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The Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics 2013 Annual Report

Everyday Action on Behalf of Applied Economics



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About the Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics

C-FARE is a non-profit organization which promotes the work of applied economists and serves as a catalyst for incorporating economic thinking into the analysis of food, agricultural and resource decisions. We serve as a conduit between the academic research community and Washington, DC policymakers and agency personnel, matching expertise to public needs. Incorporated in 1993, C-FARE is based in Washington, DC and is governed by a board of applied economists representing a wide range of public and private sector interests. The Agricultural and Applied Economics Association and the National Association of Agricultural Economics Administrators each appoint three members to the board and the Southern Agricultural Economics Association appoints one member. These seven directors elect at least six at-large representatives. C-FARE is a tax exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code.

C-FARE's Mission

The Council strives to enhance the effectiveness of the food, agricultural, resource, and related economic sectors through a stronger national presence of the economics profession in the processes of identifying key economic issues, setting priorities, and generating support for research, extension/outreach, and academic programs.

C-FARE's Goals

C-FARE's Board has adopted a set of goals to serve the needs of the profession. These goals guide C-FARE's daily actions and activities to achieve its Mission.

GOAL 1: **Nexus of New Ideas and Opportunities**

C-FARE will be recognized as a nexus of new ideas and opportunities in the fields of food, agricultural and resource economics.

GOAL 2: **Resources and Capacity for Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics**

C-FARE will work towards providing sufficient resources and capacity to address meaningful economic analysis to societal issues.

GOAL 3: **Source of Economic Information and Interpretation**

C-FARE will be the go-to organization that connects stakeholders (policymakers, federal agencies and industry organizations) with objective, timely, reliable and relevant economic information.

C-FARE Performs Many Functions to Serve and Support the Applied Economics Profession



Facilitates Webinars, Seminars and Briefings on Timely Topics

C-FARE develops webinars, seminars, and briefings. These activities are designed to inform and/or train stakeholders on the application of economics relevant to current policy issues or legislative initiatives. C-FARE's activities highlight the strengths of economic analysis in multi-disciplinary research and education.

Monitors Federal Policy-making Activities

C-FARE monitors and reports on budgets, bills, legislation, rule-making, and initiatives under discussion in the federal policy-making arena. C-FARE also develops public comments that encourage federal policymakers and program managers to include and incorporate applied economic analyses in program development, policy implementation, and requests for research.

Engages Federal Stakeholders and Decision Makers

Members of the C-FARE Board of Directors regularly meet with decision makers to provide information on the importance of economic research, extension, and education, and the value of many federal data series. C-FARE also educates stakeholders and decision makers about the importance of economic research and data through educational letters on specific, timely topics.

Works for Enhanced Funding for Applied Economics

C-FARE's leadership regularly meets with key federal agencies to discuss the benefits associated with applied economics research and to examine new resources and funding opportunities for the profession.

Nominates Members of the Profession for Policy Advisory Board/Panel Positions

Advisory boards and panels offer opportunities for the profession to broaden its influence. C-FARE seeks to enhance the presence of food, agricultural and resource economists on key federal advisory boards.

Provides Information to Students and Young Professionals

C-FARE's intern briefings and informational updates help support the professional growth of the next generation of applied economists. At the briefings, speakers talk about their backgrounds, skills, and academic experience. Experts elaborate on experiences and skills they've found necessary to build a career in the private, public, or non-profit sectors in Washington, D.C.

Develops Reports and White Papers on Timely Topics

C-FARE's Blue Ribbon Expert Panels and partnerships develop reports on innovative ideas for how applied economics can help to overcome the 21st century challenges to food, agricultural and resource systems.

