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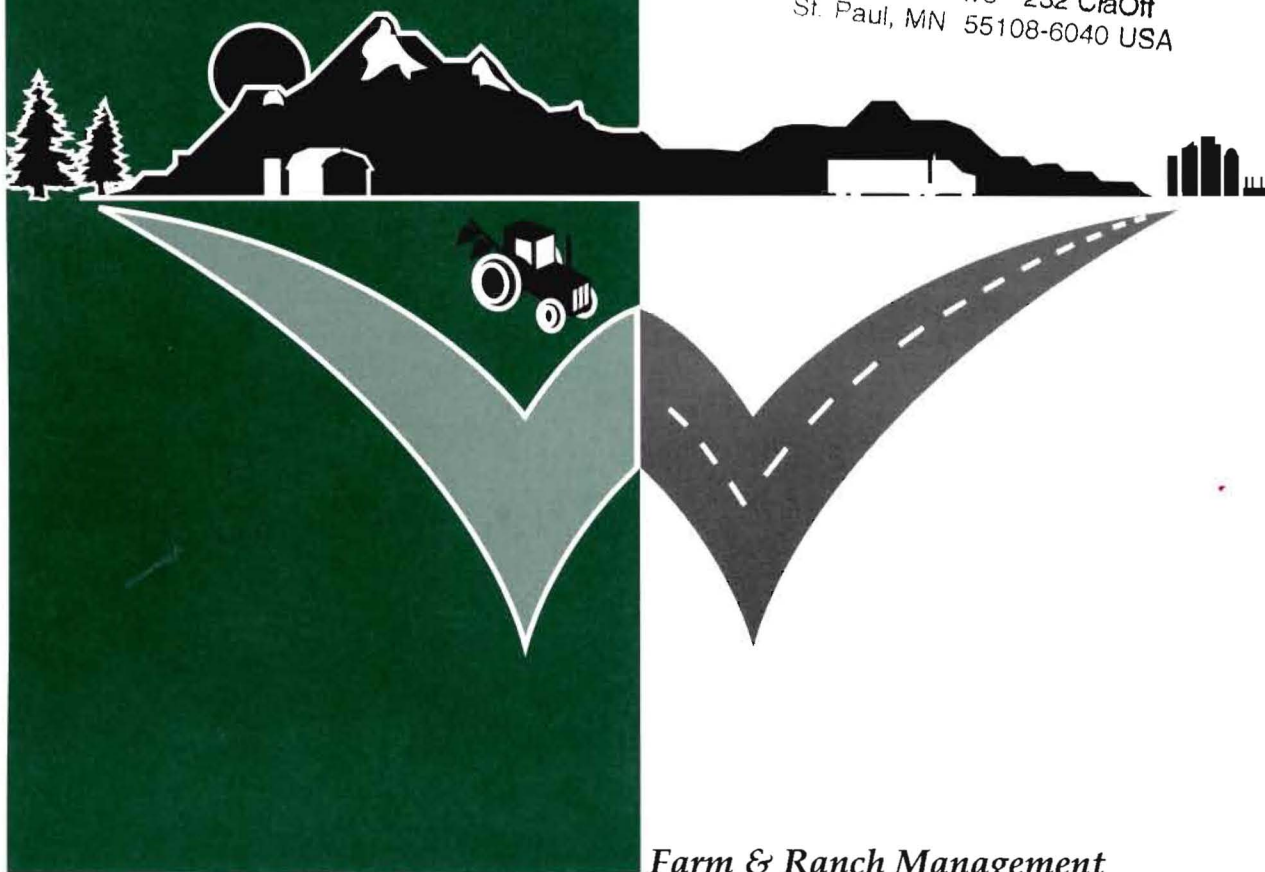
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Spring 2002: Volume 1, Number 1

A Journal of the
Western Agricultural Economics
Association

Western Economics Forum

Waite Library
Dept. of Applied Economics
University of Minnesota
1994 Buford Ave - 232 ClaOff
St. Paul, MN 55108-6040 USA



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WESTERN ECONOMICS FORUM

News from the Western Agricultural Economics Association

May 2002

Inside...

