

Organized Symposia

TITLE: Agriculture and the Expanding Biobased Economy of the 21st Century: Training of Traditional and Non-Traditional Students (Moderator: Enefiok Ekanem, Tennessee State University).

Organizer: Surendra P. Singh, Tennessee State University.

Participants: Daniel F. Manternach, New Uses Council; James Doolittle, South Dakota State University; Safdar Muhammad, Fisseha Tegegne, and Sammy L. Comer, Tennessee State University; Robert Harris, Tennessee Valley Authority; Peter Nelson, AgroTech Communications, Inc.

The purpose of the symposium was to discuss the growing importance of biobased products, identify various biobased products and energy sources, and discuss the need for changes in educational programs to prepare students to work in the biobased product economy. Results of a survey conducted to collect information on the educational background and experience preferred by employers, for Agriculture College graduates, engaged in biobased product development or production were presented and discussed. The attributes indicated by employers could help in making necessary changes in program(s) to prepare graduates for the biobased economy.

TITLE: Student Participation in Undergraduate Discipline-Related Organizations: How Can We Get Students (and Faculty) Involved? (Moderator: Randall D. Little, Mississippi State University).

Organizers: Randall D. Little and M. Darren Hudson, Mississippi State University, and Lisa House, University of Florida.

Participants: Lisa House, University of Florida; David Willis, Texas Tech University; Dan McLemore, University of Tennessee; and David Fraser, Cotton Board.

Prospective employers generally view student participation in extracurricular activities as positive. Such activities provide opportunity to enhance and reinforce classroom training. Yet, many departments do not offer them to their students. Or, if they do, many students fail to capitalize on them. The purpose of this organized symposium is to explore what works—including student involvement and expectations, faculty participation, and departmental commitment.

TITLE: Applied Research to Improve the Valuation of Water Quality Services for National Public Policy Analysis (Moderator: John Powers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency).

Organizer: Brett Gelso, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Participants: John Powers and Brett Gelso, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The purpose of this symposium was to make researchers aware of the general framework used to conduct water quality benefits analysis and to promote discussion among researchers about ways that applied research can be made more useful for public policy analysis. The symposium included presentations on the general components of the analytic system, including water quality models, definitions of water quality “commodities,” and economic valuation studies that estimate society’s willingness to pay for improved water quality. The discussion focused on identifying ways to im-

prove the usefulness of applied economics research for public policy analysis.

TITLE: Focus on ARMS (Agricultural Resource Management Survey) (Moderator: Tim Payne, USDA-ERS).

Organizers: Tim Payne and Jorge Fernandez-Cornejo, U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (USDA-ERS).

Participant: Tim Payne, USDA-ERS.

The purpose of this symposium was to present information on the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS). ARMS is USDA's primary instrument for data collection on a range of issues related to crop and livestock production, resource use, costs and returns, and farm financial condition. ARMS data are used to support ERS's research and is used by research institutions. There is growing interest among non-USDA researchers for direct access to the results of ARMS surveys. ERS needs to be aware of the needs of the research community and must balance their needs with the constraints inherent in modern government. In an effort to make more data available to researchers, accessibility issues are under discussion.

TITLE: Mandatory Country-of-Origin Labeling: Impacts and Issues for Extension and Applied Research (Moderator: Lynn Kennedy, Louisiana State University).

Organizers: John Robinson and Parr Rosson, Texas A&M University.

Participants: Derrell Peel, Oklahoma State University; Parr Rosson, Flynn Adcock, John Robinson, and T.C. Betancourt, Texas A&M University; and Darren Hudson, Mississippi State University.

The purpose of this symposium was to examine the effects and implications of the mandatory country-of-origin labeling (MCOOL) provisions of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. Because the current

MCOOL rules are quite different from earlier versions, changes to the regulations were presented. Competition, marketing opportunities, and the effects on southern-produced cattle, meat, fruits, and vegetables were considered. The costs and distribution of costs associated with the labeling requirements were discussed as were the implications of the postponement of MCOOL for most products. Applied research and extension education issues were examined and discussed, including the desire to better identify consumer preferences toward MCOOL and willingness to pay.

TITLE: Biotechnology Impacts on Rice Production and Consumption (Moderator: Dixie Reaves, Virginia Tech).

Organizers: Roger A. Hinson, Louisiana State University, and Dixie W. Reaves, Virginia Tech.

