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1996

**Visions for Agricultural Economics: Better Serving Applied Economists**

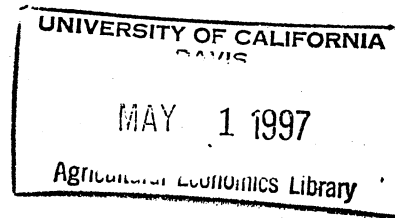
**A Report**

**to the**

**American Agricultural Economics Association  
Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics  
National Association of Agricultural Economics Administrators  
Farm Foundation**

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## Executive Summary

The agricultural economics profession is very diverse. Agricultural economists today are university researchers, instructors, and extension educators; private sector planners and strategic analysts; government researchers, analysts, and advisors; managers and CEOs. Agricultural economists apply their skills to a wide range of topics including production, marketing, finance, consumer demand, community development, natural resources, trade, and public policy. The profession, once much more homogeneous, has evolved over time to this rich, diverse state. Professional associations for agricultural economists, however, have not kept pace with these changes. This report provides recommendations to the main professional association, the American Agricultural Economics Association, on products and services needed for agricultural economists to better focus on the linkages between economic issues and public and private sector decisions in the 21st century.

## **Visions for Agricultural Economics: Better Serving Applied Economists**

Long-range planning and coordination by the American Agricultural Economics Association (AAEA) and other key professional organizations in agricultural economics is important to ensure institutional viability, provide effective service for agricultural economists, and to allow the agricultural economics profession to best make its societal contributions. The profession and AAEA have a rich history of institutional innovation and adaptation to a changing environment. Since 1980, major examples of professional progress include the creation of the AAEA Foundation, CHOICES magazine, the Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics (C-FARE), the National Association of Agricultural Economics Administrators (NAAEA), and the *Review of Agricultural Economics*; greater involvement of AAEA members in programmatic planning in the annual meeting; institutionalization of the AAEA business office and its permanent home in Ames, Iowa; creation of the AAEA executive secretary position; and other actions responding to the 1989 recommendations of the Adaptive Planning Committee. Policy changes, budget pressures and the current re-evaluation of research, education, business and policy organizations provide a new opportunity for institutional change designed to enhance the societal value of the agricultural economics profession.

### **Background**

In 1995 the W.K. Kellogg Foundation awarded a grant to four organizations serving agricultural economists for the project "Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics for the 21st Century". The purpose is to build leadership capacity and expertise within agricultural economics, and embrace agricultural economists not well served in their professional activities.

The participating organizations are the AAEA, C-FARE, NAAEA, and the Farm Foundation. These organizations and their members have committed substantial resources to supplement the Kellogg grant over its two year life. The project is guided by a steering committee comprised of representatives from each organization.

The project's overall goal is to recommend products and services needed by agricultural economists to better serve society in the 21st century. The project identifies ways to:

1. Enhance leadership, mobilize economic expertise and further develop the human capital of all agricultural economists.

2. Expand collaboration with other disciplines, organizations, interest groups, policy makers, private firms, and other users of the profession's research and education.
3. Reach existing and untapped potential audiences with the profession's knowledge base.

The past disciplinary emphasis of the AAEA has largely bypassed the needs, interests and capabilities of many agricultural economists. They work in land grant universities (mainly extension and resident instruction), government agencies, agribusiness firms, nonprofit institutions, special interest groups, and non-land grant educational institutions. Many have Ph.D. and M.S. degrees and some with B.S. degrees work as applied economists. Those economists represent a major resource for addressing society's emerging issues, but new initiatives and programs are needed to further develop and mobilize their expertise. They will benefit from products and services provided by a professional society focusing on the linkages between economic issues and public and private sector decisions. The opportunity to significantly broaden participation in the professional infrastructure can serve the needs of all agricultural economists and through their efforts, U.S. citizens in general. A major strategy underlying this project is to comprehensively evaluate the products, services and delivery mechanisms of the AAEA.