- 1 Presidential Note
- 2 Why Are Some Journals So Expensive?
- 3 Things You Need To Know
- 3 Officer Elections
- 8 Grass Roots Federal Land Management
Is This Devolution Really the Solution?
John Loomis
- 11 Dynamic Strategic Interaction: A Synthesis
of Modeling Methods
Timothy J. Richards
- 15 Industry Location Modeling: Extensions of
Plains Economic Targeting System
John Leatherman
- 19 The 2002 Farm Bill: What Does It Mean for
Western Agriculture?
James W. Richardson

PRESIDENTIAL NOTE

by Steve Blank

My, how time flies when you're having fun! It is hard to believe that the 2001-02 year is rapidly approaching its conclusion. The WAEA Executive Committee has been very busy (read as "having fun") this year because so many positive developments for the WAEA are in the works, as I reported in my last column. Now there are two important activities remaining before the year concludes: our election of officers and the annual meeting.

First, we need to elect a new slate of officers for the 2002-03 year. Information on those members standing for election is in this newsletter. I urge everyone to vote. Also, I encourage everyone to nominate people (or themselves) as possible candidates in future elections. An engaged membership is important for any association's health.



Next, the 2002 annual meeting will be held jointly with the AAEEA July 28-31 in Long Beach, California. It will be big – offering lots of bang for your registration buck. We have

a great program planned for you. The WAEA is offering its full program in addition to the AAEEA program. Details will be forthcoming from the AAEEA, but I want to alert you to highlights of the WAEA program.

To begin, WAEA Vice President Dillon Feuz did a great job in chairing the Selected Papers process and reports a program of 21 sessions that cover the entire range of interests for our members. Next, in-coming President Ray Huffaker will be presenting his Presidential Address, "Many are Called, but Few are Chosen." Alex McCalla will give the Fellows Address, "Liberalizing Agricultural Trade: Will it Ever be a Reality?"

Finally, there will be two WAEA Invited Paper Sessions. The first session is "Coordinating Science and Technology in the Agricultural Biotechnology Revolution," *Organizer and Moderator*: Steven Buccola, Oregon State University. *Papers and authors*: "The Role of Patents in Inducing Research to Produce Science and Technology: Case Studies in Rice Genomics and Rice Transformation Technologies" by Carl E. Pray and Anwar Naseem, Rutgers University; "Do Synergies Exist Between Basic and Applied Ag Biotech in Universities?" by Jeremy D. Foltz, University of Connecticut; "Information Pathways in Biotechnological Innovation: Golden Rice and Virus-Resistant Papaya" by Steven Buccola, Yin Xia, and Terri Lomax, Oregon State University; and "A Clearinghouse to Improve the Productivity of Intellectual Property Rights" by Greg Graff and David Zilberman, University of California, Berkeley.

The second session is "Farmland Prices as an Indicator of Competitiveness in the New Global Economy: Prospects for California and Western U.S. Agriculture," *Organizers*: Kenneth W. Erickson (USDA-ERS) and Ashok K. Mishra (USDA-ERS), *Moderator*: Ashok K. Mishra. *Papers and authors*: "California Farmland Markets: What's Happening at the 'Ground Level'?" by Gary Rudolf, American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers and Steven Wiyatt, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service; "Western U.S. Farmland Markets: A Farm Credit Perspective," by Allen Featherstone, Kansas State University; and "Estimating U.S. and Western Farmland Prices, Return on Assets, and Other Indicators of Agriculture's Financial Performance," by Charles Moss, University of Florida. *Discussant*: Jason Shogren, University of Wyoming.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the Long Beach meeting!

WHY ARE SOME JOURNALS SO EXPENSIVE?

Nearly all of us have noted the seemingly exorbitant rates some publishers charge institutions for journal subscriptions. The *Journal of Econometrics*, for example, charges libraries and other institutions \$2,152 for a yearly subscription. Yet *Econometrica* charges institutions a scant \$267/year. Why the discrepancies in institutional subscription rates?

Theodore C. Bergstrom, professor of Economics at the University of California, Santa Barbara, offers a plausible explanation for these discrepancies in a recent *Journal of Economic Perspectives* article titled "Free Labor for Costly Journals?" (You can download a copy gratis at Bergstrom's website:

<http://www.econ.ucsb.edu/~tedb/>).

