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# Maintaining the Cutting Edge

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## State Initiatives for Agricultural and Rural Development

Rodney Clouser, organizer and moderator (University of Florida)  
Michael Green (Council of State Governments)  
Phillip Baumel (Iowa State University)  
John Holt (University of Florida)  
Ron Shaffer (University of Wisconsin)

State legislatures and departments of agriculture have increased involvement in developing state policies that will improve the economic well-being of farm producers and rural residents. Some of these policies address issues such as production, marketing and alternative agriculture, while other policies concentrate on issues such as education, job training, business expansion or retention, and value added industry.

Production, marketing and alternative agricultural crop mixes were reviewed from policies adopted in Illinois. Education, job training, etc. were discussed based on recommendations or suggestions from Governor's Task Force Reports completed in Ohio, Texas, Indiana and Florida.

Consensus by participants was that production, marketing and alternative agricultural crops could help improve the economic well-being of a small segment of rural America, but other programs such as education, job training and business expansion are also necessary to improve the situation in rural areas.

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