Specific Activities and Actions Taken in 2013 to Achieve C-FARE's Goals

Goal 1: Nexus of New Ideas and Opportunities in the Fields of Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics

Blue Ribbon Expert Panel Activities

As a result of our Strategic Planning Efforts, C-FARE has developed “Blue Ribbon Expert Panels” (BREPs) to provide short- and long-run guidance about national and international matters of mutual interest to policymakers and food, agricultural and resource economists. Information based on the panels’ expertise flows two ways. The panels assist C-FARE with answers to questions from policy makers and provide C-FARE with advice about policy needs and concerns. Current panels focus on: (1) Energy; (2) Global Competitiveness and Profitability of Agriculture; (3) Economic Opportunities in Rural Communities; (4) Natural Resources and Environmental Issues; (5) Consumer Concerns about Food, Health and Safety; (6) Climate Change; and (7) Development.

C-FARE encourages the panels to: (a) compose public comments; (b) develop organized symposia for professional meetings; (c) submit articles to the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association (AAEA) *Choices* magazine; (d) develop white papers; (e) identify workshop ideas; and (f) catalog important and timely information resources related to the panel’s focus.

Activity Highlight: Blue Ribbon Successes in 2013

- The BREP on Global Competitiveness and Profitability of Agriculture provided planning suggestions for a meeting held by National Academy of Sciences on Public Access to Federally-Supported Research and Development, Data and Publications.
- The Global Competitiveness and Profitability of Agriculture Panel responded to a Federal Register notice about data collection.
- The Natural Resources and Environmental Issues Panel worked with AAEA to form a new AAEA Section entitled “Land, Water and Environmental Economics.”
- The BREPs on Natural Resources and Environmental Issues and on Development sponsored sessions at the AAEA meeting in Washington, D.C. in August.
- BREP on Climate Change member, Dr. Bruce McCarl of Texas A&M participated in the Washington, D.C.-based Climate Science Working Group’s Congressional Visits Day. Dr. McCarl was invited to visit with the House Committee on Science.
- In 2013, BREPs provided timely and reliable responses to ten inquiries by congressional staff, more than a dozen questions from the media, and seven requests from organizations in the food, agriculture, and natural resource stakeholder community.
- The BREP on Climate Change submitted comments to “Science-Based Methods for Entity-Scale Quantification of Greenhouse Gas Sources and Sinks from Agriculture and Forestry Practices.”

C-FARE Report: “From Farm Income to Food Consumption: Valuing USDA Data Products”

In 2013, C-FARE continued our practice of organizing federal program reviews to provide excellent examples of how economists contribute to federal topics and programs.

On May 16, 2013, C-FARE held a seminar as a part of a project to elucidate the value of data collected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Specific objectives of the project were to:

1. Summarize the major USDA data collection efforts;
2. Provide a conceptual framework for determining the value of information;
3. Summarize the academic research on the effects and value of USDA data products;
4. Provide, where possible, case-study accounts of effects of prior discontinuations of USDA data products;
5. Make recommendations on opportunities to increase the value of USDA data collection efforts; and
6. Outline an approach that measures the net benefits of alternative USDA data products.

In October, the C-FARE released the report, “[From Farm Income to Food Consumption: Valuing USDA Data Products.](#)” The report outlines eight questions to provide a framework for making more informed and objective judgments about the relative merits of competing data products. In addition, the report also emphasizes recommendations for further research, the need for understanding the extent of data use across Federal agencies, and streamlining data collection to more closely match how and when the data are most useful. The report surveys the social science literature on the value of public data, explores available research on the value of USDA data, and describes a framework for prioritizing data collection and reporting.

Activity Highlight: [Unraveling Uncertainty in Agricultural Markets with Data](#)

On November 8, 2013, C-FARE organized a webinar on agricultural markets data. The webinar presenters emphasized that commodity markets are driven by products and information. Today, the nation’s data and statistical agencies face unprecedented pressure to assess and reduce their costs. As a result, data and statistical assessments critical for alleviating market volatility and uncertainties have been suspended, aggregated, and even, in some cases, eliminated. The expert presenters shared information on the role of federal data sources in agricultural commodity markets, including dairy, livestock, and major grain and oilseed crops.