Put tersely, Bergstrom's argument is that publishers of commercially owned journals are engaging in monopoly pricing of those journals. By contrast, journals owned by professional associations are priced more competitively or closer to production costs. One implication of the pricing scheme is that your institution's library must spend as much as 80% of its budget to acquire about one third of the 300 economics journals Bergstrom surveys. Conversely, only 10% of the budget would be needed to acquire about 60% of the more competitively priced journals.

The table below gives an idea of subscription rates for selected journals in agricultural economics.

Journal Title	Publisher	Annual Institutional Subscription Rate	Institutional Rate for Developing Countries	Total Number of SSCI Citations ^a
Agricultural Economics	Elsevier	\$634	\$634	87
European Rev. of Ag. Econ.	Oxford Univ. Press	\$255	\$255	144
Australian J. Ag. & Res. Econ.	Blackwell	\$234	\$215	19
Amer. J. of Ag. Economics	AAEA/Blackwell	\$225	\$112	1,812
Canadian J. of Ag. Econ.	Ag. Inst. of Canada	\$97	\$97	208
Review of Ag. Economics	Blackwell	\$83	\$24	58
J. of Ag. and Applied Econ.	S AEA	\$70	\$70	29
J. of Agricultural Economics	Ag. Econ. Society	\$60	\$60	220
J. of Ag. and Resource Econ.	WAEA.	\$44	\$44	N.A.
Ag. and Res. Econ. Review	Cornell Univ. Press	\$15	\$15	2

^a SSCI citations are total numbers of citations in the *Social Science Citation Index* for 1998.

Source: Bergstrom's spreadsheet accessed at <http://www.econ.ucsb.edu/~tedb/Journals/listkey.html>, March 6, 2002, and various publishers' websites.

Bergstrom's website contains more information on publishers of economics and other academic disciplines.

Gary D. Thompson, Editor, *JARE*



WHAT'S NEW

The Western Forum by email!

In addition to the new format and content of our newsletter. The Western Forum, we have decided to move to a new system of distribution and delivery for those of you interested. The 2002 membership form included an option to receive the newsletter by email. If you did not notice that option, or are interested in changing to email delivery, please send a message to Dawn Thilmany, Secretary-Treasurer at thilmany@lamar.colostate.edu.

JARE Editors

As mentioned in past newsletters, Gary Thompson and his editorial team at the University of Arizona will complete their

terms as editors with the December 2003 issue of JARE. That means it is time to select a new editor or team of editors for this important leadership role. Persons interested in serving as JARE Editor(s) should contact Ray Huffaker at huffaker@wsu.edu or Steve Blank at (530) 752-0823 or sblank@primal.ucdavis.edu.

Membership

As of March 31st, we have over 700 members. Thanks to each of you for your membership and support...we hope you promote your membership and the quality of our Journal to your colleagues, so that we can represent an even greater share of agricultural and resource economists.

OFFICER ELECTIONS

The following people have been nominated and have agreed to stand for election. We appreciate the willingness of these individuals to serve the Association:

President – E. Bruce Godfrey and Clement E. Ward

Vice President – Gary Brester and Rhonda Skaggs

Directors – Joe Parcell, Tom Marsh, Larry W. Van Tassell, and Larry Janssen

Enclosed is a ballot for all individuals that Dawn Thilmany has record of having paid dues for 2002. If you believe this is an error please let her know. This is especially important for those individuals who may have paid WAEA dues through AAEA.

We welcome any suggestions or nominations for future President, Vice-President and Board of Directors candidates.

You may cast your ballot via e-mail by sending Dawn your preference (thilmany@lamar.colostate.edu) with the number in the upper right-hand corner of your ballot. Ballots are due JUNE 15th.

Candidates for President:

E. Bruce Godfrey

Bruce Godfrey is professor of Economics at Utah State University. He received his PhD from Oregon State University and was on the faculty at the University of Idaho before joining the faculty at USU. He has been a member of WAEA for more than 30 years. He has served as secretary-treasurer, been a member of the editorial council, a member of the WAEA council, selected papers chair and was in charge of local arrangements for the 2001 summer meeting. He has also served on several WAEA committees and has received teaching and extension awards from WAEA.

Bruce has taught, done research and conducted extension programs throughout his career. He has taught most of the ag and resource economics courses offered at USU. Extension programs and research in the areas of farm/ranch management and finance coupled with work in public land policy are currently his primary areas of focus.