The Farm Foundation has been serving the profession for several decades but C-FARE and NAAEA are new organizations, created in 1993 to fill gaps in professional representation. C-FARE will continue to experiment with opportunities to reach new audiences for the profession's knowledge base, prioritize research and extension programs, and monitor agency budgets for support of economic analysis. The NAAEA develops human capital for administrative leadership in the 1862 and 1890 land grant institutions, non-land grant universities, and USDA agencies. Farm Foundation's niche is to develop increased agricultural and agribusiness interaction with the agricultural economics profession and to sponsor workshops and conferences relevant to the project's goals.

### **Project Approach**

Information to meet the above objectives was obtained from various sources including relevant literature, listening sessions, surveys, and a visioning conference. Listening sessions provided information on services agricultural economists need to adequately conduct their professional activities. Attendees included agricultural economists who are members as well as non-members of the four participating organizations. The listening sessions were held in California, Illinois, Indiana, Georgia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Texas, and Washington, DC. In total, approximately 500 agricultural economists participated. They

included agricultural economists working in businesses, extension, research and education organizations other than universities, and non-land grant university personnel, particularly those in teaching. The Georgia listening session was organized with the Georgia Agribusiness Association, the Chicago session with the Chicago Agricultural Economists Club, and the Minnesota session with University of Minnesota. The Texas sessions were assisted by Texas A&M staff who had contacts with extension field staff and non-land grant university agricultural economists, including 1890s in Texas. The California sessions were aided by contacts of the University of California extension personnel with the agribusiness community, and at San Luis Obispo to reach teaching personnel in non-land grant universities. Two sessions were organized in Washington, DC, one with economists working outside of government agencies and the other in conjunction with the USDA Economists Group. In addition, listening sessions were held at the three regional agricultural economics association meetings, the 1995 AAEA annual meeting, the Southern and Western extension economists meetings, and the 1995 National Public Policy Education Conference.

In recognition that many agricultural economists could not participate in a listening session, a mail survey of agricultural economists, both current members and non-members of the participating organizations was conducted to further define the services economists need to facilitate their professional activities. The member surveys were sent to 1,222 individuals (about one-third of membership) chosen at random from the AAEA membership roster. The non-member survey was sent to 2,572 individuals out of a random sample from a 3200 non-member data base developed for this project. The non-member data base was developed from a variety of sources including faculty at land grant institutions, Economic Research Service and other government agencies, and recent Ph.D. and M.S. graduates at some land grant universities. The response rate for members was 58 percent (691 usable questionnaires) indicating substantial member interest. The response rate was 28 percent for the non-member survey, yielding 634 usable surveys.

The listening sessions and surveys provided input for a visioning conference held in conjunction with the AAEA annual meeting in San Antonio. The conference goal was to develop a common vision encompassing the interests, issues, and problems of mutual concern to a broad range of agricultural economists. The specific objective was to explore the role of the AAEA and the other participating organizations in serving the needs of current and potential members.

The eighty-five agricultural economists participating in the conference represented the broad spectrum of the profession -- 1862 land-grant research, teaching, and extension economists; 1890 land-grant research, teaching, and extension economists; non-land grant university economists; government economists; and industry economists. Many of the



participants were drawn from the listening sessions' attendees. They focused in small groups and plenary sessions on three questions: 1) What products will agricultural economists demand?; 2) What services will agricultural economists demand?; and 3) How should agricultural economists be organized and governed to provide these products and services?

Based on the literature review, listening sessions, surveys, and visioning conference this report provides recommendations for the professional infrastructure groups to consider in serving the needs of agricultural economists in the 21st century. It particularly focuses on AAEEA, but the other organizations involved in the project will be affected by and involved in changes implemented by AAEEA.

### The Common Threads

Threads of commonality characterized the listening sessions, surveys and visioning conference. *First and foremost was the thread or theme of diversity.* Agricultural economists are a diverse group of professionals whether viewed by topic or function. By topic agricultural economists are involved in production, marketing, finance, management, consumer demand, public policy, community development, natural resources, environment, and international trade to name a few. By function agricultural economists are instructors; researchers; extension educators; government researchers, analysts, and advisors; private sector planners and strategic analysts; managers; CEOs; and administrators. Some are more quantitatively oriented than others. Diversity is thus a fact of our professional lives. But the American Agricultural Economics Association (association), the main professional society for agricultural economists, does not reflect this rich diversity in its membership, products, services, or governance (discussed below).

