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NAREA Awards

Outstanding Master's Thesis Award

Targeting Food Aid to Improve Food Security

Erin Coniker Lentz

Cornell University

Advisor: Chris Barrett

In a climate of persisting food insecurity and increased budget constraints, effective targeting of food aid is increasingly important. This thesis presents two essays examining targeting's role in food security.

The first essay uses high-frequency panel data among Ethiopian and Kenyan pastoralists to test the efficacy of food aid targeting under different modalities, food aid's responsiveness to various covariate shocks, and its relationship to private transfers. We find, first, that self-targeting food-for-work indicator targeted free food distribution reaches the poor more effectively than community-based targeting. Second, that food aid flows respond mainly to readily observable rainfall measures and not to either covariate, community-level income or asset shocks. Third, that food aid does not appear to affect private transfers in any meaningful way.

The second essay assesses how decisions made at different points along the food aid distribution chain affect micro-level food security conditional on specifics of the transfer environment. By developing a holistic model of the tradeoffs faced when addressing food insecurity with public transfers, we investigate how to maximize the welfare of food-insecure households under different policy scenarios. With respect to policy mechanisms available to donors, lowering shipping costs by ending cargo preferences will substantially improve recipient welfare. Further, targeting emerges as the most important tool available to operational agencies. Each of these two policy points are more important for food security than determining the correct mixture of cash and in-kind aid.

Master's Thesis Award of Merit

An Evaluation of Demand Response in New York State's Wholesale Electricity Markets

Peter Andrew Cappers

Cornell University

Advisor: Richard Boisvert

This thesis identifies the conditions under which and quantifies how much society gains from integrating demand response directly into wholesale electricity markets and the level of participation that will bring about these improvements. Furthermore, it identifies the conditions under which the bulk power system is made more reliable

through the participation of demand response and the inducements necessary to achieve this improvement. To accomplish these goals, an econometric representation of New York's wholesale electricity markets' supply curves is developed in order to understand exactly how changes in load affect price.

Economic demand response is very sensitive to locational differences in the bulk power system. The simulation undertaken illustrates how a significant amount of demand response is needed in western New York to generate a positive change in net social welfare, under rather extreme conditions, whereas very little must be relied upon in New York City and Long Island, under much more

reasonable circumstances. From a reliability standpoint, demand response can play a vital role in accurately maintaining reserve margins provided the payment or tariff rate is allowed to fluctuate given the quantity of reserves needed. When a fixed rate is used instead, the reliability benefits from load curtailments are almost always less than the costs to achieve them.

Master's Thesis Award of Merit

Estimating Preferences for Quality-of-Life Attributes Using the Stated Choice Method: A Survey of Cape May County, New Jersey, Residents

Mary Jennison Kipp

The Pennsylvania State University

Advisors: Richard Ready and Ann Fisher

It is assumed that respondents to stated-choice surveys focus only on outcomes (i.e., combinations of attribute levels) described by hypothetical scenarios when making choice decisions. Information peripheral to that which is presented in the scenarios themselves should not influence choices. This study tests these assumptions about choice behavior by using a split-sample design in providing contextual information to survey respondents. In our survey, residents of Cape May County, New Jersey, were asked to choose between pairs of scenarios describing quality of life in the county 30 years into the future. Attributes used to describe quality of life in the hypothetical scenarios include habitat for birds, daily travel time, tap

water quality, flood risk, and local taxes, fees, and prices. Half of the respondents were told that these quality of life attributes would change as a result of poorly planned development, while the other half were told that the changes would result because of global warming stressors. Results show that respondents' choices and willingness to pay for each of the four non-monetary quality-of-life attributes do not differ across choices and treatments. This finding supports the founding assumptions of the stated-choice methodology that, when making choice decisions, respondents focus on outcomes described in scenarios and their preferences are constant with regards to the mechanism by which attribute levels change.

Distinguished Member Award

This award recognizes members who have made continuous and outstanding contributions to the Association, the region, and the profession. The award recognizes members for significant recent professional achievement in the context of an overall meritorious record. Recipients must be members in good standing and be nominated by three other members. A recipient can receive the award more than once, based on recent achievements.

