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SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE

*R. J. Hildreth
Managing Director
Farm Foundation*

These remarks are more an attempt to put perspective on the conference than a summary. I speak to food and agriculture issues knowing full well that these issues are a subset of the issues with which you are concerned.

These past few months I have been exposed to a number of stimuli that have led me to the idea that one of the most important aspects of the food and agriculture policy scene is the wide range of issues and actors involved. As Don Paarlberg pointed out in his Fellows Lecture at the 1978 AAEA Meeting, agriculture has lost its uniqueness. The food and agriculture policy is forged in an interaction of a large number of issues and actors. While some people have described this as fragmentation of policy, it actually means that the policy process has become much larger and much more intricate.

Consider the topics we discussed at this conference: Food and Nutrition Policy Options, Policy for Small Farms, International Trade, Public Policy in the Land-Grant System. In addition, we had workshops on Energy Policy, Public Policy Community Education, Local Government, Public Lands Policy, and Agricultural Law. We also had special addresses on Rural Development Policy and the American Agriculture Movement. Discussion at the conference, and thought about the presentations, reveal that the issues under each of the above topics are interrelated.

My attempt to corral these sets of issues is contained in the following description of A Food and Agricultural Policy Matrix for the Late 1970s. The implication of the date is that it was somewhat different in 1970, and will likely be somewhat different in the 80s. The most likely state for the 80s is that the matrix will be larger and more complex.

The matrix is composed of policy issues and actors. The list of policy issues has grown over time, with many of the issues added in recent years. All impact on the performance of the food and agricultural sector of society.

The non-ag interest groups include a wide range of organizations — labor unions, consumer organizations, environmental organizations, etc. The Food and Agricultural Science and Education category includes not only the USDA/Land-Grant University Complex, but also research and education of other public and privately supported universities, as well as private firms, foundations, and institutes. The General Public category consists of citizens as consumers and taxpayers. The self-interest of individuals within a category does not always coincide. For example, farmers who mainly produce feed grains have a different self-interest than dairymen or cattle feeders.

The matrix is a generalized representation of interactions of issues and actors. It does not show the intensity of the interrelation in each cell. For example, Foreign Government action is very important for the issues of International Trade and Development, important for Agriculture Price and Income, and probably of modest importance for Rural Development. Nor does it show the interaction among cells, i.e., the relationship between the interests of Marketing Firms on Nutrition Policy and the interests of the Farmers on Tax Policy.

The major point I wish to leave with you is that any specific public policy education program will need to consider all of the cells in the matrix. Some will be more important than others, of course, and some cells can safely and usefully be ignored. But they can be ignored only after careful thought is given to the total matrix.

At this conference we looked at nutrition policy and the impacts of changes in nutrition policy on farmers, the marketing industry, and consumers, with attention given to the general public. We did not look at the impacts on the input industry, foreign governments, or all interest groups. Can we safely ignore these cells? Perhaps so, but the decision to ignore them should be a conscious and thought-out decision, not inattention. Do we need to look more at how agriculture price and income policy, international trade policy, energy, water, rural development, tax, transportation, and environmental policies affect nutrition policy?

We cannot hope to be useful educators by attempting to “dump” the entire matrix on our students in each lesson. It is our task to sort out the significant cells and show how they interrelate. This makes the job of public policy education more difficult. For our students, we need to help them to “bring order out of apparent chaos.” As the task of public policy education becomes more important, it becomes more difficult.

ACTORS POLICY ISSUES	AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM			NON-AG INTEREST GROUPS	GOVERNMENTS			FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE & EDUCATION	GENERAL PUBLIC
	INPUT	FARMERS	MARKETING		LOCAL & STATE	FEDERAL	FOREIGN		
Agriculture Price & Income									
Nutrition									
Land									
International Trade									
International Development									
Energy									
Water									
Rural Development									
Tax									
Transportation									
Environment									
Consumer									

A FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL POLICY MATRIX FOR THE LATE 1970's

PARTICIPANTS

ALABAMA

Lavaughn Johnson

ALASKA

Marguerite A. Stetson

ARIZONA

George Campbell, Jr.

ARKANSAS

Charles E. Bishop
Carl Farler
Charlotte Gorman

CALIFORNIA

Ann L. Burroughs
Kirby S. Moulton
Jerry B. Siebert
William W. Wood

COLORADO

L. Eugene Schroeder
Warren Trock

FLORIDA

Charles D. Covey
M. L. Upchurch
John T. Woeste

GEORGIA

William D. Givan
Joshiah Hoskins, Jr.

HAWAII

Stephen M. Doue

IDAHO

Robert L. Sargent

ILLINOIS

Walter J. Armbruster
Harold D. Guither
R. J. Hildreth
John A. Quinn
Moyle S. Williams

INDIANA

J. Carroll Bottum
Otto C. Doering
Bob Jones
Marshall Martin
Pat O'Rourke

IOWA

Charles Gratto
Russ G. Pounds

KANSAS

Donald B. Erickson
Barry Flinchbaugh
Roy Frederick
Gail Imig

KENTUCKY

David Debertin
Wilson Hourigan
Craig Infanger

LOUISIANA

Sanford Dooley

MAINE

Vance E. Dearborn

MARYLAND

A. M. Prindle
Dean F. Tuthill

MASSACHUSETTS

N. Eugene Engel
George McDowell
Gene McMurtry

MICHIGAN

Alvin E. House
James D. Shaffer
Vernon L. Sorenson
Garland P. Wood

MINNESOTA

Martin Christiansen

MINNESOTA (con't)
Richard T. Crowder
Luther Pickrel
Arley Waldo
Carole B. Yoho

MISSISSIPPI
Rupert B. Johnston

MISSOURI
Coy G. McNabb

MONTANA
Verne W. House

NEBRASKA
Duane Olsen
Everett E. Peterson

NEVADA
Jack L. Artz
John A. Knechel

NEW HAMPSHIRE
John Damon

NEW JERSEY
Robert G. Latimer

NEW YORK
George L. Casler
Cecelia Roland
Bernard F. Stanton

NORTH CAROLINA
George Hyatt, Jr.
Fred A. Mangum
Michael Walden

OHIO
Wallace Barr
David H. Boyne
Daniel Cowdery
William Flinn
George Gist
David Gerber
Herbert E. Hadley
Dennis R. Henderson

Fred Hitzhusen
Lois Hungate
Ted Jones
Anita McCormick
George Morse
Lorri Procelli
Norman Rask
William J. Richards
Alma Sadam
John Stitzlein
Paul R. Thomas
Vernon Vandemark
Bennie White

OKLAHOMA
Gerald A. Doeksen
James Mosely
Keith Scarce

OREGON
A. Gene Nelson
J. B. Wyckoff

PENNSYLVANIA
J. Patrick Madden
Harold E. Neigh

RHODE ISLAND
Thomas F. Weaver

SOUTH CAROLINA
B. H. Robinson

SOUTH DAKOTA
Gene Murra

TENNESSEE
David C. Gandy
D. Ray Humberd

TEXAS
William E. Black

VERMONT
Verle R. Houghaboom

VIRGINIA
J. Paxton Marshall

VIRGINIA (con't)

Donald Lacey

WASHINGTON

Bruce Florea

WEST VIRGINIA

Gerald V. Eagan

Anthony Ferrise

WISCONSIN

Richard L. Barrows

Mary Lavender

William E. Saupe

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

W. T. Boehm

John S. Bottum

J. R. Corley

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