WAEA Direction

The financial position of WAEA and the professional reputation of JARE are two of the major strengths of WAEA at the present time. Past and present editors of JARE have done an excellent job of providing a journal that has a high professional reputation. Recruitment and selection of a new editor(s) is needed to maintain the high standards of the journal. The proposed project of digitizing past issues of JARE should receive high priority to make this product of the association more widely available via the web and/or on CD. I also believe the submission of more articles that focus on western issues should be encouraged. The initiation of the Western Economics Forum (an electronics and newsletter based publication) represents a new initiative that has my enthusiastic support.

The annual meeting is always a highlight. I have enjoyed meeting with the larger associations (AAEA and WEAI) but, some of the best meetings I remember have been when we have met independently. I believe an independent meeting should be held at least every third year. The presence of WAEA must also be very evident when we meet with a larger organization. Annual meetings that are not held with a larger group should be held at attractive sites that may not be able to accommodate larger groups such as AAEA. I also believe that WAEA sponsored activities should focus on issues that are of importance or are unique to the western states and provinces. I strongly favor a change in the constitution concerning the selection process for papers presented at the annual meetings. Reviewed abstracts were used in 2000-2002 instead of "finished papers" as outlined in the constitution. This has increased discussion of

the papers presented and should allow graduate students to be more actively involved in paper sessions. Some review and winnowing is needed but, I favor a high acceptance rate and policies that will encourage more people to participate. I also favor a proposal that would give an award at the annual meeting to members of the association who have made a lasting professional contribution. This might be a life time achievement or a WAEA fellow award. WAEA membership is dominated and past participation at the meetings has been primarily by those who are associated with an academic institution. Efforts should be encouraged to involve those employed by non academic organizations and firms.

Clement E. Ward

Clement E. Ward is a Professor and Extension Economist, Department of Agricultural Economics, Oklahoma State University. Education: B.S. Iowa State University 1966, M.S. Kansas State University 1971, Ph.D. Kansas State University 1974. Experience: Agricultural Economist, Farmer Cooperative Service, USDA 1974-78; Associate Professor, Professor, Oklahoma State University 1978-present, Interim Department Head, June-December 1999; Subject matter interest: Livestock-meat marketing and pricing; Refereed journal articles: 36 in 12 journals, including *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, *Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*, *Review of Agricultural Economics*, *Agribusiness*, *Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics*; Other publications: 1 book, 4 book chapters; >70 extension fact sheets and circulars, >40 conference proceedings; Papers presented: >60; Extension program: spoken at >20 national conventions/conferences, >50 regional/state conventions/conferences, and conducted >75 *Fed Cattle Market Simulator* workshops; Awards: Oklahoma State University, *Elmo Baumann Distinguished Professorship* 1999; Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, *Outstanding Team Award* 1987, 1988, 1997; American Agricultural Economics Association, *Distinguished Extension Program (Group) Award* 1997; Western Agricultural Economics Association, *Outstanding Extension Program (Group) Award* 2000, 1997, 1995; Southern Agricultural Economics Association, *Distinguished Extension Program* 1993; Significant professional service: Western Agricultural Economics Association Secretary-Treasurer 1992-95, Elected director 1986-88, Council member 1982-86.

WAEA Vision

Our Association has a respected, quality journal, conducts worthwhile, varied meetings, is financially strong with

relatively stable membership, and has several committed leaders. My role will be to provide continued leadership in these areas. I support the Association meeting independently on occasion as well as periodically with the American and Canadian agricultural economics associations and the Western economics association. Our meetings should continue offering something to agricultural economists in various positions, teaching, extension,

research, industry, and government. Two areas in which we can improve are increased communication to members and an enhanced web site for members' use and information. The leadership team over the next couple years will need to select another quality team of *JARE* editors, establish guidelines for the WAEA Fellows program, and monitor our service contract with the AAEA for limited secretary-treasurer functions.

Candidates for Vice President:

Gary Brester

Gary Brester is a Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University. He received his B.S. and M.S. degrees from Montana State University, and Ph.D. from North Carolina State University.

Dr. Brester co-chaired the 1997 WAEA Selected Papers Committee, served as a WAEA Director from 1999-2001, and is a member of the *JARE* Editorial Council and *Choices* Editorial Advisory Board.