*A second theme involves insufficient activism, foresight or as many conference participants stated "....the association is reactive instead of proactive."* This theme is reflected in two ways. First the association has not been proactive in its approach to retaining current members or attracting prospective members. Second, the association has normally reacted to important national issues affecting agriculture. Seldom has the association been the leader in identifying emerging issues and marshaling resources to provide unbiased information to decision makers. This perception ignores a number of activities, often initiated by individual members, that contribute to issue identification and decision information. Much more can be done, however, especially by the leadership of the association.

*The third theme is life-long learning.* Discussion in the listening sessions, surveys, and the conference consistently addressed areas in which economists could learn more. The areas of learning vary over such topics as cutting-edge research methods, new and different

teaching methods, or emerging "hot topic" policy issues. Avenues are needed by which agricultural economists can fill this hunger for life-long learning. This is consistent with increasing attention to the evolving need for continual learning throughout most careers.

*Finally, a subtle yet real theme lies under the surface at most gatherings of agricultural economists -- the lack of a sense of community within the profession. The prevailing attitude of many in the profession is "...that unless I am published frequently in the American Journal of Agricultural Economics, I am not valued in the profession." Because of this attitude many agricultural economists working in government and industry, primarily teaching in colleges and land grant universities, and/or providing extension education have felt alienated by the academic, disciplinary association. As a result, they have found little reason to become members of the association. *This is borne out in the numbers. In identifying non-members for this project's mail survey about 1,000 agricultural economists at land grant universities were identified. Approximately 90 percent of them had primarily teaching or extension appointments. For government economists 85 percent of USDA's Economic Research Service economists, one of the largest employers in the world of agricultural economists, do not belong to the association and of the agricultural economists in other agencies of USDA and outside USDA, 95 percent are non-members. For the small percentage of AAEA members from these groups who participated in the visioning conference, the question is: "Am I welcomed or am I simply tolerated in the association?"**

### **AAEA as a Learning Organization**

At the San Antonio Visioning Conference, organizational consultant Elizabeth McGrath discussed Peter Senge's principles of a learning organization and how our association fits into these principles. She stated that an increasing number of professional associations are changing their patterns of thinking and interacting. In addition to providing efficient and effective services to their members, many associations function as learning organizations - by considering members' ever-changing needs and interests, and responding in ways consistent with the association's mission, vision, and values.

Senge's five principles of a learning organization are:

1. Shared Vision -- comprised of mission, vision, and values.

It is a) the picture of the future; b) common to all members of the organization; and c) the inspiration for individual commitment/contribution. *For AAEA a shared vision is neither articulated clearly nor shared broadly.*

**AAEA needs to articulate a shared vision i.e. its mission, vision, and values.**

A. Mission is characterized as:

- a sense of timeliness;
- involvement of ends and means;
- appeal to stakeholders; and
- development and ownership throughout the association.

**Example for AAEA:**

*"To provide professional publication outlets and other timely and high quality products and services in support of agricultural economists at every stage of their education and professional career."*

B. Vision is characterized as:

- challenging, inspiring, energizing;
- creation of purpose, direction and commitment;
- more than individual self-interest;
- an integral part of the culture; and
- uncomplicated, concise, easy to understand and simple to communicate.

**Example for AAEA:**

*"To determine, within the next two years, how best to serve all agricultural economists, offering them challenges and rewards both within the association and in cooperation with other associations."*

C. Values set the organization's standards by which to operate to fulfill the mission and vision.

**Example for AAEA:**

*"To promote a sense of community and provide opportunities for active participation by all agricultural economists, regardless of race, gender, career choice, or educational level."*

## 2. Systems Thinking

Do decision-making and governance structures reflect the entire system? Are the various boards (i.e. AAEA Executive Board, AAEA Foundation Board) and committees (i.e. Extension, Resident Instruction, Membership, CWAE, COSBE, etc.) sufficient, robust, and synergistic? Is time taken to reflect on the board's or committee's process or are only outcomes evaluated?

