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RESOURCE USE ISSUES  
AND  
THE PLANNING PROCESS

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and  
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## FOREWORD

This publication represents a collection of papers which were presented before the Second Northeast Extension Seminar of The Northeast Regional Committees. The conference, which was held in Boston, October 11-13, 1966, explored the topic of "Resource Use Issues and the Planning Process."

The seminar was attended by professionals in rural and urban planning, economics, and sociology; landscape architects; educators, agricultural agents; and extension specialists in forestry and wildlife, area development, and public affairs.

Included in this publication are all papers which were presented before the four committees and those presented before the Northeast Regional Extension Public Policy Committee. They represent current thinking in the field of resource use and planning.

Much guidance and support was given by Henry M. Hansen of the University of Connecticut, and Joseph Ackerman and R. J. Hildreth of the Farm Foundation to the Boston Conference and the publication of the papers presented there. Financial costs were underwritten by the Farm Foundation and the Institute for Research on Land and Water Resources of The Pennsylvania State University.

Finally, we salute Jack Brown and Carroll D. Price, II who devoted many hours to the editing of this compilation of papers.

John C. Frey, Chairman  
Northeast Regional  
Extension Public  
Policy Committee

CONFERENCE SUMMARY  
by Joseph Ackerman\*

When the Program Committee asked me if I would summarize the conference, I said I would be willing to make a few comments at the end of the conference but that I would not try to summarize the issues presented. I will, therefore, merely emphasize some of the points made and express a few of the thoughts that occurred to me as I listened to the presentations.

As I met with the committee that planned this conference, I was tremendously impressed with the potential of bringing together individuals interested in public affairs, farm management extension, farm management research, and resource economics to discuss the planning process. Planning is a complex job that requires people of varying abilities and competencies. In the past, many of the decisions made at the local, regional, and state levels with regard to resource use were largely political decisions concerned primarily with the physical aspects. Today we are entering a more complex age, in which the technical, the economic, the social, and the political are interrelated, and we recognize the need for looking at the total situation. We also recognize the far-reaching effects of decision making in this area and the importance of basing these decisions on the best available information.

I think it was quite obvious as we listened to the various papers presented that a major problem in planning is lack of information needed by planners to arrive at a sound decision. If planning is to succeed it must be based on knowledge. Information must be comprehensive. It must provide insight on current problems and also must provide clues to future needs. Information must be provided continuously over a long period of time because a community is dynamic, not static. We have a great information gap in practically all areas related to planning.

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\* Dr. Ackerman is Managing Director of the Farm Foundation in Chicago, Illinois.

Another problem in planning may be that we have gone too far in the direction of specialization. I think we are beginning to recognize that no one particular discipline can serve the needs of planning and that what we now need is an integration of practically all of the disciplines into the planning process. Possibly one of the reasons for the large gaps in information is that we have never quite fully understood the interrelationship that exists between the scattered stocks of available information and their place in the planning process. I wonder if the information gaps might not be so large today if in the past we had brought together planners, research workers, and extension people as we did at this conference.

Still another problem in planning is coordination. The present emphasis on resource use and community development has brought a proliferation of planning units, many with conflicting interests and some with overlapping responsibilities. The growing interdependence of rural and urban areas makes it important that plans be made on a broad rather than limited geographical basis and that we look at the total community rather than any one segment. As we look ahead the need for a broad planning framework and a guiding system that will provide stimulus, direction, and control for orderly development is apparent.

As our resources become scarcer, they will require closer management in the public interest. At the same time people are becoming more interdependent, and their well-being will depend increasingly on public decisions. Government is going to play a more prominent role in planning in the future than in the past. In a democratic society this means that the public will have a stronger voice in planning. We, therefore, need to develop a public dialogue on significant issues such as resource use. Only through deliberate and intelligent action based on informed decisions can we have the kind of resource use that will bring the greatest benefit to the public.

Our state universities, which have professionals in many fields, are in a strategic position to contribute to the planning process. They have the competency in research and instruction that is required for

planning. However, they need to make known to the general public the competencies and services available. They need to mobilize their forces and take a more aggressive role in planning. Moving from physical environmental planning into the economic, social, and political requires that the universities have a much broader and more intensive research base if they are to be helpful in making intelligent decisions. The universities have the capacity to train professional planners to meet the growing need for planning competence. As one or two people on the program have indicated, it has probably been rather difficult to develop a curriculum in this area because we are not yet certain how to incorporate the relevant disciplines into an effective curriculum. However, the universities can consult with planners and begin some experimental efforts.

The state universities also have in their extension services, a well established system for disseminating information, another important requirement in planning. To a large degree, planning is very similar to the area of public policy. When we first brought extension people together for the purpose of increasing understanding of public problems, we stressed the need for information on the part of the general public as a basis for decision making. We said it was necessary to present to the public the various alternatives and the economic and social consequences of each alternative. We tried to develop understanding which would enable the individual to select the most satisfactory alternative in light of his own values. Similarly, in the planning process, a community needs information for evaluating alternatives in order to select the one that offers the most promise in achieving its goals.

I was pleased with the logic of those who planned this conference in having the first part of the conference deal with the theoretical issues of the planning process as viewed by planners and by people in the college of agriculture, and then having the second part of the program deal with state extension programs in public affairs that involved land use issues. The committee certainly is to be congratulated upon their selection of Northeast extension programs that were discussed at the meeting.

Through the discussion of the theoretical and a review of actual programs under way, I hope that we have improved our understanding of the planning process and its place in a developing economy. We should be more aware of the importance of research to fill the informational gaps that now exist. If we have set the stage at this conference for some research activity to close the gap of understanding, then it seems to me that we have made progress. The conference has helped us to see a more vital and creative role for extension in the years ahead. I can visualize a full-time extension position in planning in almost every university. Certainly, extension will play an important part in shaping the future and in developing values and molding attitudes that will lead to the kind of communities that we are anxious to have.

CHAPTER III  
APPENDIX