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# Maintaining the Cutting Edge

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**Why Many Extension Economists Are Not at The Cutting Edge and What They Can Do About Moving The Edge**

George McDowell, organizer (University of Massachusetts)

Larry Libby, moderator (University of Florida)

George McDowell (University of Massachusetts)

George Morse (Ohio State University)

The political-economic history and current mission of the land grant system absolutely require defining the "cutting edge" in applied economics in ways that focus in real problems faced by real people within a state or region. Extension economics is central to defining and retaining that cutting edge. The responsibility of the extension economist is to maintain excellence with this discipline, to constantly probe the political-economic system in search of the most pressing issues, and to maintain sufficient professional and programmatic flexibility to respond. Peer review of extension programs would enhance quality and promote excellence. A program certification process is recommended to provide systematic review of content and permit sharing of particular approaches or content among specialists. Such a process would further establish the respectability of extension output and clarify the "cutting edge."



Why Many Extension Economists Are Not at The Cutting Edge and How They Can Be Most Worthy The Edge

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