Stephen Smith

Stephen Smith is a professor of agricultural and regional economics, and head of the Agricultural

Economics and Rural Sociology Department in Pennsylvania State University's College of Agri-

cultural Sciences. Dr. Smith was also director of Penn State's Center for Economic and Community Development, and coordinated the Community and Economic Development graduate program.

Dr. Smith received a bachelor's degree in international relations from the University of Pennsylvania in 1967. He served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia from 1967 to 1969, then went on to earn master's and doctoral degrees in agricultural economics from the University of Wisconsin in 1971 and 1974, respectively. In 1976 and 1977 he served as economic and resource planning analyst for the Wisconsin Office of State Planning and Energy. That was followed by nine years at the University of Idaho, where, in 1981, he received the Outstanding Faculty Award from the Associated Students of the University of Idaho. In 1986 he joined Penn State, assuming teaching and research responsibilities in U.S. and Pennsylvania rural development and international agricultural development.

Dr. Smith's research encompasses rural and regional economic change, economic development policy, and economic impact analysis, the role of the service sector, business location, and entrepreneurship. He was among the first researchers to examine the role of service industries in rural American communities. He has written or coauthored several book chapters and more than 33 refereed papers and journal articles, and delivered invited lectures at more than 50 national and international conferences.

In 1998 and 1999, Dr. Smith was a Senior Fulbright Scholar at the Institute for Peruvian Studies in Lima, Peru. He also has worked in Spain, as well as in Chile and several other Latin American countries.

Dr. Smith is past president of the Southern Regional Science Association, and is a member of the American Agricultural Economics Association, the Northeastern Agricultural and Resource Economics Association, and the Community Development Society.

NAREA Award for Outstanding Public Service Through Economics

This award was created to recognize and encourage contributions to the general public welfare. The intent is to recognize that agricultural, environmental, consumer, resource, or community development economics can be applied to solve important problems affecting the quality of life of the general public, and that such contributions may come outside the traditional, sometimes narrowly defined, contributions to research, teaching, or extension. The award may be given to anyone, including noneconomists and nonmembers of NAREA.

Thomas G. Johnson

Dr. Johnson has a joint appointment as the Frank Miller Professor of Agricultural Economics and Professor in the Harry S. Truman School of Public Affairs at the University of Missouri, Columbia. He is also Director of the Community Policy Analysis Center.

Dr. Johnson's areas of expertise include rural economic development, fiscal and economic impact analysis, local government finance, and transportation economics. His research includes interdisciplinary projects on issues such as bioenergy, land use, and transportation. Recent projects include one to develop decision support tools for Missouri's river ports, one to develop a comprehensive investment analysis system for the Missouri Department of Transportation, and another to help electrical co-ops determine the fea-

sibility of conversion to biopower production. He recently advised the government of Ukraine on changes to its agricultural and rural development policy, and is studying proposed changes to the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy.

In addition to being a founding member of the International Comparative Rural Policy Studies Consortium, which includes eight universities in Europe and North America, Dr. Johnson is a Fellow of the Southern Regional Science Association. He has served on the Editorial Council of the American Journal of Agricultural Economics and the Southern Journal of Agricultural Economics.

Journal Article of the Year for 2005

Achieving Environmental Objectives Under Reduced Domestic Agricultural Support and Trade Liberalization: An Empirical Application to Taiwan

(*ARER* Vol. 34, No. 1, April 2005: 16–31)

Hung-Hao Chang (Cornell University), Richard N. Boisvert (Cornell University), and David Blandford (Pennsylvania State University)

We focus on rice policy reform required for Taiwan's admission to the WTO, and examine the effects, theoretically and empirically, of the re-instrumentation of domestic policy needed to achieve environmental objectives when both positive and negative environmental externalities exist. Policies that treat non-commodity attributes in agriculture as secondary to existing aims, such as in-

come support, are unlikely to result in the desired supplies of environmental goods. Those supplies can be achieved at lower government and social costs using policy instruments to achieve environmental goals directly. Results are relatively insensitive to the social values assigned to environmental goods.