AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
http://ageconsearch.umn.edu
aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE POLICY ON CONSUMERS

Georgia Stevens Neruda
Office of Consumer Advisor, USDA

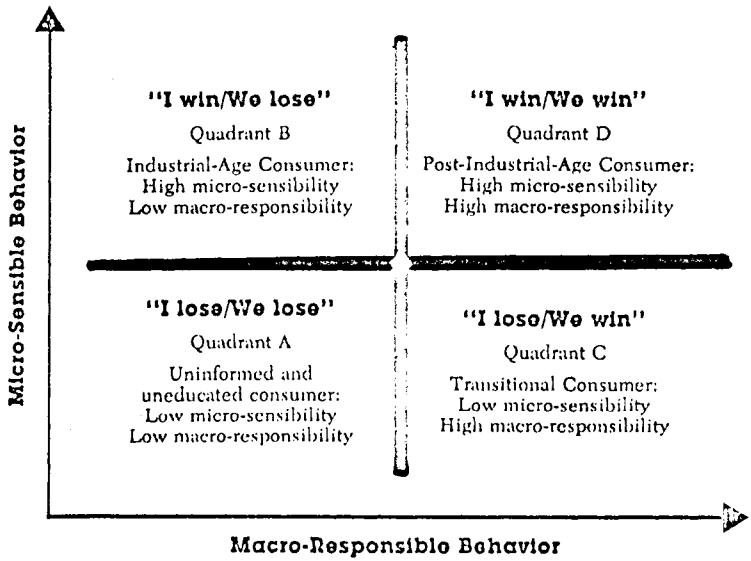
My assignment has been one of gathering resources and models to help you develop public policy education programs on the "Impacts of International Trade Policy on Consumers." I think that some explanation of how I have proceeded would help you in the same type of search that is necessary every time you are faced with new issues in the process of developing public policy education programs.

With our knowledge of public affairs, we know that the process remains the same even as the issues change. The set of questions "What is the problem, Why is this a problem, and For whom is this a problem?" helps us to identify the real issues involved. As we use a problem solving approach, we develop a wide range of alternative solutions by exploring the consequences and impacts of each alternative and determining the related costs and benefits. Controversies are sure to surround any particular solution of the issue — someone usually loses when someone else gains. As public policy educators, we cannot make policy decisions for our clientele. The final policy decision must be left to those involved.

"Thinking Globally, Acting Locally" was the theme for the first international conference on the future held three years ago by the World Future Society. This theme is also appropriate to our program development as we realistically look at the resources available for local county extension agents to use in helping consumers to think in more global terms. One model for better understanding consumer behavior in a global sense is one developed by Dr. Ronald W. Stampfl and a consulting team for the J.C. Penney *Forum*. Helping consumers to see their decisions as a combination of micro-sensible and macro-responsible behavior creates a framework for the local choices that must be made in this ever smaller world. As educators, we must challenge consumers to think not only like individuals in quadrant A with low micro-sensibility, low macro-responsibility but also like those in quadrant D representing high micro-sensibility, high macro-responsibility or "I win/We win." (See illustration.)

I think you will find that you can use this model in a variety of ways to broaden the scope of thinking regarding almost any issue. The

A Consumer-Behavior Matrix



Source: J.C. Penney FORUM, Spring/Summer 1981.

Distributed by Dr. Georgia Stevens Neruda at the National Public Policy Education Committee Conference, September 14, 1983.

model helps to refocus our thinking as we make tradeoffs between the short-run opportunities for the family unit and the long-run costs on the global society.

There are numerous resources available to provide our audiences with micro and macro choices that must be made related to the impact of international trade policy. I will try to refer to those that you might not have already used, the resources that go beyond the Agriculture Council of America "U.S. Farm Export Education Project"; or the Extension Service specially funded project "Speaking of Trade: Its Effect on Agriculture" described at last year's National Public Policy Education Conference; or the activities planned by the international committees as a part of the National Extension Homemakers Council in several states. Second, I tried to find resources that would help the professional who is more knowledgeable about food and agriculture issues to relate these within the context of other trade issues. There

needs to be an exchange of information between the food and agriculture trade issues spokesperson and the persons concerned with the effects of steel, clothing, shoes, and color television imports. Third, I found that there are non agricultural groups that are addressing trade issues and therefore, the audience may be already available for you to expand their group's discussion to agriculture issues as well. Fourth, these resources can be regionalized to your own specific local needs — Michigan's auto industry requires a very different program approach than Nebraska's grain and beef farmers. The following resource list with a brief description and address may be helpful.

1. League of Women Voters Education Fund 1730 M Street, NW. Washington, DC 20036 (202) 429-1965	Educational on-going program in many communities. Resource materials on understanding theory of free trade, the effect on sectors of the economy, and implementing community surveys of where goods originated.
2. General Federation of Women's Clubs 1734 N Street, NW. Washington, DC 20036 (202) 347-3168	Educational on-going program in many communities. "Great American Farm" series with numerous references recommended for clubs to develop their own programs.
3. Consumers for World Trade Dupont Circle Bldg. Rm. 425-A 1346 Connecticut Avenue, NW. Washington, DC 20036 (202) 785-4835	Formed in 1977 in response to protectionist trade bill in Congress. Promotes fair trade through educational programs, advocacy activities, and membership services including newsletter.
4. Joint Council on Economic Education 1212 Avenue of the Americas New York, NY 10036 (212) 582-5150	Statewide consumer and economic education workshops. Numerous resource materials and newsletter available.
5. World Future Society 4619 St. Elmo Avenue Bethesda, MD 20814 (301) 656-8274	Tax-exempt non-profit scientific and educational association whose members are interested in the ways in which today's decisions are shaping tomorrow's world. Publishes resource materials and sponsors courses.
6. AFL/CIO 815 Sixteenth Street, NW. Washington, DC 20006 (202) 637-5000	Numerous resource materials available on Labor's view of U.S. international trade policies, typified as "fair trade" versus "free trade".

7. U.S. General Accounting Office Document Handling and Information Services Facility P.O. Box 6015 Gaithersburg, MD 20230 (202) 275-6241	Publishes newsletter of just-published reports made for various governmental agencies. Reports provide a substantive review of the problem with recommendations for new policy development.
8. U.S. Department of Commerce 14th & E Street, NW. Washington, DC 20230	*Impact of Exports on Domestic Employment*
9. U.S. Department of Treasury Office of International Trade Room 4436 15th & Pennsylvania Ave., NW. Washington, DC 20220 (202) 566-5261	Resource material on the costs of trade restrictions on consumers.
10. U.S. International Trade Commission 701 E Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20436 (202) 724-1753	Reports to President on investigations under 1974 Trade Act relating case studies of selected industries affected by trade policies.

The following organizations have numerous educational materials and programs but are not dealing with trade issues at the current time:

1. American Association of University Women
   Sales Department
   3401 Virginia Avenue, NW.
   Washington, DC 20037
   (202) 785-7700
2. Consumer Federation of America
   1314 Fourteenth Street, NW.
   Washington, DC 20005
   (202) 387-6121
3. National Consumers League
   1522 K Street, NW., Suite 406
   Washington, DC 20005
   (202) 797-7600