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# KENTUCKY'S PROGRAM IN AGRICULTURAL POLICY

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In Kentucky's College of Agriculture, I am the only extension person with direct responsibility in agricultural policy work. However, when the need arises, other extension personnel as well as teaching and research personnel in the Department of Agricultural Economics help carry some of the agricultural policy work load.

My work has three objectives. One is to keep the extension field force informed about developments in agricultural policy and to help them do policy work. I also attempt to keep the total extension organization and the college staff informed of policy issues and our policy work.

Another objective is to work with groups or organizations concerned with agricultural policy, such as the Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation, the National Farmers Organization, the Burley Advisory Committee, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, and the state ASCS office.

A third objective is to conduct public affairs education programs for the general public at the state and the county or area levels. The state level program consists mainly of mass media efforts through radio, TV, news stories, circular letters, and policy "mail outs." It involves working with the organizations and groups already mentioned. The county level work usually takes the form of discussion meetings on specific policy issues.

Our program has dealt with a wide range of issues—the economics of price determination, characteristics of agricultural supply and demand, bargaining in agriculture, federal farm legislation, specific commodity programs, commodity referenda, agricultural exports and imports, the European Economic Community, world food needs, environmental quality, family income maintenance, taxation, and the public's role in policy formulation.

Because 35 percent of cash receipts from farm marketings in Kentucky come from tobacco, much of our farm policy effort in recent years has dealt with tobacco production control and price-support programs and policies. Our intensive educational efforts

among growers, all segments of the tobacco industry, and agricultural leaders had an important impact in getting the burley tobacco control program changed in 1971 from acreage allotments to the more effective poundage quota system.

Despite the continuing importance of tobacco in our state, much less time will be devoted in the future to tobacco policy than in the past. This will permit expanding our program to include an educational program on the agricultural environment, an increase in the number and location of the policy discussion meetings, and the publication of more material on agricultural policy and public affairs.

Two recent developments illustrate our interest in the agricultural environment as an area of policy work in extension. First, an environmental workshop was conducted at three locations in the state for all extension personnel at the state, area, and county levels. Second, the college added the position of Assistant Director of the Cooperative Extension Service for Development and Agricultural Environment. The same person is also Assistant Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station for Development and Agricultural Environment. Having the entire program under the direction of one individual is expected to result in more effective coordination of the expanded research and extension efforts in this area of growing concern.

As I see it, Kentucky's agricultural policy program in the future will include: (1) continued work with farm organizations and other groups as an educational input on current issues; (2) more use of mass media communications to inform the public on policy issues, especially when time is limited; (3) more training of specialists and agents to do policy work; (4) helping farmers to more nearly solve their own problems as farm programs phase down; (5) a program on agricultural environment; and (6) educational efforts on public policy issues affecting farm people, such as land-use planning, welfare, and development of rural areas.