WAEA Direction

"The WAEA must continue to make significant contributions to economic education of policy-makers, agricultural producers, agribusiness managers, and consumers. We must help these groups develop their economic thought processes so that they critically consider societal issues. The WAEA can contribute to this educational challenge by maintaining the high scholarly standards of the *JARE*, enhancing professional development, improving member teaching capabilities, extending research and outreach efforts to agribusinesses, and improving the quality of our communications with non-economists. The WAEA must continually evaluate and respond to societal economic education needs by using our comparative advantage of producing high-quality, unbiased, research-based output. Specifically, I believe that the WAEA will need to provide monetary compensation to future *JARE* editors/editorial teams if we are to successfully compete for critical scarce resources and maintain the high standards set by previous editors/editorial teams. I am in favor of a three-year cycle of annual meetings in which we share meeting venues with the AAEA and *WEA* in two-out-of-three years. I would like to see the WAEA hold its own annual meeting every third year at a family-oriented, resort destination (e.g., Lake Tahoe, NV; Big Sky, MT; Aspen, CO; Coeur d'Alene, ID; an Alaskan

cruise ship). Finally, the WAEA should sponsor a low-cost, quasi-formal employment center at our own annual meetings and when we meet with the *WEA* to encourage graduate student meeting participation and improve the efficiency of our labor markets."

Rhonda Skaggs

Rhonda Skaggs is a Professor of Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Business at New Mexico State University. She received her B.S. and M.S. from Colorado State University, and her Ph.D. from Utah State University. She was employed as a Research Associate at the University of Wyoming, and has been with NMSU since Fall 1989. Dr. Skaggs has served the WAEA as a Council Member (since 1995), Director (1998 – 2000), Chair of the Awards Committee (1999), author of articles in the *JARE*, and reviewer for WAEA Selected Papers (2000).

WAEA Direction

The WAEA is my professional organization of choice. My association with the WAEA has been both personally and professionally rewarding. The *Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics* has an excellent and well-deserved reputation, and I believe that the journal should continue to serve the interests of the western agricultural economics profession. Membership in the WAEA has declined over several years, largely due to reductions in faculty numbers at several departments in the region. Unfortunately, the WAEA is not the professional organization of choice for many agricultural economists at western universities. Many of our co-workers do not perceive the WAEA to be an organization of their peers. If elected, I will work to spark new interest in the organization among our non-member colleagues.

Candidates for Director:

Joe Parcell

Joe Parcell is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Missouri. He received his B.A. in Mathematics from the University of Northern Iowa, and his M.S. and PhD in Agricultural Economics from Kansas State University. Dr. Parcell's WAEA activities include publications in the *JARE*; serving as a *JARE* journal reviewer; selected paper reviewer for, moderator at, and presenter at WAEA meetings; and involvement with the Young Professionals in Agriculture Economics Conference. He has been a member of the WAEA since 1995.

Tom Marsh

Tom Marsh is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Kansas State University. He earned a BA from Carroll College (1985) and MS in Mathematics and Applied Economics from Montana State University (1991). From 1991-1994, he worked as a research economist for the Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest Laboratory. In 1998, he completed a PhD in Agricultural Economics from Washington State University. His activities include WAEA Executive Council (2001-2002), coauthor of *JARE* and selected papers, session chair, and reviewer of *JARE* and selected papers.

WAEA Direction

The WAEA and its two major functions, the *JARE* and WAEA annual meetings, possesses the institutional background and financial means to create opportunities for integrating academics, industry, and decision makers. The current membership of the WAEA includes numerous individuals that have been recognized nationally and internationally for their contribution to theory, advancement in the application of theory to address recognized problems, and for their delivery of credible and relevant information to clientele. Thus making the WAEA one of the most respected regional associations in the world. To take advantage of these member qualities the WAEA must identify new methods to disseminate knowledge to a broader constituent base, while minimizing the costs of these activities. First, the WAEA should look to establish a practical, peer-reviewed, web-based journal targeted at enabling the process for interaction of academics and constituents. To assess relevance, the web-based journal would provide for real-time discussion forums between the author and readers and evaluation of article content by readers. Second, as the number of faculty in individual departments decline and specialties develop, the opportunity to enhance one's social capital is limited. The WAEA can play a role in identifying interest areas, and mediating the formation of academic clusters for establishing low cost linkages to enhance social capital across locations on a national and international level. This will be especially important for the development of young faculty who enter the profession in a time when many departments face financial constraints, possibly straining their involvement in traditional types of interaction, i.e., professional meetings. I believe that by beginning to investigate these opportunities now the WAEA can develop a niche for which to expand the WAEA membership to include more industry persons and decision makers, as well as to academics looking for a means to interact through non-traditional modes.