*In the survey and listening sessions, many participants' perception was that the AAEA Board was not in touch with its membership. Concern exists that Board members do*

*not regularly attend meetings or use other approaches that allow them to seek views of members regarding AAEA products and services.*

### 3. Learning in Community

For AAEA the target community has yet to be completely defined. Is AAEA primarily research oriented or will it provide support and services to all agricultural economists? *The existing perception is that the former is the case and expressions of frustration that changes have not been made, as well as skepticism that this project will improve the situation, came out repeatedly.*

### 4. Personal Mastery

To what degree and in what realms does AAEA provide services, opportunities, and challenges to support agricultural economists in their respective activities and responsibilities? *The prevailing perception is that the focus is primarily on mastery of research techniques and topics.*

### 5. Mental Models

Pictures of the array of products, services and committees could help determine missing pieces and overlap (figure 1). *The perception and arguably the reality is that currently figure 1 is a good depiction. The challenge is to make changes to cause the orbits to overlap and to interact in a productive manner. It is clear that many members as well as non-members have relatively little understanding of the linkages, operating procedures, and opportunities to provide input to the overall governance structure that currently exists.*

## **Recommendations**

Based on this discussion of common themes and analytical framework, the following recommendations are provided. These recommendations are the culmination of information collected and analyzed from previous AAEA association inquiries, the listening sessions, surveys of members and non-members, and the visioning conference deliberations.

### **General Recommendations**

#### **1. Determine a Shared Vision**

A determination of who to serve is the first decision. If the results of this project are accepted, *the overwhelming conclusion is that all agricultural economists working in the profession must be supported with products and services from this association without regard to race, gender, career choice, and educational level.* Perceptions and examples

provided earlier for mission, vision, and values might be useful starting points for determining a shared vision. An important implication of accepting this report's conclusion is the need for information about the diversity of the profession.

**Follow-on Recommendation:** Assess the patterns of 1) current membership and 2) the profession. Determine the universe of agricultural economists to be served. (CWAE is beginning to do some of this with funds provided by the Foundation Board but a coordinated effort with the Executive Board is needed). Commit to updating this picture of the profession periodically and sharing its results with the profession. Implement activities, products, and services to satisfy the identified needs of all agricultural economists.

## **2. Market the Association**

To be dynamic and relevant a proactive approach is needed to communicate the accomplishments of the association, the benefits of membership, and plans for the future. The many opportunities to market the association should be utilized such as: a) membership renewal -- provide a reminder of membership benefits, accomplishments, plans for the future; b) annual meeting promotion -- send meeting announcements to non-members encouraging them to join and obtain the benefits of membership; c) opportunities for continuing education, and d) utilization of various publicity vehicles, including -- magazines, reciprocal advertising with other associations, and the internet -- that may reach potential members.

**Follow-on Recommendation:** Contract with an association marketing professional to work with the Executive Secretary and Board. Have the President prepare an annual "State-of-the-Profession" report to use in marketing the association and to invite reactive assessment and criticism.

## **3. Facilitate Communication**

Utilize all current communication tools to communicate with members and potential members. For example, provide a) a more user friendly format for the newsletter and b) a first class home page with a variety of components such as chat rooms, links to other related associations and to other home pages within the profession, as well as reference material.

**Follow-on Recommendation:** Hire or contract with professionals in a variety of communications fields such as newsletters and web pages to develop first class communication vehicles for the association. Alternatively, develop this capability within existing staff.

#### 4. Get Ahead of the Curve

Anticipate the future needs of members and the profession. The Board should devote more time to considering the current and future information, skills, and association services needed by agricultural economists. The Board should focus a major part of one of its meetings annually on long-range planning and evaluating progress in achieving the shared vision.