Moderator:

- Katherine Smith, Executive Director, Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS)

Speakers:

- Steve Meyer, President, Paragon Economics;
- Andrew Novakovic, E. V. Baker Professor of Agricultural Economics, Cornell University; and
- Samuel Funk, Chief Economist, United Soybean Board

The webinar connected with 53 participants interested in the topic. A strong focus was placed on Congressional staff. Success was evident as several of the questions posed during the question and answer period were from Congressional staff. The webinar can be viewed at: <http://www.cfare.org/2013datawebinar/>.

GOAL 2: Providing Resources and Capacity to Support Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics

Submitted Informational Letters to Congress

C-FARE's staff continues to work with partners from other disciplines to increase awareness and appreciation for applied economics research. These activities are highly selective and include increasing awareness via letters to Congress, visiting with Congressional staff, and hosting seminars highlighting the value of U.S. data products, reports, and related research. The C-FARE Business Office also monitors the activities of the federal government to identify opportunities to better educate the public on the importance of the discipline's work in public policy and private-sector decision making.

In July, C-FARE joined 20 other professional organizations to thank Congress for funding the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) in the FY14 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations bill. The letter highlighted BEA's central role in understanding our economy, promoting economic growth and job creation; and providing the local data essential for small and large businesses to make effective operational decisions. The letter to Congress also stressed the need for data in such important BEA tools as the Regional Input-Output Modeling System (RIMS II); Local Area Personal Income Statistics (LAPI); and two Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) analytical products.

To be able to provide specific examples to policymakers about the value of data products and research, C-FARE continues to seek information on the importance of economic information. In 2013, C-FARE began gathering input on how researchers use data from the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Economic Research Service (ERS) and other agencies of importance to applied economists and the AAEEA. These summaries were shared with Congressional offices and funding agencies. Private-sector firms have requested the summaries for use in their work to build awareness about analysis, collection, reporting, and research activities.

Please view links to C-FARE success stories here: <http://www.cfare.org/publications/success-stories>

Nominated Members of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Profession to Advisory Boards/Panels

In May 2013, C-FARE recommended potential nominees from the applied economics profession and especially from C-FARE Blue Ribbon Panels, to the National Research Council's consensus study called "A Framework to Assess the Effects of the Food System."

Presented Greg Walden (OR-2nd) with the 2013 Friend of Agricultural Economics Award

Susan Capalbo, Past-Chair of the National Association of Agricultural Economics Administrators (NAAEA), discussed the importance of agricultural and applied economics research with Representative Greg Walden's (OR-2nd) on November 13. Dr. Capalbo also presented Representative Walden with the 2013 Friend of Agricultural Economics Award (Figure 1).

Thomas Griffin, an alumnus of Oregon State University (OSU) and Ray Baum, Senior Policy Advisor, joined Representative Walden, Dr. Capalbo, and Mrs. Caron Gala at the meeting. Representative Walden indicated

that “there is so much wonderful research going on at the Land Grants around the Nation, but not enough people know about it. We need to change that.”

C-FARE posted photos of the meeting, which were shared by OSU, AAEA, and two other groups. The photos were viewed 348 times—the most in the history of the C-FARE web page. Over 30 press outlets in Oregon, along with national media groups, received the press release. As a result, C-FARE gained several new followers.



Figure 1. Dr. Susan Capalbo of Oregon State University presenting Representative Greg Walden with the Friend of Agricultural Economics Award on November 13, 2013.

[Organized an Agency Seminar - An Overview of Rates of Return to Agricultural Research](#)

On May 20, 2013, C-FARE sponsored an informational seminar for Washington, DC-based colleagues and stakeholders. About 20 federal, academic and private sector participants working in U.S. agriculture research and development heard from Keith Fuglie, Chief of ERS’s Resource, Environmental, and Science Policy Branch. Dr. Fuglie discussed “Evidence on Returns to Agricultural Research” and ERS Economist Paul Heisey focused on “Implications of R&D funding for Long-Term Agricultural Productivity Growth.” With increasingly constrained federal budgets, it is even more important to identify public investments in agriculture that support productivity and growth and which pay high dividends to taxpayers.

