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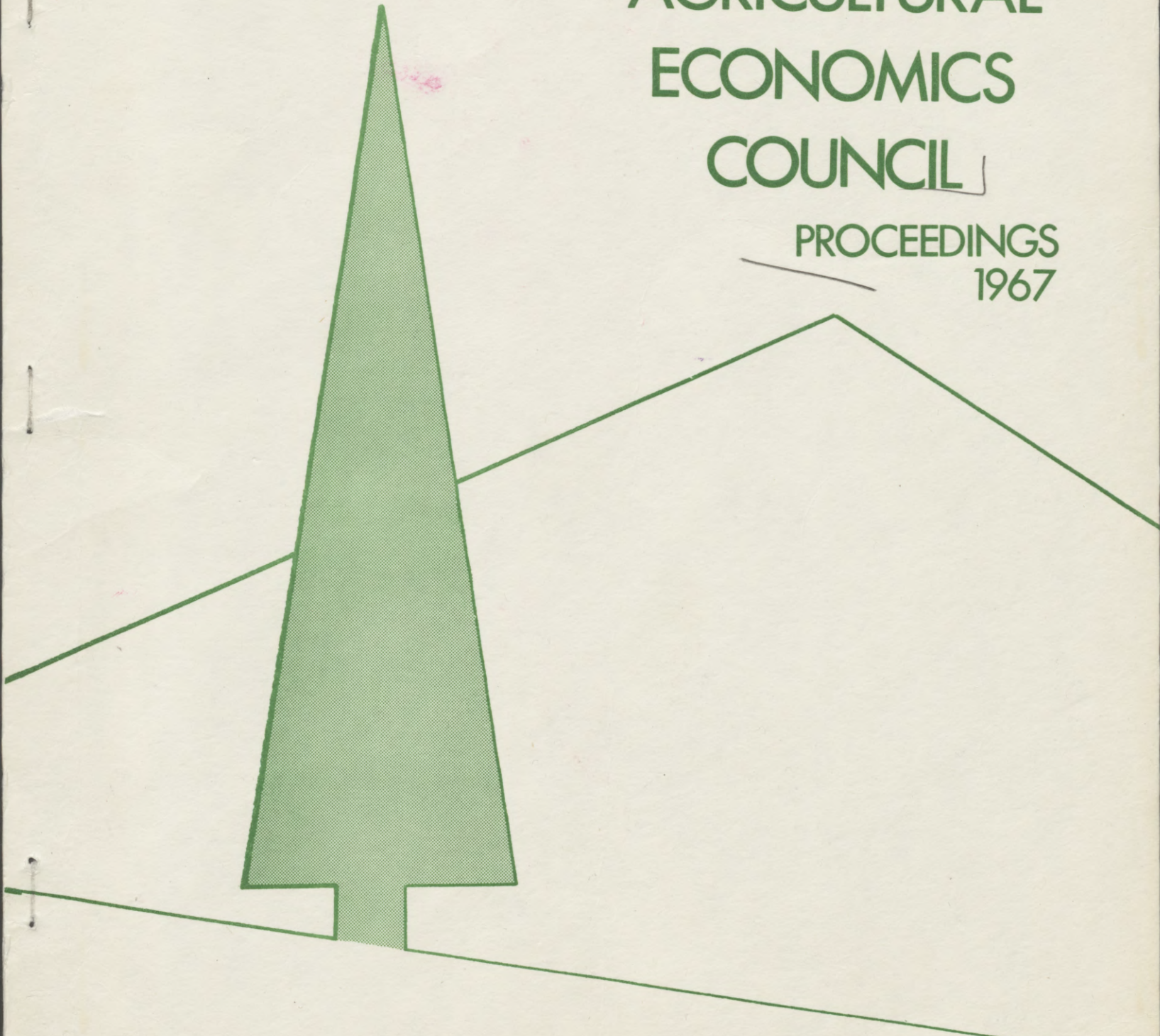
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1967 ANNUAL MEETING

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE
ORONO, MAINE

JUNE 26, 27, 28, 1967

ADJUSTMENTS BEING MADE WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS & ECONOMICS
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

H. B. Metzger

The Department of Agricultural Business and Economics acquired its present name in 1962 when it dropped its original title -- Agricultural Economics and Farm Management. This year the department voted to change its name to Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. There is no trustee approval as yet for this change in name. Nevertheless, the change or desire for change in name reflects adjustments which have taken place in the department during the past five years. The intent has been to highlight the ever widening range of activity encompassed by the department. This activity touches first on all the economic and social aspects of the food and fiber industry from farm to consumer and secondly, and more recently, on activity which encompasses the broad area of economic and social aspects of community and resource development. Unfortunately, our name has never reflected the Rural Sociology discipline which continues to flourish as an integrated part of the whole.

A recent departmental review indicated that the professional staff was about equally involved in subject matter dealing with (1) food and fiber marketing and (2) resource and community development. The future personnel needs of the department, highlighted in the review, gave high priority for staff to research human and resource development problems, and to provide business management services to aid resource development beyond the traditional agricultural processing and marketing firm approach.

