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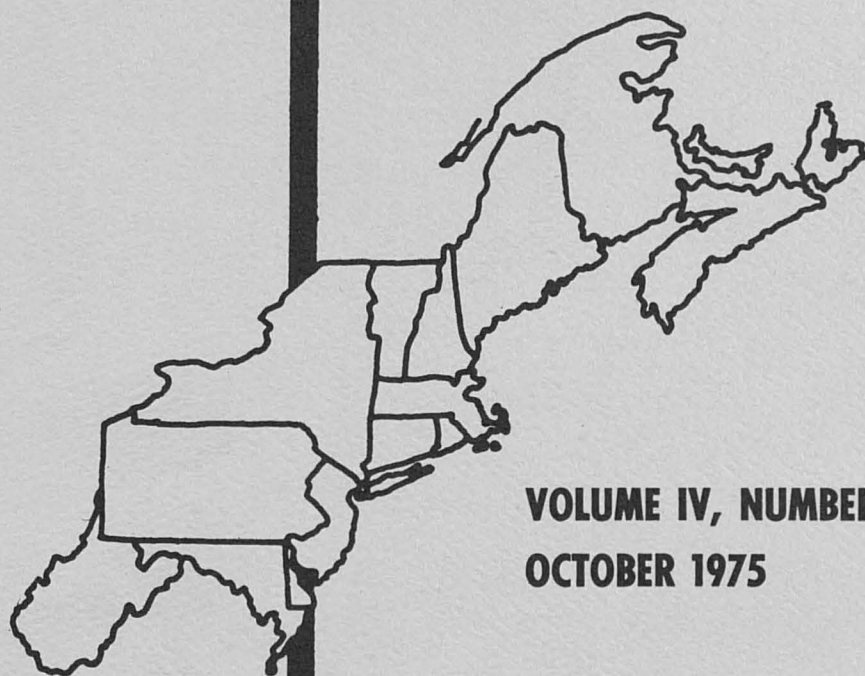
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# **JOURNAL OF THE**

## **Northeastern Agricultural Economics Council**

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Presidential Remarks

Kenneth D. McIntosh  
Chairperson and Professor  
Division of Resource Management  
West Virginia University

As President of the Northeastern Agricultural Economics Council, I will take this opportunity to say a few words concerning our Council; its past, present and future status as an organization.

Approximately five years ago, the New England Council was expanded into a regional association that extends from the Maritime Provinces of Canada to West Virginia. In my judgment it was a wise move to expand the Council into a broader regional group creating a relatively large pool of professional talents in agricultural economics that could assemble for discussion of problems which are common to the northeastern area. The marriage is approximately five years old and during this feeling-our-way period, we have made remarkable progress as a regional association. Some of the most solid evidence of our progress relate to:

1. The trust which has developed between small and large departments throughout the Northeast. A few years ago there was considerable concern that the smaller departments would be "gobbled up" by the larger ones. I detect that this concern has dissipated and we no longer spend any mental time with respect to that matter.
2. Our journal has developed into a very respectable document which has nationwide coverage. Libraries and economists are aware of this journal and becoming subscribers.
3. The quality of our papers has increased remarkably. At each meeting more papers are received than could possibly be given during the session periods. Therefore, the quality has increased as a result of "sifting and winnowing" among the papers to obtain those with the highest quality.
4. Younger members of our profession and graduate students throughout the region have obtained an outlet for their perspectives through this regional association. This is an alternative outlet to the American Agricultural Economics Association. Furthermore, it is an organization where one can express himself and have professional

peer evaluation of such utterances. This is a healthy process for members in the agricultural economics profession in the northeast and such dialogue should be encouraged and promoted.

5. Our membership has grown to approximately 300 to 325 members. When we reflect backward this represents a significant increase but we should not become self-satisfied. To assist in avoiding the eroding effects of complacency, a Membership Committee has been appointed to review our total membership and to make suggestions with respect to processes for maintaining and increasing our numbers.

