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A Statement from the Editors

We welcome you to the 1st Quarter, 2009 issue of *Choices*. You will find a timely theme and two interesting individual articles which present analyses of topics important to agricultural, food, rural, and environmental issues and policies.

The theme addresses how the current economic crisis and volatility in financial and commodity markets is likely to impact the agricultural sector from producers through the supply chain. Guest editor David Schweikhardt brings together seven articles covering topics ranging from the financial crisis and bailout efforts driving the macroeconomic environment, to farm level challenges in managing risk and obtaining credit, to the policy implications for the agricultural sector, and a proposal to mitigate future price volatility through a virtual grain reserve coordinated internationally to reduce impacts on poor consumers worldwide. Authors address questions about whether indeed we face greater uncertainty in agriculture's future, what farmers may need to do to deal with apparent increased instability in markets for their products and for the inputs they use, and policy issues needing attention.

A separate submitted article closely related to this theme analyzes the potential for changes in policy related to ethanol production to ease pressures in corn markets. The assumption is that it is desired to hold corn prices at lower but more predictable levels than experienced over the last

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Choices is the principal outreach vehicle of the Agricultural & Applied Economics Association (AAEA). Published quarterly, it is designed to provide current coverage regarding economic implications of food, farm, resource, or rural community issues directed toward a broad audience. *Choices* publishes thematic groupings of papers and individual papers. The broad themes we will repeatedly visit in *Choices* are agriculture and trade, resources and the environment, consumers and markets, agribusiness and finance, and rural and community issues. Submitted manuscripts are subject to peer review for publication consideration.

AAEA will also publish monthly *Policy Issues* articles addressing particularly timely topics with peer-reviewed, brief economic analysis of potential interest to those involved in the policy dialogue.

Editorial Communications

Proposed manuscripts, thematic proposals, and comments may be emailed to the editors: Theme and policy issues suggestions or submissions, send to walt@farmfoundation.org; Submitted articles, send to clement.ward@okstate.edu. Editorial communications may be sent to keoughwilson_239@msn.com.

year. A second submitted article is focused on structural change in agricultural production, with increasing size of operation to take advantage of scale and scope economies. The authors analyze the implications of farm consolidation, growth in size, diversification, and relationships to the policy environment. While the study

reported here focuses on agricultural operations in the state of Washington, implications are readily drawn for the entire United States.

We encourage submissions of proposals for future themed sets of papers, individual articles, and timely policy issues analyses. Submit theme proposals and policy issues propos-

als to Walter J. Armbruster at walt@farmfoundation.org, and individual papers for the quarterly *Choices* to Clement Ward at clement.ward@ok-state.edu. We look forward to working with you to address important economic and policy issues affecting food, farms, resources, and rural communities.