**Follow-on Recommendation:** Form a Long-Range Planning Committee that represents the diversity of the profession and reports to the Board. Have the Committee develop five year plans with annual monitoring of progress. However, a committee of member volunteers can do only so much. Staff assistance will also be needed. Hire a part-time professional to resource this committee and other standing committees of the Board.

#### Recommendations for Products and Services

##### 1. Publications -- The Outside World's Look at the Profession

###### A. American Journal of Agricultural Economics (AJAE)

- i. With the launch of a new applied publication, keep AJAE as it is but emphasize relevance.
- ii. Require an executive summary at the beginning of each article to highlight key findings and their relevance to real world problems.

###### B. New Publication -- Review of Agricultural Economics (RAE)

- i. Its purpose and format as described to the membership is well received by the profession. It has the potential to reach many underserved segments of the profession.
- ii. It should publish applied articles including multidisciplinary work.
- iii. Great skepticism remains about whether RAE's potential will be reached. Success depends on:

- Editors in tune with RAE objectives (see also recommendation 11, p.17),
- Breadth of applied materials published,
- Support of AAEA to give it stature and credibility, and
- Willingness of members to contribute material and utilize its content.

These elements must be in place for RAE to be successful.

## C. CHOICES

- i. CHOICES reaches many markets, including non-economists.
- ii. It has a unique policy focus.
- iii. Market it more to extend its reach.
- iv. Consider developing themes for future issues.
- v. Guard against relying primarily on AJAE authors for articles.

## D. Newsletter

- i. Put on the Web. Non-members should pay to access employment information.
- ii. Provide a different format to make content more visible on front page.
- iii. Obtain professional expertise to help evaluate how to a) enable the newsletter to communicate more effectively and b) entice more attentive reading of it.

## 2. Annual Meetings -- Great Communication Vehicle for the Profession

- A. Balance the meetings. Need both cutting edge and grass roots issues. Give the President more leeway to target topical issues or areas to provide a current flavor to the meetings and help unify the other-wise diverse set of offerings in the total program and eliminate duplication.
- B. Match the diversity of the program with the diversity of agricultural economists. Give interest groups (e.g. agribusiness management, government economists, extension economists, etc.) more flexibility and responsibility in planning and conducting sessions.
- C. Evaluate sessions, including invited sessions, for quality of presentation and content. Reward good sessions by recognizing them in the newsletter or in other ways. (See also recommendation 5C, p.16.)
- D. Provide guidelines for style of presentation to make the meetings more customer friendly. Emphasize the need to communicate clearly and concisely in the allotted time slots. Encourage use of good visuals and "making a presentation" rather than "reading a paper".
- E. Bring in renowned outside speakers with panel discussions (e.g. Fellows panel) offering different points of view or introducing new topics at general sessions. Emphasize forums and interactive discussions among presenters and with the audience. Experiment with new approaches.
- F. Place more emphasis on sessions that provide continuing education credits/certification such as provided to realtors and finance economists in the 1996 meetings.

G. Provide more case studies, workshops, and other opportunities for students, extension educators, and resident instructors.

H. Further consider the role of pre- and post-conferences in accomplishing the above suggestions. But do not duplicate the general annual meeting program.

### **3. Continuing Education (CE) -- A Commitment to Life-Long Learning**

A. Provide a menu of CE opportunities, such as special "hot topic" issues (e.g. pesticide legislation, food safety), resident instruction (developing/teaching case studies), making good presentations, interviewing for a job (grad students), economic outlook, adapting software to agribusiness decisions, and applied research techniques.

B. Provide more opportunities for certification or recognition of completion of CE courses. For certification opportunities, explore professional requirements in various jobs, e.g. certifying agricultural consultants.

C. Provide sessions besides pre/post conferences. Mid-year symposiums on current topics were frequently mentioned at the visioning conference. AAEA receives numerous invitations from agricultural engineers, soil and water conservation, and other groups to co-sponsor seminars and conferences but seldom issues its own invitations. (See also recommendation 4D below.)

D. Explore off-site education opportunities through the internet, video, teleconferencing, etc. AAEA could provide leadership in these areas. For example, AAEA could sponsor or facilitate teleconferencing courses that could be offered with credit accepted at educational institutions.

