provide another very important source of stimulation.

Each year the Program Committee has three major objectives: (1) providing timely and useful information in a policy framework, (2) providing appropriate education methodology, and (3) sharing ideas and meaningful experiences. An effort is always made to provide a balance in the program between emerging and current issues and between agriculture-oriented and nonagriculture-oriented policy issues.

Now for some historical nostalgia. The 1951 conference at Allerton Park covered four major areas: (1) international affairs, (2) inflation, (3) agricultural production policy, and (4) interrelationships of agriculture and other segments of our national economy. Note the similarity to this year's program; necessarily, the specific policy issues are different.

At the national level, we need only look at the extreme volatility of prices and the rate of inflation to realize the importance of policy education. The current issue of *Newsweek* tells of the increased volume of communications that Congressmen are getting from their constituents. Add to this situation the energy crisis and the possibility of fuel oil rationing.

At the state and local levels, the need for policy education is also very great. For example, in Colorado, during the interim between legislative sessions, a tremendous amount of effort is aimed at forging meaningful land use legislation. We sense a feeling of dissatisfaction and distrust by legislators concerning assistance from the physical sciences and a counterswing to seeking solely information offered by social scientists. This is hardly the decision-making framework advocated by policy educators.

Local citizens are restless. In one of our Colorado counties, a group is petitioning for the recall of the county commissioners. Can a policy educator be of assistance in this situation?

Policy education can provide the framework for a meaningful learning experience. It can assist the citizenry by demonstrating how to determine the alternatives and present these alternatives to the appropriate decision makers.

The need is urgent; the time is *now*. Thanks to the Farm Foundation for the guidance and financial support it has given to public policy education in the United States.

Looking at the roster of resource people on the program and the quality of the participants, I predict another successful National Public Policy Education Conference.

PART I

*Energy Policy
Issues*