So much for the broad picture. Here are some of the recent developments in teaching, research and extension.

Resident Instruction

Five years ago we updated our B.S. and M.S. programs and added two-year programs in business management. This past year we had 156 students in all programs, 88 in the two-year, 60 in the four-year, and 8 graduate students.

We will offer this fall a revised curriculum for the B.S. degree. It provides for a continued broad training but with more depth in agricultural economics and the humanities. Subject matter areas receiving more emphasis include production and resource economics, policy, and research methods. 1969 graduates will have 120 hours as the minimum degree requirement compared with 134 hours currently required.

Our Master's program has been strengthened to require 12 credits of required core work. Recent action on course designation segregates graduate and undergraduate students in this core. The Master's program attracts students interested in the resource field as well as the food production and marketing fields.

A major new development in the graduate area is a new program of professional training recently approved by the faculty. It is identified as Master of Agricultural Business and Economics. This is a non-thesis program which otherwise meets all the requirements of the M.S. degree.

Of particular note are new programs which are being jointly offered or coordinated through other branches of the University. These include:

1. a graduate program in Resource Utilization, jointly sponsored by the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences and the School of Forestry;
2. an introductory course in Econometrics, jointly offered by Agricultural Business and Economics and the School of Business Administration;
3. an interdepartmental major in International Affairs coordinated through a University Committee on International Affairs.

Finally, a step has been taken to provide closer working relationships with the School of Business Administration by having an exchange of representatives from our staffs at each faculty meeting.

Research

Our research efforts have been highlighted by a shift of major proportions into the resource field. This has taken the form of research and planning studies for the State and resulted in the development of an Outdoor Recreation Plan. Sub-regional input-output analyses and studies on the economic impact of land use changes, recreation facilities, and new highways have been completed or are underway. Significant studies of the social impact on communities of major installations such as Telestar and the proposed Lincoln-Dickey Dam project also have been undertaken. In addition we are embarking on an economic study of the shellfish industry.

Our efforts in agricultural research are being directed more along functional lines with production economics, business firm management, food distribution management, pricing, and demand as problem areas. Major efforts are being directed toward solving problems of alternative enterprises or alternative systems of producing, processing, and distributing food. Emphasis is being given to impacts of changing technology and resource availability on our agricultural industries.

We are concentrating our efforts within the agricultural sector with respect to commodity work--concerning ourselves primarily with potatoes, poultry and dairy.

A highlight of the adjustments in the research effort is the increased coordination taking place. We have a staff member working in a team effort with production scientists from the Department of Agricultural Engineering and the U.S.D.A. in the Potato Handling Research Center at Presque Isle. We are engaged jointly with the Food Processing and Agricultural Engineering departments in a poultry meat processing study and with an Extension Crop Specialist in a blueberry marketing study. We have a staff member from the University of Maine Law School in Portland engaged in a phase of a land-use project. The department recently has appointed, as Collaborator in residence, a member of the U.S.D.A. field staff in farm production economics.

Extension

In many ways the adjustments in Extension have been greater than elsewhere. A two-pronged movement of specialization in the commodity area and a concerted effort to focus on community and resource development problems has brought about marked changes. Of nine staff positions, only three are engaged directly with food production and marketing. The other six have community and resource development and public affairs assignments. These six staff members are involved in aiding individuals, groups, and communities solve social and economic development problems. This staff fills positions designated as community development specialist, resource development

specialist, extension sociologist, public affairs specialist, and recreation specialist. Except for the recreation specialist, who operates as a district specialist, these are state staff positions. All staff members work with county agent staffs, who are now devoting most of their time to community and resource development projects. In addition to the disciplines of economics and sociology, our staff now includes men trained or experienced in business management, public administration and education.

The range of activity in which the community and resource development staff is engaged is indicated by their participation in such projects as:

1. assisting selected communities in determining needs, establishing goals, and devising methods of achieving these goals;
2. assisting a community in planning to meet future recreation needs;
3. providing both individuals and town officials technical assistance on layout, and guidance in arranging financing, for campsites and other recreation facilities;
4. undertaking feasibility studies for individual and community recreation developments;
5. assisting local and regional planning boards in organizing, in procuring data, and developing and instituting plans;
6. consulting with individual businesses about management and operating problems of recreation or tourist facilities;
7. conducting leadership workshops for community, county and state leaders concerned with aging.

The publication of a monthly news release, Resource Development Highlights, is symptomatic of the departments commitment to aiding Maine people in using federal and state programs to further community and resource development.

The thrust of this work has not obscured the fact that our marketing and business management efforts associated with the food industry are also development in character. We continue very strong programs in both poultry and potato marketing and in a broadly conceived management approach in food production. The major adjustment here is the integrated nature of the work as it is coordinated with state specialists in the crop and livestock production fields and carried out through area specialists located in the counties. Our plans for the future are to continue these areas which serve commercial agriculture and to concern ourselves more with broad industry problems.