### **4. Outreach -- Ways to be More Proactive**

In addition to the traditional outlets for the profession's knowledge base, expand outreach to include:

A. Opportunities to provide timely white papers/public service leadership on major policy issues on the Web or through other outreach vehicles.

B. Increase activity in K-12 economics education with a broader range of agricultural economists involved.

C. Sponsor news releases about particularly important research results on selected topics having a high level of interest and application. Organize news conferences for particularly notable and provocative speakers and topics.

D. Proactively broker our knowledge base to the private sector and other associations' members, through organizing sessions for their programs and exploring collaborative efforts. Find ways to involve them and their leaders in sponsoring and conducting activities.



E. Focus more organized attention on external relationships with other disciplinary organizations, policy organizations, and other potential users of agricultural economics knowledge.

#### **5. Awards -- A Signal of What AAEA Values**

A. Expand the awards/recognition program and the range of those helping to select recipients to be consistent with the diversity of the profession. Consider new awards targeted at those working in the following areas:

- i. Agribusiness,
- ii. Foundations and other non-profits,
- iii. Government,
- iv. Non-land grant colleges and universities, and
- v. Disciplinary and multidisciplinary team efforts for research, teaching, and extension.

Examples might include:

- Professional leadership award
- Decision analysis award
- Innovative applications award
- Economics impact award
- Disciplinary team award
- Multidisciplinary team award.

B. Make Fellows selection more transparent/democratic. Expand the selection committee to better represent the diversity of the profession.

C. Provide recognition for good sessions and presentations at annual meetings.

#### **6. Employment Service -- Important to All**

A. Expand the scope of the service to allow potential employers to explain their business, job opportunities and internships at the annual meeting.

B. Expand beyond Ph.D. to M.S. and attract other employers besides land grant universities, i.e. industry, government (beyond ERS), teaching colleges and universities, non-profit organizations.

C. Use the Web on an interactive basis for potential employers and employees.

#### **7. Personal Services -- A New Area**

A. Explore opportunities through other professional societies for such services as life insurance, credit cards, medical insurance for self-employed/retired.

B. Explore liability insurance for professional work -- especially for consultant work.

### Recommendations for Governance

1. Facilitate the formation of special interest chapters or roundtable groups such as extension economists, government economists, agribusiness management, marketing, natural resources, etc., similar to the ad hoc accommodations of C-WAE, COSBIE, and NAAEA to accommodate the diversity of the profession. Allow the various groups to voluntarily form and present their case to the Board for recognition. Work toward being perceived as a more democratic organization.
2. Review the existing committee structure to facilitate the emergence of special interest/roundtable groups.
3. Adopt a sunset rule for committees. Periodically review all committees for a rationalization to continue.
4. Expand the size of the Board to better represent the diversity of the profession.
5. Change the method of electing Board members to either:
  - A. Elect directors for specific interest areas such as agribusiness (e.g. analyst and manger), extension (e.g. specialist and agent), government (e.g. researcher and manager), teaching (land grant and non-land grant), and research (land grant and non-land grant) .
  - B. Continue to nominate directors-at-large but ensure that diversity such as agribusiness, extension, government, teaching, and research is maintained at all times.
6. Publicize the responsibilities and time commitments of Board members and Committee chairs to inform them of the commitment needed for these important responsibilities.
7. Review responsibilities of Board members and enforce them.
8. Assure that the Board is a policymaking board not an implementing board. The association President serves as the Chairman of the Board.
9. Hire a full-time Executive Director who is responsible for implementing Board policy. Establish an executive committee from the Board to work with the Executive Director to implement policy decisions.
10. Improve communications about Board activities to members. For example, put Board agenda and minutes on the Web page; provide an overview of AAEEA organizational structure, how committees interact with the Board, and role of the business office.
11. Assure that editorial teams of AAEEA publications have representation from a range of member interests. For example, have a researcher and extension professional as editors of AJAE.

