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## Abstracts of Organized Symposia

## MICROCOMPUTER USES AND APPLICATIONS IN NORTHEASTERN AGRICULTURE

Coordinator: Pradeep Ganguly, University of Maryland (Adjunct)  
and the State of Maryland (DECD/Research)

Participants: Robert L. Christensen, University of Massachusetts;  
G. Art Hussey, Northeast Computer Institute;  
H. Don Tilmon, University of Delaware;  
John W. Wysong, University of Maryland

The objectives of this symposium were:

1. To present an overview of microcomputer uses and agricultural software developments in the Northeast;
2. To present sample programs designed for Northeastern agriculture;
3. To evaluate risk management with the aid of microcomputers;
4. To present an overview of the objectives of the Northeast Computer Institute.

The All-Risk Crop Insurance Evaluation (ARCIE) program, developed by Steve Griffin at Texas A&M University, was presented by H. Don Tilmon. The purpose of this program is to assist farmers in their analysis of crop insurance as a risk management tool. Tilmon examined the possible applications and usefulness in the Northeast.

"Dairy 2 - A Microcomputer Program for Dairy Crop Management," developed by Pradeep Ganguly and John W. Wysong at the University of Maryland, was presented by John W. Wysong. Available for several microcomputers, this program can be used to provide management recommendations for dairy-crop farms in the Northeast. Wysong demonstrated the program's application on a typical 100-cow dairy-crop farm.

Robert L. Christensen focused his attention on the 'use of microcomputers in extension mar-

keting programs.' Christensen noted that while "the emergence of microcomputer and associated service industries has placed the potential for data acquisition and analysis in the hands of most commercial farmers," software availability still is a serious limiting factor in the adoption of the new technology in agriculture. He also indicated that software availability was extremely limited in marketing and risk management.

The mission and objectives of the newly formed Northeast Computer Institute were presented by its Director, G. Art Hussey. Located at the Pennsylvania State University, the Institute will provide technical information services support to the cooperative extension, research, and resident education functions of the member institutions. Hussey outlined three objectives of the Northeast Computer Institute: (1) to evaluate existing software, (2) to develop and distribute training materials, and (3) to communicate the computer adoption developments across the region.

During the open discussion period of this well attended symposium, the speakers clarified several issues including software source, costs and availability procedures, unique applications by farmers and other end users, and the overall role of land grant institutions in this area.

## EXPANDING MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION

Coordinator: G. L. Cole, University of Delaware

Participants: F. Webster, University of Vermont  
J. Delphendahl, University of Maine  
V. Norton, University of Maryland  
D. Rossi, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
A. Luloff, University of New Hampshire

The purpose of the symposium was to present a report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Membership Participation. Various alternatives for expanding membership participation were presented. A clear majority of the Committee and of the audience favored changing to an elected executive committee consisting of 4-6 members in addition to the president, president elect and past president, with the editor and secretary-treasurer as non-voting members. Election by mail ballot was supported with concerns expressed about regionalism of representation. Other suggestions in-

cluded encouraging additional graduate student memberships, continuing the M.S. thesis award, developing an undergraduate papers section at the annual meeting, improving membership communications with a newsletter, encouraging more participation from rural sociologists in the region and developing more systematic procedures for selection of committee members and manuscript reviewers.

The committee will prepare recommendations for council by-law changes to be discussed at the 1984 annual business meeting.