Facilitated Meetings with Federal Stakeholders and Decision-makers

As part of the May 20-22 and September 22-24, 2013, C-FARE Board of Directors meetings, C-FARE coordinated informational meetings with key decision makers and stakeholders in federal agencies, congressional offices, and other non-profit organizations.

C-FARE Board members discussed the value of data and related research during meetings with the following Congressional members or their staffs.

1. Ed Pastor (AZ 7th)
2. Frank Lucas (OK 3rd)
3. Rodney Davis (IL 13th)
4. William Enyart (IL 12th)
5. Pat Roberts (KS)
6. Thad Cochran (MS)

C-FARE staff and Board members also met with staff from the following agencies and organizations to discuss information needs related to agricultural and applied economics.

1. AGree Project, Meridian Institute (AGree)
2. American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF)
3. American Feed Industry Association (AFIA)
4. Economic Research Service (ERS)
5. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
6. Farm Foundation (FF)
7. National Council of Farmer's Cooperatives (NCFC)
8. National Credit Union Foundation (NCUF)
9. National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)
10. The Cooperative Development Foundation (CDF)
11. The Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS)
12. USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)
13. USDA Office of the Chief Economist, Climate Change Program Office (USDA OCE CCPO)
14. USDA Grain Inspectors, Packers and Stockyard Administration (USDA GIPSA)
15. USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
16. USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
17. USDA Rural Development (USDA RD)
18. Walton Family Foundation

Coordinated Student and Young Professional Development Activities

Development Call: On February 8, 2013, C-FARE held a one-hour conference call for students and faculty to hear speakers providing information on internship opportunities in Washington, DC, where to look for a summer internship and how to apply. We received 80 RSVP's for the event.

Internship Briefings Program: For the 11th year, C-FARE offered the Intern Briefings Program for summer interns in Washington, DC with an interest in economics. The program consisted of three briefings focused on careers with Capitol Hill, agencies and non-governmental organizations. More than 80 students participated in the 2013 program, with about 20 attending all three summer events.

USDA Outlook Forum Program: On September 27, C-FARE sponsored an informational call for students and advisors. The participants learned about the USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum's Student Diversity Program.

Activity Highlight: [AAEA Post-Conference Tour for Students and Young Professionals](#)

The USDA Economist Group and C-FARE hosted AAEA Annual Meeting tours of federal agencies involved in food, agriculture and resource economics. Over 40 participants attended tours of six USDA agencies: Economic Research Service Foreign Agricultural Service; Farm Service Agency; National Agricultural Statistics Service; National Institute for Food and Agriculture; and the World Board (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Collage of some of the events at the USDA Post-Conference Tour.

Activity Highlight: [The Role of Cooperatives in the Nation's Economy: Educating Future Cooperative Owners and Leaders](#)

In 2013, C-FARE began a two-year project entitled, "The Role of Cooperatives in the Nation's Economy: Educating Future Cooperative Owners and Leaders." The project, funded in part by the CHS Foundation, develops teaching modules focusing on the economics of cooperatives. C-FARE received additional technical support for this project from the Council for Economic Education (CEE) which provided assistance in the coordination of peer and teacher review of the modules. As of 2013, the modules had been developed and were being field tested by a group of high school teachers. The modules are expected to be released in Fall, 2014.

GOAL 3: Source of Objective, Timely, Reliable and Relevant Economic Information and Interpretation

Provided *Choices*, *Amber Waves*, C-FARE Reports, and Other Resources to Congressional Staff

In June 2013, C-FARE sent Congressional staff a brief summary containing links to key public and private sector food and agriculture economics resources, including, including *Choices*, *Amber Waves*, and several C-FARE publications.

Facilitated Seminars, Briefings, and Information on Timely Topics

C-FARE develops webinars, seminars, and briefings. These activities are designed to inform and/or train stakeholders on the application of economics relevant to current policy issues or legislative initiatives. C-FARE's activities highlight the strengths of economics analysis in multi-disciplinary research and education.