WAEA Vision

The appeal of WAEA is its focus on agricultural and resource economics in the Western US and Canada. Individual contributions on these and other topics are effectively communicated in paper sessions at annual meetings and articles in the *JARE*. However, future success of the WAEA depends on - among other factors - attracting and retaining new professionals. To attract new members it is important to provide means that successfully integrate students (undergraduate and graduate) and new professionals (industry, academia, and government) into the WAEA meetings, whether their interests are traditional (teaching, research, and extension) or less traditional (job searching, administrative, management, and accreditation). For instance, incorporating regional competitions for student academic bowls or case study teams may be an option. Also, I support alternatives that offer more opportunities for industry professional at annual meetings such as incorporating industry symposiums or workshops. Finally, I support holding periodic joint meetings of the WAEA with the AAEA, WEA, and other associations. This offers more opportunity and better exposure from which to add potential members to the WAEA and it provides WAEA members valuable interaction with other associations.

Larry W. Van Tassell

Larry Van Tassell is Department Head and Professor of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology at the University of Idaho. Larry was previously a faculty member at the University of Wyoming and the University of Tennessee. He received his Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics at Texas A&M University in 1987 and his M.S. in Agribusiness and B.S. in Animal Science from Brigham Young University. Larry has served the WAEA as a Council Member 1992-1995; Thesis Awards Committee Member 1994; Thesis Awards Committee Chairperson, 1995; *JARE*

contributor and reviewer; Selected Paper contributor and reviewer; and Selected Papers Committee member, 2000.

The WAEA exists to serve its membership. Along with providing the organizational structure for publishing the *JARE*, the WAEA needs to provide ample opportunity for members to associate with one another and to create synergism among institutions. Members need to decide how to do this—by adding discussion or instructional sessions at the annual meetings, or through another venue. The WAEA council is the key for bringing the membership desires and needs to the association leadership. Council members need to actively solicit input from their department members to a common set of questions to be discussed at each council meeting. Graduate student participation, both M.S. and Ph.D., should also be encouraged by providing activities such as a graduate student paper competition. For example, graduate students could present papers during regular WAEA meeting sessions and be judged by committee members assigned to attend those sessions. Council members should also solicit information from graduate students to determine how the WAEA can best meet their needs and facilitate their integration into the association.

Larry Janssen

Larry Janssen is a Professor in the Department of Economics at South Dakota State University. He received his BS and Ph.D. in agricultural economics at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln and MS in agricultural

economics from Oklahoma State University. He was recently a visiting professor to Chungnam National University in South Korea. He currently teaches classes in agricultural finance, economic development, and research methodology and conducts research on agricultural land market and agro-environmental policy topics. WAEA activities include prior service as a Director (1990-92) and Council member (1987 – 1990), author and reviewer of selected papers, session moderator, and article reviewer for the *JARE*, service on WAEA Outstanding Master's Thesis committee, and SDSU Econ Dept. planning committee for hosting the 1995 WAEA meetings in Rapid City, SD.

WAEA Direction

I have been a member of WAEA and AAEA for over 25 years and have participated in many annual meetings and activities of both Associations. The *JARE*, annual meetings and awards program continue as the major "products" of the WAEA. The *JARE* editors have performed a commendable job of increasing the number of articles published and maintaining a high quality journal. I always enjoy participating in the WAEA annual meetings but I am concerned about maintaining the viability of separate summer meetings in an era of rising meeting costs, declining travel budgets, and competition with the AAEA meetings. The WAEA meetings, when separate from AAEA meetings, should include regional topics and activities of interest to members that are distinctly different from the content of AAEA meetings. This should include a major focus on the many economic issues facing the western U.S. and Canada. I would like to obtain information from members of the key characteristics needed to boost attendance and participation in WAEA meetings.