### **Business Office Implications**

Several of the recommendations are directly related to staffing and the business office. This section synthesizes these recommendations so that they can be collectively considered to assist discussions about the benefits and costs of an augmented business office.

1. A full time Executive Director is needed if the major findings and recommendations of this report are accepted. This point was made quite strongly at the visioning conference and listening sessions.
2. Marketing the association will require dedicated staff time. Hire or contract with a part-time professional for this purpose to at least establish an initial plan.
3. Enhancing communication with members and non-members will require dedicated staff expertise. Hire or contract with a part-time professional for this purpose.
4. More continuing education programs and symposiums throughout the year mean added staff responsibilities. Analyze the resources needed and determine if existing staff can incorporate these responsibilities or if additional staff is needed.
5. Committees, such as the new long-range planning committee and other standing committees, may need staff support to adequately meet their responsibilities. Hire at least a part-time staff person to resource these committees.

### **Policy Implications**

Many of the above recommendations have policy implications. To assist the Board in considering potential policy changes to help implement the report's recommendations, the following policies are suggested. The Board should:

1. Subsidize start-up activities until they can generate added membership through expanded activity.
2. Make any special activities self-supporting to the extent benefits accrue primarily to participants. This is consistent with current board policy.
3. Utilize part of the association's net worth as venture capital to finance new initiatives.
4. Involve the Foundation as a partner in targeted fund raising, where appropriate.
5. Offer match funding to provide incentive for special interest groups to initiate new activities.
6. Expand the offering of Business Office services to other associations on a fee basis.
7. Consider the formation of a federation among the Regional Agricultural Economic Associations and AAEEA, as a part of service and income generating activities.

### Recommendation Priorities

Many recommendations have been brought forward in this report. In the hope of facilitating decisionmaking, the recommendations are placed in priority order according to the degree of urgency to make a decision. Three classifications are used:

High Priority -- Decision needs to be made within 30 days.

Medium Priority -- Decision needs to be made within six months.

Low Priority -- Decision needs to be made within one year.

#### **High Priority**

*General Recommendations* Pp. 11-13

- Determine a Shared Vision
- Market the Association
- Facilitate Communications
- Get Ahead of the Curve

*Products and Services*

Publications Pp. 13-14

- 1A. AJAE
- 1B. RAE
- 1D. Newsletter

Annual Meetings Pp. 14-15

- 2A. Balance meetings
- 2B. Program diversity
- 2C. Evaluate sessions
- 2D. Provide guidelines
- 2E. Outside speakers
- 2F. Continuing education credits

Continuing Education P. 15

- 3A. Menu of opportunities
- 3B. Certification opportunities
- 3C. Mid-year symposiums

Outreach P. 15

- 4A. Public service leadership
- 4C. News releases

Awards P. 16

- 5A. Expand program
- 5B. Expand Fellows selection
- 5C. Recognize good sessions at annual meetings

Employment Service P. 16

- 6A. Expand service
- 6B. Expand participants

*Governance* P. 17

1. Facilitate special interest/roundtable groups
2. Review existing committees
3. Adopt sunset rule
4. Expand size of board
5. Change method of electing board
6. Publicize board/committee responsibilities
7. Enforce responsibilities
8. Policymaking board
9. Full-time director
10. Improve board communications
11. Editorial teams

*Policy* P. 18

1. Subsidize activities
2. Self-supporting activities
3. Utilize net worth as venture capital

**Medium Priority**

*Products and Services*

Publications P. 14

- 1C. CHOICES

Annual Meeting Pp. 14-15

- 2G. More opportunities for students

- 2H. Pre/post conferences
- Outreach Pp. 15-16
  - 4D. Broker knowledge
  - 4E. Extend to other organizations
- Employment Service P. 16
  - 6C. More use of Web
- Policy* P. 18
  - 4. Partner with Foundation
  - 5. Match funding
  - 6. Business office services

**Low Priority**

*Products and Services*

- Continuing Ed P. 15
  - 3D. Off-site opportunities
- Outreach Pp. 15-16
  - 4B. Increase K-12 activity
- Personal Services P. 16
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