Participants: Roger A. Hinson, Louisiana State University; Dixie W. Reaves, Virginia Tech; and Mike Salassi and Wes Harrison, Louisiana State University.

The objective of this symposium was to highlight the effects of biotechnology advances on rice production and to discuss concerns about consumption of products from genetically modified crops. Considerable controversy exists with respect to the potential social benefits and costs and risks associated with the development and use of genetically modified crops. On the one hand, many in commercial agriculture and industry feel that potential benefits significantly outweigh risks. Many consumers, consumer groups, and environmentalists, on the other hand, feel that the potential costs, including uncertainty about effects on human health and the potential effects on biosystems, overshadow the benefits. Perspectives about genetically modified rice, from both the production side and the consumer side, and the broader implications were topics of discussion in this symposium.

TITLE: Exploring Opportunities of Non-Traditional Alternative Enterprises for

Small Farmers (Moderator: Albert J. Allen, Mississippi State University).

Organizers: Safdar Muhammad and Fisseha Tegegne, Tennessee State University.

Participants: Sandra Soliaman, Tuskegee University; Omoanghe S. Isikhuemhen, North Carolina A&T State University; Safdar Muhammad, Fisseha Tegegne, Enefiok Ekanem, and Surendra Singh, Tennessee State University; and Tom Tate and Antonio McLaren, USDA/CSREES.

Small farms represent a significant proportion of total U.S. farms. They have been facing numerous problems over the years in various areas, ranging from production to marketing. Current trends in agriculture, including globalization and specialization, pose new challenges for their viability and survival. There is a need to introduce nontraditional alternative enterprises to enhance their income. Such an approach will provide protection against competition with large farms and provide opportunities to create niche markets to reach consumers of specialty products. The goal of this symposium is to evaluate opportunities that alternative enterprises offer to enhance performance and profitability of small farm operations. The short presentations, each of which will focus on a specific issue, are expected to stimulate audience discussion.

TITLE: Leveraging Extension Resources through Inter-Agency Cooperation (Moderator: C.W. "Bill" Herndon, Mississippi State University).

Organizers: John D. Anderson and C.W. "Bill" Herndon, Mississippi State University.

Participants: John D. Anderson and C.W. "Bill" Herndon, Mississippi State University; Timothy A. Woods, University of Kentucky; and Ross O. Love, Oklahoma State University.

In recent years, state-supported universities around the nation—including in the South—have had to deal with significant reductions in

funding. Extension programs have been affected by this reduction in resources. In this environment, the development of partnerships between Extension services and other governmental agencies, nongovernmental agencies, and farm and special interest organizations have become more commonplace. The purpose of this symposium was to examine these partnerships in greater detail. Specific examples of interagency partnerships were discussed to shed light on the motivations for such partnerships, their positive and negative aspects, and operational challenges to their implementation. These aspects of interagency partnerships were discussed from the perspective of specialists directly involved, as well as from the perspective of college-level administration.

TITLE: Issues Surrounding the Acceptability of Agricultural Biotechnology: Results from Focus Group Meetings and Mail Questionnaire Surveys (Moderator: Steve Halbrook, Vice President, Farm Foundation).

Organizer: Enefiok Ekanem, Tennessee State University.

Participants: Enefiok Ekanem, Safdar Muhammad, Fisseha Tegegne, and Surendra Singh, Tennessee State University; Eric Wai-les, Jefferson Miller, and Diana Danforth, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; Dennis Balogu, Tracy Dunbar, Usman Adamu, and Shannon Hendix, University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff; Mary Mafuyai-Ekanem, Sheilda Sutton, Marsha McGraw, and Carolyn C. McCain, North Carolina A&T State University; Cheryl Toner, International Food Information Council; and Wen S. Chern, The Ohio State University.

Because of lively debate and extensive discussions of genetically modified crops in the food system, agricultural biotechnology has taken center stage in issues involving food safety, the environment, economics, ethics, morality, and public policy, among others. The purpose of this symposium was to provide a forum for discussing social acceptability of

agricultural biotechnology and to provide some understanding on how the technology is communicated to the public. The symposium examined consumer attitudes toward agricultural biotechnology and explored factors affecting acceptance in Japan, Taiwan, and the United States. This symposium sought to stimulate discussion and expand present understanding of the issues surrounding agricultural biotechnology by bringing together researchers, extension professionals, and policy experts.