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# CHOICES '86

*The Magazine of Food, Farm, and Resource Issues*

*Third Quarter 1986*







**T**he profession of agricultural economics is issue-oriented. From its beginning some 75 years ago the profession has been called upon to contribute understanding, information, and advice to help individuals and organizations make wise decisions and to help society select among alternative policies and construct programs to carry out the policies that society selects.

Thus, it is appropriate for the AAEA to foster effective anticipation of issues of the future. One major step consistent with this philosophy was an August 1985 conference of agricultural economists from throughout the country organized by Jim Hildreth, Managing Director of the Farm Foundation. One purpose of the conference was to identify critical future issues important to society and to the work of agricultural economists.

The 175 agricultural economists who participated in the conference identified 5 critical issues. These issues will be printed in the next edition of CHOICES, and we will be inviting your comments on our list (we'd like to see your list, too). To get a head start, write for a complimentary copy of AAEA's publication *Critical Issues Facing Agricultural America in the 21st Century*. Write to: AAEA Business Office, Heady Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011.





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# GALLERY

## About the authors



**John Schnittker**

John A. Schnittker, a long-time observer of U.S. and international agriculture, describes the environment for agricultural policy for the coming years and assesses the pressures for changes in these policies. He is a former Deputy Secretary of Agriculture and has been a Washington Consultant for the past 14 years.



**Jesse Helms**

The Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Jesse Helms speaks candidly about farm commodity policy—how the 1985 Farm Bill marks a watershed and the many legislative challenges that remain. He is interviewed by CHOICES Editor Lyle Schertz.



**Richard Sexton and Terri Sexton**

Richard Sexton is Assistant Professor at the University of California, Davis, and Terri Sexton is Assistant Professor at the University of Kansas and Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of California, Davis. In this second installment on the taxation of co-operatives they argue that co-op tax treatment does not harm the economy.



**Richard Dunford**

Richard W. Dunford, an Associate Professor at Washington State University, focuses on taxes, a topic which has seized the attention of all of us. He describes the special rules that have been applicable to farming and presents a tabular comparison of the House and Senate bills before going to conference.



**D. Gale Johnson**

D. Gale Johnson of the University of Chicago focuses his commentary on population with particular reference to lower income countries. He describes an emerging new consensus that the effects of population growth upon economic development are very modest. They may be negative or positive, but they are far less important than other conditions created by people.



**Lauren Soth**

Lauren Soth, a former editor of the Editorial pages of the Des Moines Register, continues as a regular columnist on farm and rural issues for the Register and other newspapers. He questions over-reliance on numbers in economic communications and points out that to make choices you need argument.