Seminar: "International Commodity Price Volatility and Risks"

On February 11, 2013, C-FARE partnered with the USDA Economists Group to hold a seminar addressing "International Commodity Price Volatility and Risks," for 70 participants from USDA and the private sector.

Speakers included:

- John Baffes, Senior Economist and Commodity Analyst, World Bank
- Thomas Erickson, VP of Government and Industry Affairs, Bunge, N.A., Inc.
- Michael Greenberger, Professor, University of Maryland, School of Law.

Webinar: "Cleaning Up the Slime: Science and Substantiation"

On February 15, 2013, C-FARE jointly sponsored a webinar with The Federation of Animal Science Societies entitled "Cleaning up the Slime: Science and Substantiation" for 60 participants. The webinar also highlighted The 4th Quarter, 2012 *Choices* theme on "Pink Slime, Marketing, Uncertainty, and Risk in the 24 Hour News Cycle."

Speakers included:

- J. Ross Pruitt, Assistant Professor, Extension Livestock Economics, Louisiana State University Agricultural Center
- Chad Carr, Assistant Professor, Extension Meat Specialist, The University of Florida's Food Safety and Quality Program.

Briefing: "Market Forces or Regulation?"

On May 13, 2013, C-FARE sponsored Dr. Rachael Goodhue (UC Davis) as the National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (NCFAR – www.ncfar.org) luncheon briefing speaker. Dr. Goodhue's briefing in the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture hearing room had more than 40 attendees, and she subsequently met with various staff from the California Congressional delegation to highlight her federally funded research that focused on the organization, regulation and performance of agricultural and natural resource markets. Offices visited included: Representative David Valadao – (CA-21), Representative John Garamendi – (CA-3), Representative Ken Calvert – (CA-42), Representative Jeff Denham – (CA-10), and Senator Dianne Feinstein (CA).

Briefing: “Safely Crossing the Food Chain: The Economics of Reducing Food Risk”

On August 1, 2013, Julie A. Caswell, Professor in the Department of Resource Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and AAEA President, spoke at a National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (NCFAR – www.ncfar.org) briefing focusing on economic research examining alternatives to reducing health risks in food. The audience consisted of over 80 congressional staff and stakeholders from the Washington, DC community. In addition to the presentation, Dr. Caswell visited three offices from her congressional delegation, including Representative Jim McGovern (MA-2), who has taken a leadership role in Congress in expanding the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program.

Activity Highlight: Climate Science Day on Capitol Hill

On February 26-27, 2013, Dr. Bruce McCarl (Texas A&M University) traveled to Washington, DC to participate in Climate Science Day, the multi-disciplinary event that attracted 50 scientists from a variety of science organizations. The purpose of the event was to provide Members of Congress with the best possible access to scientific information on climate science when making policy decisions. This non-partisan event, organized by the Climate Science Working Group (CSWG), did not subscribe to any particular policy or course of action. Dr. McCarl and others also met with staff from seven congressional offices to offer science and economic information: Representative Marc Veasey, (TX-33), Representative Bill Flores (TX-17), Energy and Commerce Committee; Representative Randy Weber (TX-14), Representative Jared Polis (CO-2), and Senators Mark Udall (CO), and John Cornyn (TX). The Energy and Commerce Committee specifically requested a meeting with Dr. McCarl.

Developed Reports and White Papers on Timely Topics

C-FARE’s Blue Ribbon Expert Panels and partnerships contributed innovative ideas on how applied economics can help to address the 21st century challenges to food, agricultural and resource systems.

Activity Highlight: Report Series, “The Conservation Crossroads in Agriculture”

"The Conservation Crossroads in Agriculture" project convened leading economists to examine the current thinking about the economic implications of conservation policies. As part of its work on the impending farm bill, C-FARE released the series, which included the following reports:

1. “[Top 10 Design Elements to Achieve More Efficient Conservation Programs](#)” by Dr. David Zilberman, University of California at Berkeley and Dr. Kathleen Segerson, University of Connecticut;
2. “[Economic and Environmental Effects of Agricultural Insurance Programs](#)” by Dr. Daniel A. Sumner, University of California at Davis and Dr. Carl Zulauf, Ohio State University;
3. “[Examining the Relationship of Conservation Compliance and Farm Program Incentives](#),” by Dr. Otto Doering, Purdue University and Dr. Katherine Smith, American Farmland Trust; and
4. “[Implications of a Reduced Conservation Reserve Program](#)” by Dr. JunJie Wu and Dr. Bruce Weber of Oregon State University.

