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Francis M. Epplin

Lifetime Achievement Award

Francis Epplin is a professor and Jean & Patsy Neustadt Chair in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Oklahoma State University. He received a B.S. in agricultural education from Southern Illinois University in 1970. After a tour of duty with the U.S. Army in Vietnam, he completed his M.S. in agricultural industries from Southern Illinois University in 1973. He served as an instructor in the Department of Agriculture at Western Illinois University for two years. He then began a Ph.D. program at Iowa State University where he worked with Earl Heady and completed his Ph.D. in 1979. He has been at Oklahoma State ever since, advancing through the ranks to the chaired position he holds today.

Dr. Epplin has lived the land-grant mission. He contributes to all three legs of the land grant triangle and his contributions are strengthened by the multidisciplinary facets of his work. He is the ultimate team member who enhances the impact of any team in which he participates. He has been involved in multidisciplinary grants totaling several million dollars. He has been a major part of the team that brought winter canola production to Oklahoma. He was working on biofuels long before it became trendy.

In terms of publication numbers, Dr. Epplin has published more than 60 refereed journal articles, most of which are coauthored by colleagues or graduate students. Less than half of Dr. Epplin's articles are in traditional outlets for agricultural economists. His publications reflect his multidisciplinary work with publications in *Agronomy Journal*, *Journal of Animal Science*, *Biomass and Bioenergy*, and *Weed Technology*. The distribution of his work among journals outside of his home discipline reflects his contributions to the land-grant mission. Dr. Epplin has 21 articles published in crop and soil science journals, five in animal science journals, 11 in agricultural and/or biomass systems journals, and several in



management-oriented journals. He also has authored several book chapters, more than 50 journal abstracts, and numerous selected papers for professional meetings, again with an impressive theme of multidisciplinary contributions. Dr. Epplin has presented more than two dozen invited papers at professional meetings of production scientists including agronomists, agricultural engineers, animal scientists, and entomologists. His record of excellence includes strong evidence of his successful multidisciplinary work.

While he remains a bit of a skeptic, Dr. Epplin's perspective on the economics of bio-fuel production is highly sought after. He has presented invited papers and served on discussion panels on the topic both nationally and internationally, including presentations at conferences sponsored by the National Science Foundation and by the Foreign Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. Dr. Epplin is often the only economist on the program, reiterating the respect that colleagues outside

of his discipline have for him. Perhaps because of his agricultural background, his work seeks to reflect reality. Unlike much of the other cellulosic ethanol research, his research considers the increased cost from concentrated seasonal demand for equipment and that you “cannot safely bale biomass when it is too wet.”

Colleagues in extension value Dr. Epplin’s work as well. Though he has no formal extension appointment, he and colleagues have won two awards for their contributions to educational materials related to no-till from the American Society of Agronomy. He has also given numerous presentations to producers regarding the economics of canola production in Oklahoma.

As a teacher, he is simply one of the best. The student evaluations for his courses are extremely high. The graduate students at Oklahoma State used to give an award for outstanding teacher, but after Dr. Epplin won the award four years in a row, the graduate students decided to retire the award. He received the Phoenix Award at Oklahoma State in recognition of being the outstanding graduate teacher of the year. He has also been recognized with the Distinguished Graduate Teaching Award by the American Agricultural Economics Association. Dr. Epplin has served on the Graduate Exam Committee, the Graduate Recruitment

and Admissions Committee, and as the advisor for the Agricultural Economics Graduate Student Association for much of his career.

He also advises 20–40 undergraduate students each year. He is an outstanding advisor and his efforts were recognized with the Outstanding Undergraduate Advisor Award in 2007. His specialty is transfer students and others who may need a little extra help in making it to graduation.

He is a dependable departmental and university servant on committees. He has chaired numerous departmental committees, including multiple terms as graduate chair. His service on the Athletics Council came at a critical time for Oklahoma State. His committee recommended numerous reforms.

Dr. Epplin has adopted the Southern Agricultural Economics Association (SAEA) as his primary professional association and has rarely missed a meeting during his career. He has coauthored 46 papers that were selected for presentation at SAEA meetings. He and colleagues have presented six posters at SAEA meetings and three of these received awards. He and co-authors received the SAEA award for outstanding journal article in the *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics* in 2011. He has served on the SAEA Ph.D. Dissertation Award Committee and is a frequent reviewer of SAEA selected paper proposals.