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Agriculture as a profession

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**Unemployment and Underemployment
Institute**

T. T. Williams, Director

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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SERIES #104-76

**DEMAND AND SUPPLY FOR BLACK
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS**

BY

Leroy Davis

**Southern University and A & M College
Post Office Box 9846
Baton Rouge, LA 70813**

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FOREWORD

The Unemployment and Underemployment Institute was created to coordinate all international economic development activities of the 211(d) grant at Southern University.

In 1972, the Agency for International Development (AID) approved a five year grant to Southern University to strengthen and increase its capacity in economic/agricultural economics to enhance Southern's capabilities to contribute to the resolution of problems of rural unemployment and underemployment in developing countries.

The general objectives of the Institute are (a) to develop and coordinate the activities of the University for greater participation in international economic development programs; (b) to make available the capacities and expertise thus developed to public and private agencies involved in industrial development programs; and (c) to conduct research, seminars, and workshops on domestic and international development problems including cooperatives, manpower utilization, small farmers, housing, population, nutrition, leadership training, and community development.

In keeping with objective (a), the University supports several faculty members working towards advanced degrees in the area of economic development and related disciplines, supports undergraduate scholarships to foreign and U. S. nationals in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics, provides travel to professional seminars for faculty, foreign exposure to development experiences, and special training on techniques of program design and evaluation.

In keeping with objective (b), the Institute sponsors an International Development Seminar Series, Student-Faculty & Staff Seminar Series, and hosts foreign individuals and groups interested in economic development programs at Southern University.

Results of research projects consistent with the objectives of this program are published under the Institute's Faculty-Staff Research Paper Series. Papers published under this series reflects the diversity of interests and specialties of our faculty and staff.

The above activities of the Institute demonstrate the capacities and expertise of Southern University developed through the 211(d) program. As a result of the 211(d) grant, the Unemployment-Underemployment Institute at Southern University is in a position to offer expert and technical personnel to private and public agencies involved in international economic development programs.

T. T. Williams
Director

DEMAND AND SUPPLY FOR BLACK
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS*

BY

LEROY DAVIS

In the last few years some attention has been given to matching the demand and supply of professionally trained personnel. The American Agricultural Economics Association (AAEA) has established an ad hoc committee on employment. John D. Holmberger presented a paper to the AAEA entitled, "The Market for Agricultural Economists", a paper written on economists. A caucus of Black Economists held a symposium on increasing the supply of Economists. However, to my knowledge, nothing has been written on the market of black Agricultural economists. This paper is designed to shed some light in this area.

Traditionally, blacks trained in agriculture have had difficulties in finding employment in other than predominantly black land-grant institutions. The demand in these institutions has been limited and unsustained. After World War II, a number of blacks obtained graduate degrees and formed what could be called "one-departments" in the 1890 Land Grant Institutions. These departments grew virtually at a zero rate because of the (a) lack of demand for students (graduate school and employment); (b) lack of funds; and (c) lack of activities other than teaching. That is, research and extension were non-existent in these institutions. Departments of Agricultural Economists existed as service institutions for Colleges of Agriculture and produced virtually no students in the area of Agricultural Economics. These departments continued to exist for about two decades at that state.

*Unpublished paper, Department of Agricultural Economics, Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, December, 1974.

During the late 1960's, the demand for black persons to train the Agricultural economists increased. Several factors accounted for the rise in demand. The appropriation of Cooperative State Research Service (CSRS) funds to 1890 Land Grant Institutions changing policies and recruitment activities by governmental agencies, non discrimination clauses in federal contracts to industrial firms, and pressure for black faculty and students in 1862 Land-Grant institutions.

Industry and the Black Agricultural Economists

Few black agricultural economists were expected to be employed in business and agri-business firms. This was expected, especially since only a small percentage of both agricultural economists and economists are employed in industry.

Helmberger reported that only 2.55 percent of agricultural economists and 6.17 percent of economists with Ph.D. degrees were employed by private business firms. The figures for agricultural economists and economists with master's degrees were 10.37 and 20.25 percent, respectively, while agricultural economists and economists holding bachelor's degrees comprised 14.58 and 29.85 percent of all persons classified as professional economists. The figures for "bachelor" economists may be higher, because all persons holding degrees in agricultural economics and economics are classified or registered as professional economists. They may be working in some other capacity other than economic analyses.

Letters were sent to 14 industry agricultural economists who were employed by different agri-business firms. They were asked to identify blacks trained in agricultural economics who worked for the same firms. Approximately 75 percent of those surveyed replied to the letter. None of the persons who

replied identified any blacks with degrees in agricultural economics working for the firm. Some of these surveyed tried to identify black agricultural economists employed by other agri-business firms; but none were reported. Some firms reported hiring blacks trained in other disciplines to perform some of the functions of a professional agricultural economist. Most were optimistic about hiring qualified blacks if they could be found.

Percent Composition of Black Students
in 1862 Land Grant Institutions by Region*

Location	Bachelor	Master	Doctoral
East	44.4	21.5	0.0
Midwest	44.4	57.1	62.5
South	11.2	14.3	12.5
West	0.0	7.1	25.0

Percent Composition of Students
in 1862 Land Grant Institutions by Region*

Location	Bachelor	Master	Doctoral
East	9.2	12.4	11.7
Midwest	51.5	45.3	52.3
South	18.0	21.5	14.4
West	21.3	20.8	21.6

Percent of Black Students in
1890 and 1862 Land Grant Institutions by Academic Level

Institution	Bachelor	Master	Doctoral
1890	85.8	68.2	0.0
1862	14.2	31.8	100.0

Number of Black Students in 1862 Land Grant Institutions
Located in States with 1890 Land Grant Institutions Vs.
States with 1862 Land Grant Institutions Only

States	All Students	Bachelor	Master	Doctoral
1890	12	5	5	2
1862	28	13	9	6
Total	40	18	14	8

Percent of Black Students in 1862 Institutions
Located in States with 1890 Institutions Versus
States with 1862 Institutions Only

States	Bachelor	Master	Doctoral
1890	27.8	35.8	25.0
1862	72.2	64.2	75.0

. Number of Black Agricultural Economists in 1890 Institutions by Region

Region	Total	Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor	Instructor	Extension Economist	USDA
East	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Midwest	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South	7	2	5	0	0	0	0
West	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	9	4	5	0	0	0	0

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