Activity Highlight: Facilitated Policy Discussions and Education about the Conservation Crossroads Reports

In January 2013, C-FARE invited the authors and experts from the “Conservation Crossroads” series to Washington, D.C. to meet individually with key Congressional offices to discuss the reports. By deliberately focusing on individuals serving on the committees authorizing agricultural legislation, we discussed the economic implications of conservation policy with key leadership at a pinnacle decision-making point. C-FARE visited the offices of the following members of Congress members:

- Dan Benishek (MI-1)
- Jim Costa (CA-16)
- Joe Courtney (CT-2)
- Rodney Davis (IL-13)
- Jeff Denham (CA-19)
- William Enyart (IL-12)
- Marcia Fudge (OH-11)
- Bob Gibbs (OH-7)
- Bob Goodlatte (VA-6)
- Randy Hultgren (IL-14)
- Kurt Schrader (OR-05)
- Marlin Stutzman (IN-3)
- Glenn Thompson (PA-5)
- Ted S. Yoho, DVM (FL-03)

In addition, C-FARE hosted an informational luncheon to introduce new audiences to the Conservation Crossroads authors and the information presented in the reports. Participating organizations included:

- National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC)
- Resources for the Future (RFF)
- National Association of Counties (NACo)
- World Resources Institute (WRI)
- American Farmland Trust (AFT)
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Report: “The Public Benefits of Federal Food Assistance Programs Far Outweigh Their Public Costs”

On January 30, 2013, C-FARE released a report authored by Dr. Jean Kinsey, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Applied Economics at the University of Minnesota. The McKnight Foundation and The Walton Family Foundation funded the report. An executive summary and full report can be found at: <http://www.cfare.org/econofsnap/>. The report has been distributed to key Congressional offices, and decision makers.

The C-FARE Business Office continues to work with partners from other disciplines in a variety of ways to best represent the applied economics profession in matters of federal science policy and budget determination.

2013 C-FARE Board of Directors

C-FARE's governing board includes applied economists representing a wide range of public and private sector interests. We appreciate their time and expertise. These members also provide their own travel expenses to our board meetings and we appreciate their leadership and support on behalf of the profession.

2013 Board Members

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C-FARE's 2013 Sponsors

We would like to thank our sponsors for supporting C-FARE's operations and programs.



The Agricultural & Applied Economics Association (AAEA) Trust is the non-profit fundraising arm of AAEA. The Trust supports the work of agricultural and applied economists by funding programs and initiatives designed to advance the profession. <http://www.aaea.org/trust>



CHS Foundation is the major giving entity of CHS, an energy, grains and foods company. www.chsfoundation.org



The Economic Research Service is a primary source of economic information and research in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. ERS conducts a research program to inform public and private decision making on economic and policy issues involving food, farming, natural resources, and rural development. <http://www.ers.usda.gov>



www.nass.usda.gov

The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service provides timely, accurate, and useful statistics and information in service to U.S. agriculture.



The purposes and objectives of the Southern Agricultural Economics Association shall be to foster the study and understanding of agricultural economics and its applications to problems in the Southern United States; to promote unity and effectiveness of effort among all concerned with those problems; to promote improvement in the professional competence and standards of members; to cooperate with other organizations and institutions engaged in similar or related activities; and to increase the contribution of agricultural economics to human welfare. www.saea.org

Agricultural and Applied Economics Departments

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Michigan State University
Mississippi State University
New Mexico State University
North Carolina State University
Oklahoma State University
Purdue University
South Dakota State University
Southern Illinois University
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