At this time, I remind you that favorable trends with respect to growth in program and growth in membership carry with them what we call built-in managerial problems. You cannot isolate yourself from them. As an organization grows internal management problems increase. It was true last year, this year and next year will be no exception. With increasing members formal procedures become a necessity and must be a part of our thinking process. Second, increased numbers demand that our forward planning for lodging, for meeting facilities, for food services, for registration, etc. be done earlier and more systematically; programs must be developed in advance and agendas prepared early. Otherwise, as our membership grows, we will find housing foul-ups, facility mix-ups and program interruptions of various kinds. Third, the need for coordinated and integrated program development between the host institution and the president-elect becomes more acute. This places a heavy burden on our president-elect and it will be especially true in the coming year as the host institution will also be preparing for the annual AAEEA meeting. Fourth, what about activities for wives and children if our annual meeting continues to be part professional and part social? We should think about this matter and discuss it at a business meeting. After all, it does take extra effort to provide those non-professional activities for our family members. Fifth, policies concerning papers and review procedures will need to be more explicitly stated or at least well understood by all the membership. Our editor has noted that he and the editorial board will be drafting a statement of editorial procedures for the executive committee to consider at their winter meeting. This does not mean the executive committee will be delineating editorial policy. Simply stated, Wally will present a statement of current editorial procedures to the executive committee. However, please remember that with more sections, more papers and peer review the rules of publication and editorial policy and procedure need to be refined and explicitly stated. Sixth, what type of annual program? Is it to be strictly professional, strictly social, or some blend of the two? We could alternate ... one year strictly social, one year strictly professional. You must remember that we are a professional association. We are too large to meet at one motel and expect adequate facilities for the

meeting and for family members. We must resolve this matter during the next year or two. Seventh, as individual members, we must keep our dues paid and we must bear the cost of publishing that which we create. If we aren't willing to do this our organization will be confronted with financial problems every year. Eighth, over the past three years we have had three themes for our sectional meetings. We need a change. Could I be bold enough to suggest that we hear about collective bargaining and unionization among professionals? We have some experience in the Northeast with faculty unionization among professionals. We should draw upon that experience. There are institutions in the Northeast where unionization is not far down the road and they could benefit by hearing an invited paper. What about student credit hours? Is there anyone in this room who is not aware that resources are allocated on the basis of student credit hours of instruction? It is important for your college and mine. We need a section or forum for discussion of instructional programs, courses, curriculums, professional development and training of agricultural economists. With declining student numbers and credit hours of instruction there is much pressure to cut back on instructional resources. We need a forum to discuss these matters even though the section may be small with few in attendance. When you stop and think about training your own replacement, instructional programs take on a new perspective.

At this point, I would suggest that we explore means for specifically recognizing and presenting awards for outstanding instructional and extension efforts by agricultural economists in the Northeast. Such awards could be in the areas of general agricultural economics, natural resources, rural development, community development or land economics. If such recognition is not given by the Northeastern Agricultural Economics Council, who will give it? As Dr. Stanton mentioned at the Executive Committee meeting, if there is someone in this region who is being nominated for fellow of the AAEA, it is incumbent upon us to provide documentation for the nomination. If we believe that the nominee deserves the title of Fellow we should be willing to assist in the provision of documentary evidence.

We do have unfinished planning with respect to programs. Consumer and student interests warrant a place on our program over the next year or two. I suspect that each of us could benefit by listening to the perspectives of different consumer groups. Occasionally our students need a neutral arena to tell us how well or poorly we are carrying out our instructional and research programs. A mini-section might not be enough but it would be a start. At this point, I will close the chapter on suggestions for future programs and activities.

We do have unfinished business for the years ahead. We need to plan our programs with closer attention to details and activities, adopt some new themes, expand upon past themes, invite new participants, create new awards, be professional in our financial operations and reach a decision on the type of annual meeting.

These are random remarks but I do hope you will take a few minutes before our next annual meeting for deliberation. I thank all of you for the opportunity of serving as President and President-elect. My thanks especially to the members of the West Virginia delegation for participating in the regional association and for their assistance over the past three years.