

IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION

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The preceding four analyses identify a number of major public policy concerns. These issues are of such magnitude and complexity that expanded and continuing public policy education efforts are needed now and in the future.

The economic and political setting for food and farm policy has changed dramatically during the past five years. Pre-1972 conditions can never be restored even though there may be a strong desire to return to those "good old days," as stated in the North Central Regional Extension Publication, "Food and Farm Policy — A Fresh Look":

"The effects of these developments were profitable to some people, costly to many, disastrous to others, and disturbing to nearly everyone in the world. The causes are numerous and complex: demand for more animal protein by peoples of the industrialized nations; growing population in underdeveloped countries; crop failures in both exporting and importing nations due to bad weather; 'day of reckoning' for the U.S. dollar in international money markets; rude awakening to the harsh fact that supplies of land, petroleum, minerals and other raw materials have definite limits; and chronic, severe worldwide inflation."

For the remainder of this century at least, the following conditions can be expected:

1. Petroleum and other basic mineral resources will be scarce and expensive.
2. Commercial export markets for United States grains and soybeans will fluctuate with changes in weather and political motives of Russia and China.
3. Food aid and technical assistance for agricultural development will be provided by United States to Third World countries, excluding OPEC, but on a smaller scale and under stricter terms than in 1954-72.
4. Expanding world food production will be more difficult than in the past 40 years because of more costly inputs and technological limits.
5. Consumers in industrialized market economies will adjust their spending patterns in response to higher energy costs

in part by eating less red meat (but more poultry, fish, and vegetable protein) in order to buy desired non-food items.

6. United States food, farm, trade, and aid policies will be developed increasingly from agenda set by interest groups other than the "Agricultural Establishment."

Issues for Public Policy Education

In-service training conferences for public affairs specialists were started back in 1951 to improve their competence in planning and conducting educational programs on farm price and income policy alternatives. During the past ten years, public policy issues of more general interest have tended to dominate the conference. The events of 1972-77 have focused renewed interest on food, farm income, trade, and aid policies.

Looking ahead to future conferences and to regional and national efforts to develop educational materials for use by public affairs specialists in the several states, major issues of food and agriculture policy will include:

1. Reducing instability in world prices of important food crops.
2. Maintaining high levels of United States agricultural exports to assist in a favorable balance of trade.
3. Achieving the goals of domestic food and farm income programs.
4. Providing food aid and agricultural technical assistance to emerging market economies.

The interrelationships among these and broader issues of trade, capital movements, foreign exchange rates, and economic and political associations of nations for various purposes are challenging. They could be frustrating to the public affairs educator. With limited resources for public affairs education in most States Cooperative Extension Services, difficult choices must be made as to which issues receive priority. The need for public policy education is great and growing.

Considering our heritage, our clientele, our capabilities and our institutional arrangements, I suggest that the four stated issues should receive high priority on the public policy education agenda of Cooperative Extension in land-grant universities.

PART IV

1977 Food and Agriculture Legislation

